

## REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

*These Regulations are approved by the Academic Board.  
Last updated: June 2015*

*Where these regulations require a member of the School's staff or a body of the School to act, this authority may be delegated where appropriate.*

*Where these regulations require communication to be 'in writing' this will include communication by letter and/or email.*

### General

1. These regulations are made subject to the General Academic Regulations of the School and the Conditions of Registration. They apply to every student taking a programme of study leading to the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the School.
2. For students registered on an MRes/PhD programme, the Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees will apply for the MRes stage of the programme. Local regulations will also apply for each programme of study leading to a research degree in respect of arrangements for student progression, monitoring, upgrade to PhD and termination of registration. If a conflict occurs between local and School regulations, the latter will normally take precedence.

### Registration

3. Except where the School has given permission for initial registration for the PhD degree alone, each student will register initially for an MPhil or MRes programme. Such a programme will not result in examination for a PhD unless the student has been upgraded in accordance with regulations 22-25 or, for MRes programmes, in accordance with local regulations.
4. At the discretion of the teaching department and the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair, students may be exempted for part of the MPhil or PhD programme if they have already begun a programme for that (or an equivalent) degree at another university. This can include exemption from taught course(s) requirement(s), but will not normally include exemption from the School's upgrade requirements.

### Part-time registration

5. Switching to part-time registration is available to students who need to spread their studies over a longer period if they are in one or more of the following categories and can provide documentary evidence:  
  
employed or self-employed where the employment is in excess of 20 hours per week;  
on the basis of a protected characteristic recognised in the Equality Act 2010.

### Programme length

6. Except by special permission of the Research Degrees Subcommittee the minimum length of the programme will be two calendar years of full-time study or the equivalent in part-time study. A student exempted from part of a programme under regulation 4 must follow the programme at the School for not less than one calendar year or its equivalent in part-time study.
7. Unless the regulations for a programme state otherwise, the maximum length of registration will be four years for full-time and eight years for part-time students. Where a student follows periods of both full- and part-time study the maximum length will be adjusted according to the length of registration spent in each mode.
8. Exceptionally, the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may permit a student to continue in registration beyond the maximum length. A student should normally submit a request for extension of registration by the end of the penultimate year of his/her registration. The decision of the Chair is final. If granted, no further extensions will usually be permitted.

### Absence and interrupting registration

9. If a student is absent from the School for longer than 2 weeks other than permitted absences under regulations 10 and 17, he or she should first notify their supervisor/department and then the Research Degrees Unit.
10. A programme must be followed continuously except by permission of the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair. Students who want to interrupt their studies must apply in advance for permission to do so and provide the appropriate documentary evidence. Retrospective interruptions will not normally be approved. Where the School has permitted a student to interrupt his or her studies, no fee will be payable for the period of interruption; and the period will not count towards the period of study required by regulation 6 or allowed by regulation 7. Interruption will not normally be allowed for more than a total of two years overall and will not normally be permitted within the first year of study.

### Registration following a final MPhil/PhD examination

11. Where a student receives an outcome from a final examination that requires a period of revision (under regulations 52 and 54) and wishes to be registered for this period, he/she will need to request re-registration from the Research Degrees Unit.

### Supervision arrangements

12. Every student is entitled to a lead supervisor who:
  - 12.1 has knowledge of a student's subject area and theoretical approach;
  - 12.2 is a permanent member of the academic staff of the School<sup>1</sup>;
  - 12.3 has passed major review;
  - 12.4 is usually assigned for the duration of a student's programme;
  - 12.5 has no more than eight primary supervisees.
13. Every student will normally have additional supervision that may take the form of:
  - 13.1 co- or joint supervision that can include supervision across departments in the School;
  - 13.2 an adviser; or
  - 13.3 team supervision.
14. Secondary supervision may be allocated either after registration (and by the end of a student's first term of registration) or before depending on departmental procedures. In exceptional circumstances, external (to the School) secondary supervision may be permitted: should the Doctoral Programme Director determine such arrangements, seeking permission from the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair.
15. Full-time students have the right to see their supervisor at least three times a term in the first year and twice a term thereafter. Part-time students have the right to see their supervisor at least twice a term in the first year and once a term thereafter.
16. If the initial allocation of supervisor turns out to be inappropriate, the Doctoral Programme Director or Head of Department may agree a change on the initiative of the student or supervisor. However, a change of supervisor cannot be guaranteed, nor is it possible to guarantee a change to a particular academic.

