



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London

# Regulations for Research Degrees:

Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Professional Doctorates

PhD by Published Works

2022/23

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# Introduction

St Mary's University produces a suite of documents that outline the formal regulations and procedures for postgraduate research degrees and provide operational guidance to students and staff:

- The Regulations for Research Degrees outline the rules governing the formal stages of postgraduate research programmes including registration, progression and assessment.
- The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes details the procedures and practices that apply to all aspects of undertaking and administering postgraduate research programmes.

These and other key documents are available on St Mary's Research website.

## 1. General Principles

- 1.1 St Mary's University assures its academic standards for research degrees through engagement with external reference points established by the Quality Assurance Agency Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and through the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality – Research Degrees. This is demonstrated by the development and implementation of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

The standards of the University's awards are regulated through the Regulations for Research Degrees.

- 1.2 The rules and procedures relating to research degrees' work, including written and oral examinations, are set out in this document.  
These Regulations exist to ensure that students are assessed fairly and objectively, while maintaining the University's high academic standards.  
Ignorance of these rules and assessment requirements will not constitute a defence in any disciplinary procedures. Queries about the Regulations should be directed to the Head of Registry.
- 1.3 The University Regulations on assessment aim to make the assessment processes inclusive, fair, consistent and clear to both staff and students. The Regulations also reflect the expectations and relevant indicators of the QAA UK Quality Code.
- 1.4 These Regulations and their underlying principles apply to provision approved by the University and delivered by the University or by its collaborative partners leading to awards or academic credit of the University. They apply to all work that formally contributes to the award of the University, at whatever point in a programme the work is undertaken.
- 1.5 Collaborative Partner institutions authorised by the Academic Board to deliver St Mary University's research degrees on its behalf shall comply with these Regulations.
- 1.6 Any exemption or variation from these Regulations shall be exceptional (for example to address the requirements of a professional, statutory and regulatory Body) and must be approved in advance by the Research Degrees Committee and Academic Board.
- 1.7 These Regulations will be applied consistently to ensure equity of treatment of students regardless of their discipline or their mode of study.

- 1.8 These Regulations have been approved by Academic Board and the University Research Committee. Responsibility for their implementation and application lies with the Research Degrees Committee. They should be read in the context of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

## **2. Programmes of study**

- 2.1 The University offers programmes of study on a full- and part-time basis leading to the award of:

- (i) Master of Philosophy (MPhil)<sup>1</sup>
- (ii) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- (iii) PhD by Published Works

and the following Professional Doctoral programmes:

- (iii) Doctor of Education (EdD)
- (iv) Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
- (v) Professional Doctorate in Strength & Conditioning (D Prof S&C)

Possible exit awards are listed at Annex 3.

- 2.2. Programmes of study are determined for each student individually and will consist primarily of supervised research, assessed through a submission of work and an oral examination, together with a complementary programme of research skills development.

- 2.3 An MPhil may be awarded, following an approved programme of supervised research, to either:

(i) A student who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners;

(ii) A student who, having produced Published Works, artefact or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it within its academic context, has presented that material and defended the commentary by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

- 2.4 A PhD is awarded, following an approved programme of supervised research, to either:

(i) A student who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners;

(ii) A student who, having produced Published Works, artefact or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it within its academic context resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge, has presented that material and defended the commentary by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

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<sup>1</sup> MPhil is no longer offered as a standalone degree.

- 2.5 The degree of Doctor of Philosophy may also be awarded on the basis of a portfolio of Published Works, (see Annex 2), in which case the programme of study will consist of supervised preparation of the portfolio and a supporting statement.
- 2.6 This route to a doctorate is for candidates who have research publications which are already published and in the public domain. It is expected that the candidate's submission will demonstrate that, through the course of their research, they have considerable professional knowledge in their field at least equivalent to that gained by PhD students through the supervision process. The candidate does not have a supervisory team but a Director of Studies will be appointed by the University to assist and guide the candidate as necessary.
- 2.7 Professional Doctoral programmes consist of a taught element (Part 1) and a programme of supervised research leading to the preparation and submission of a thesis (Part 2). Such programmes conform to the principles of the following Regulations and are also subject to the regulations contained in Annex 1.