### Studying away from the School

17. All students are required to be in regular attendance at the School for the purpose of attending courses, supervisions and other seminars required by their programme. The Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may allow students to be absent from the School for fieldwork or study elsewhere and will set the conditions which will apply. These will include regular contact with their supervisor(s). Absence from the School will not normally be allowed in the first year of registration. A fee will be payable for the period of absence, and the period will count towards the minimum and maximum number of years of study required by regulations 6-7. Students undertaking fieldwork or study elsewhere must carry out a risk assessment in collaboration with their supervisor before starting the period of absence.
18. In exceptional circumstances, the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may permit a student to reside outside the UK during their period of registration. Non-resident registration status will not normally be permitted in the first year or in any subsequent years where a student is required to attend classes at the School.

### Progress Review

19. The department will formally review the progress of each student at the end of the first, second and third year of full-time registration (and as deemed by the department as equivalent for part-time students) in accordance with its published procedures.
20. Such procedures should:
  - 20.1 confirm the members of staff involved in the progress review, which should include at least one member of the academic staff other than the supervisor;
  - 20.2 detail what written work and/or examinations the student is required to submit and/or sit. Requirements for written work should be based on an appropriate area of the student's research/thesis;
  - 20.3 (where relevant) include what grade a student is required to achieve in any assessment resulting from a taught course;
  - 20.4 include a review of the student's training and professional development needs;
  - 20.5 include an assessment of any ethics review required for the student's research undertaken in accordance with the School's research ethics policy;
  - 20.6 include the submission and review of a completion timetable clearly setting out the work completed and remaining on the student's research/thesis. The completion timetable at the end of year three should ensure the examination entry is made;
  - 20.7 confirm whether an opportunity is provided for the student to defend his/her progress orally to the progress review panel; and
  - 20.8 include consideration of any information provided by the student on exceptional circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> This excludes centennial or visiting professors and retired members of academic staff.

21. Progress reviews may result in continued registration, with or without conditions, or termination of registration. The Research Degrees Manager will, if applicable, inform the student in writing of the outcome with the reasons for imposing conditions or terminating registration. A student has the right of appeal against a decision to terminate his or her registration. Appeals will be conducted in accordance with the Appeal Regulations for Research Students.

#### Upgrade to PhD

22. The department will make a decision whether to upgrade a student from the MPhil to the PhD programme at the first formal review or within one year (or two years for part-time students) of it.
23. Upgrade procedures are agreed by each department but should:
- 23.1 specify the amount and type of written materials a student is required to produce and indicate the deadlines for submission;
  - 23.2 require the student's written materials to include a clear framework for the research and a timetable for completion;
  - 23.3 provide for an upgrade panel that can include the student's supervisor(s) and include at least one member of the department who is not directly involved in the student's supervision. Where a student's supervisor is not included on the upgrade panel, his/her view should be sought before the Panel reaches a decision;
  - 23.4 include an opportunity for the student to defend his/her written materials orally.
24. If a student is not upgraded he/she is entitled to resubmit work and be re-examined under the same principles governing the first attempt within a further six months for a final decision.
25. Where a final upgrade attempt is unsuccessful the student will normally be permitted to continue in registration and submit for the degree of MPhil if he/she so wishes. The Research Degrees Manager will inform the student in writing of a final decision, and the reasons for it, not to upgrade to PhD status. Every student has the right of appeal against decisions not to upgrade to PhD status in accordance with the Appeals Regulations for Research Students.

#### Plagiarism

26. Students must make themselves familiar with the School's Regulations on Assessment Offences (of which there are separate versions on plagiarism and other offences) and the School's Statement on Editorial Help.
27. The School reserves the right to submit any part of a thesis to any software designed to identify plagiarism or to take any other steps it considers appropriate to identify possible plagiarism.

#### Research Ethics

28. All students must ensure their research complies with the School's Research Ethics Policy.

#### Requirements for all theses submitted for the degrees of MPhil and PhD

29. Most of the work submitted in a thesis must have been done after the initial registration for a research degree at the School, except that in the case of a student accepted under regulation 4 there will be allowance for the fact that his or her registration began at another institution.
30. Except where the School has agreed to a collaborative arrangement with another institution, a candidate will not be allowed to submit a thesis which has been submitted for a degree or comparable award of any institution. He or she may however incorporate in the thesis any work that is the result of previous study, provided that the work which has been incorporated is indicated on the thesis.
31. In addition to the special requirements set out in regulations 33 to 36 for both the PhD and the MPhil, the thesis will:
- 31.1 consist of the candidate's own account of his or her investigations. Work already published, either by the candidate or jointly with others, may be included only if it forms an integral part of the thesis and so makes a relevant contribution to its main theme and is in the same format as the rest of the thesis. The student must clearly state the part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow researchers;
  - 31.2 be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument
  - 31.3 alternatively, a series of papers, with an introduction, critical discussion and conclusion, may be submitted instead of a conventional thesis provided that such a format is permitted by the student's department and that the thesis conforms to the department's guidelines. A thesis that contains only joint papers is not acceptable. It must contain linking materials which must be solely the work of the candidate. The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow researchers must be clearly stated by the student;
  - 31.4 be written in English (except where the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair has given permission for it to be written in another language) and must be presented in line with published School guidance;
  - 31.5 include a full bibliography and references.

32. For the examination, the candidate will be required to provide the Research Degrees Unit with enough copies of his or her thesis, submitted in accordance with the School's instructions.

**Additional requirements for a PhD thesis**

33. The scope of the thesis will be what might reasonably be expected after three or at most four years of full-time study.
34. The thesis will:
- 34.1 form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power;
  - 34.2 give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, and include a discussion on those findings, and indicate in what respects they appear to the candidate to advance the study of the subject; and so demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study;
  - 34.3 demonstrate research skills;
  - 34.4 be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals); and
  - 34.5 not exceed 100,000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices). In appropriate circumstances the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may grant permission for a thesis to exceed the normal length.

**Additional requirements for an MPhil thesis**

35. The scope of the thesis will be what might reasonably be expected after two or at most three years of full-time study.
36. The thesis will:
- 36.1 be either a record of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and will provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly;
  - 36.2 give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, and include a discussion on those findings;
  - 36.3 not exceed 60,000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices). In appropriate circumstances the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may grant permission for a thesis to exceed the normal length.

**Submission of an MPhil or PhD thesis and examination entry**

37. Students will be examined or re-examined in accordance with regulations 37 to 60 as in force when they apply to enter the examination. They must apply in the form prescribed in the Guidelines for MPhil and PhD Examinations to the Research Degrees Unit who will then initiate the procedure for the appointment of examiners.
38. Students may submit a thesis for examination only after the minimum registration period has passed. They must be registered students at the time of submission. The decision to submit a thesis rests with the candidate alone. Only candidates who have been successfully upgraded in accordance with the School's regulations can submit a thesis for the PhD award.
39. When entering the examination candidates will be required to sign the following declaration:
- 39.1 I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).
  - 39.2 I consider the work submitted to be a complete thesis fit for examination.
  - 39.3 I authorise that, if a degree is awarded, an electronic copy of my thesis will be deposited in LSE Theses Online (in accordance with the published deposit agreement) held by the British Library of Political and Economic Science and that, except as provided for in regulation 41 it will be made available for public reference.
  - 39.4 I authorise the School to supply a copy of the abstract of my thesis for inclusion in any published list of theses offered for higher degrees in British universities or in any supplement thereto, or for consultation in any central file of abstracts of such theses.
  - 39.5 I will include the following statement at the beginning of my thesis:
    - (a) The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. In accordance with the Regulations, I have deposited an electronic copy of it in LSE Theses Online held by the British Library of Political and Economic Science and have granted permission for my thesis to be made available for public reference. Otherwise, this thesis may not be reproduced without my prior written consent.
    - (b) I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.
40. If the candidate has not submitted his or her thesis for examination within twelve months of submitting the examination entry form, the examination will be cancelled, unless the Research Degrees Manager decides otherwise.

41. A candidate may apply to the Research Degree Subcommittee for restriction of access to his or her thesis and/or the abstract for a period of up to two years. Such a request can be on the grounds, for example, of commercial exploitation or patenting or for the protection of individuals. Alternatively, a candidate may apply to the Chair for an embargo period of up to one year. Such a request can be made on the grounds, for example, of a publication contract. In all other circumstances, a thesis will be placed in the public domain immediately after the award of the degree.

#### **MPhil and PhD examinations**

42. The Research Degrees Subcommittee will appoint the examiners, having paid particular attention to their independence, expertise and relevant experience. It will appoint two, or exceptionally three, examiners for each candidate. The examiners are required to be experts in the field of the thesis and to be able to make an independent assessment of the student and the thesis. There will be an examiner appointed from one of the colleges of the University of London (including LSE) and a second examiner appointed from outside the University. With the permission of the Chair of the Research Degrees Subcommittee both examiners may be appointed from within the University, or both may be appointed from outside the University. Only one examiner may be appointed from within LSE. The candidate's supervisors or advisers may not be examiners.
43. Assessment will be by submission of a thesis (as defined above) and an oral examination, which will be conducted in English (unless the Research Degrees Subcommittee has given permission for it to be conducted in another language). In highly exceptional circumstances connected with the candidate and with the permission of the appropriate Pro-Director, the School may suspend the requirement for an oral examination.
44. Candidates must attend for examination at a place and time the School determines. They must bring with them an additional copy of the thesis paginated in the same way as that submitted for examination.
45. Prior to the examination the examiners will prepare and exchange independent preliminary written reports on the thesis to assist in conducting the oral examination (or the preparation of the joint report in those cases where no oral examination is held).
46. The oral examination will normally be held in London. The Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may, however, agree to different arrangements.
47. Unless the candidate indicates otherwise on the entry form, the supervisor(s) will be invited to attend the oral examination as an observer. The supervisor(s) do(es) not have the right to take part in the examination but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners with the agreement of the candidate. Otherwise the oral examination will be held in private.
48. After any oral examination, the examiners will prepare a joint final report. It will indicate whether the thesis meets the requirements specified in these regulations and will include a statement of the examiners' reasons for their judgment of the candidate's performance against the criteria. The examiners may, at their discretion, consult the supervisor(s) before completing their report.
49. Copies of the reports will be sent to the Research Degrees Unit who will forward a copy of it to the candidate together with the preliminary reports unless the examiners have specified otherwise.
50. Examiners have the right to make comments in confidence to the appropriate Pro-Director in a separate report. Such comments should not normally be concerned with the performance of the candidate but may cover other matters that they wish to draw to the attention of the School.
51. If the examiners are unable to agree on the result of the examination, the Research Degrees Manager will advise them and if necessary will refer the matter to the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair, who will determine the action to be taken.

#### **Outcome of the PhD examination**

52. The options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination are as follows:
- 52.1 If the thesis meets the criteria set out in these regulations and the candidate satisfies the examiners in the oral examination, they will recommend that the candidate should be awarded the PhD degree. The thesis may contain minor errors deemed by the examiners to have no academic impact.
- 52.2 If the thesis otherwise meets the criteria but requires minor amendments, and the candidate satisfies the examiners in the oral examination, they may require him/her to make amendments they specify. The examiners shall indicate the length of time permitted to the candidate to make the required amendments, which shall not be longer than six months. The candidate must submit the amended thesis to both examiners or one of their number nominated by the examiners for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
- 52.3 If the thesis, though inadequate, seems of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may allow the candidate to re-present it in a revised form for re-examination. They will indicate the length of time they consider he/she will need to complete the revisions, which shall be between seven and twelve months. Examiners may not, however, make such a decision without having submitted the candidate to an oral examination. The

examiners may at their discretion exempt the candidate from a further oral examination. On resubmission of a thesis under this regulation, examiners must reach a final decision according to regulations 52.1, 52.2, 52.4, 52.5 or 52.6.

- 52.4 If the thesis meets the criteria but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, they may allow him/her to re-present the same thesis and take a further oral examination within a period specified by them not exceeding 12 months.
- 52.5 If, after completion of the oral examination or re-examination for the PhD, the examiners decide that a candidate has not reached the standard required under regulations 33-34, they will consider whether the thesis does, or might be able to, satisfy the criteria for the award of the MPhil degree. If they so decide, they will submit a report that shows either how the criteria for the MPhil degree are met or what action the student needs to take to meet them. Examiners will have discretion to waive the thesis length for the MPhil degree if appropriate. Thereafter the following conditions and procedures will apply:
- (a) The candidate will be told that he/she has been unsuccessful in the examination for the PhD degree, but has reached the standard required for the award of the MPhil, or with amendment to the thesis may be able to satisfy the criteria for the MPhil.
  - (b) A candidate considered for the award of the MPhil degree under this regulation will not be required to submit the thesis, as required under the regulations for the MPhil degree, or to undergo a further oral examination, but will be required to fulfil the requirements for the MPhil in all other respects.
  - (c) A candidate offered an MPhil degree under these regulations must make any amendments the examiners require within a period they specify, but not exceeding twelve months. The candidate must submit the amended thesis to the examiners who will decide whether he/she has completed the amendments to their satisfaction.
- 52.6 The examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination for either the MPhil or the PhD. They will not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without having submitted the candidate to an oral examination.
53. Students have the right of appeal against a decision taken under regulations 52.3, 52.4, 52.5 or 52.6, in accordance with the Appeals Regulations for Research Students.

#### **Outcome of the MPhil examination**

54. The options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination are as follows:
- 54.1 If the thesis meets the criteria set out in these regulations and the candidate satisfies the examiners in the examination, they will recommend that the candidate should be awarded the degree of MPhil. The thesis may contain minor errors deemed by the examiners to have no academic impact.
- 54.2 If the thesis otherwise meets the criteria but requires minor amendments and the candidate satisfies the examiners in the examination, they may require him/her to make amendments they specify. The examiners shall indicate the length of time permitted to the candidate to make the required amendments, which shall not be longer than six months. The candidate must submit the amended thesis to both examiners or one of their number nominated by the examiners for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
- 54.3 If the thesis, though inadequate, seems of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may allow the candidate to re-present it in a revised form. In such circumstances, they will indicate the length of time they consider he/she will need to complete the revisions, which shall be between seven and twelve months. Examiners may not, however, make such a decision without having submitted the candidate to an oral examination. The examiners may at their discretion exempt the candidate from a further oral examination. On resubmission of a thesis under this regulation, examiners must reach a final decision according to regulations 54.1, 54.2 or 54.5.
- 54.4 If the thesis meets the criteria but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, they may allow him/her to re-present the same thesis, and undergo a further oral examination within a period specified by them not exceeding 12 months
- 54.5 The examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination for the MPhil degree. They will not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances make such a decision without having submitted the candidate to an oral examination.
55. Students have the right of appeal against a decision taken under regulations 54.3, 54.4 or 54.5, in accordance with the Appeals Regulations for Research Students.

#### **Notification of award of MPhil and PhD**

56. After the examiners have confirmed their decision, the Research Degrees Unit will notify the candidate of the result. The degree will not be awarded until the candidate has provided a copy of the successful thesis, in accordance with regulation 39.3.
57. The Research Degrees Unit will send a certificate to each candidate who has been awarded a degree. It will bear the names of the candidate in the form in which they appear in the School's records at the date of issue.



58. Where the authorities of the School notify the Academic Registrar that the student has not settled or made acceptable arrangements to settle any account outstanding, the Academic Registrar will withhold certification until the same authority certifies that the student has made payment in full.
59. The Academic Registrar may withhold the result of the examination for any student who is the subject of investigation under the School's disciplinary or other procedures.

**Revocation of award**

60. The Council or Director may revoke an award made under these regulations as permitted by the Bye-laws and Regulations of the School.

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See the [Calendar](#) for further information about Programme Regulations, Course Guides, School and academic Regulations.