### **3. Research Degree Regulations**

#### **3.1 Scope of application**

- 3.1.1 These Regulations apply to programmes of study leading to the award of Master of Philosophy, Doctor of Philosophy, including the Doctor of Philosophy awarded on the basis of a portfolio of Published Works (see Annex 2), and Professional Doctorates (see Annex 1).

#### **3.2 Duration of Programmes**

- 3.2.1 The minimum and maximum periods of study for the awards covered by these Regulations are as listed below:

##### **Programme Lengths**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Minimum period of registration</b>	<b>Maximum period of registration</b>
PhD Full-time	30 months	48 months
PhD Part-time	48 months	84 months
PhD by Published Works Full-time	12 months	18 months
PhD by Published Works Part-time	18 months	24 months
Professional Doctorate Part-time	48 months	84 months

MPhil Full-time <sup>1</sup>	20 months	36 months
MPhil Part-time <sup>1</sup>	40 months	60 months

### 3.3 Admission

3.3.1 The minimum requirements for admission to a Research Degree programme of study are that an applicant should:

(i) Submit an outline research proposal with the potential to satisfy the criteria for the intended award;

AND

(ii) Normally possess a Master's degree which matches the descriptor for a Level 7 qualification in the UK Framework of Higher Qualifications;

OR An equivalent academic qualification;

OR Evidence of equivalent experience and learning acquired in a professional context;

(iii) Evidence of proficiency in spoken and written English at IELTS 6.5 in accordance with St Mary's standards for English language requirements.

3.3.2 An applicant may not be admitted to a research degree unless the applicant has first been accepted through the admissions procedures specified in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

3.3.3 For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of Published Works, applicants are required in addition to have an extensive record of Published Works which is admissible for consideration as academic work and must demonstrate that they can produce scholarly writing at an appropriate level. See Annex 2.

They will be required to provide evidence of:

(i) The publications on which the application is based must have been accepted for publication or published.

(ii) At least five publications as sole or senior co-author.

3.3.4 For the Professional Doctorates (see Annex 1), applicants should:

(i) Submit a summary statement to indicate how undertaking study at the level of a professional doctorate relates to the applicant's professional context;

(ii) Have at least three years' significant and relevant experience in a professional area appropriate to the programme of study.

3.3.5 An applicant will only be admitted to a research degree programme where:

(i) The University is able to provide appropriate supervision and training;

(ii) The applicant would have access to the necessary resources;

(iii) Any issues relating to commercial funding, intellectual property and research ethics have been considered and are being addressed appropriately.

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<sup>1</sup> MPhil is no longer offered as a standalone degree.

### **3.4 Exemption from part of the programme of study**

- 3.4.1 An applicant who has undertaken, but not completed a programme of postgraduate research at another university or at St Mary's University but has subsequently withdrawn from studies, may be considered for exemption from part of a programme of study at the University.
- 3.4.2 In order to qualify for consideration, the applicant's previous research must:
- (i) Correspond, in terms of the level and area of work, to the proposed project of research at the University;
  - (ii) Have been undertaken at a university, or a similar institution of appropriate standing and be certified by a competent officer at that institution;
  - (iii) Have been undertaken over a period of at least 12 months of full-time study, or 24 months of part-time study no more than seven years before the proposed date of initial registration at the University;
  - (iv) Not have been counted already towards the award of a Research Degree at any institution.
- 3.4.3 Applicants to Professional Doctorates may under exceptional circumstances request exemption, on the basis of prior certificated learning, from one or more of the Part One courses. Such students will be expected to complete the programme in less time than those admitted to study the full programme. The reduced duration will be calculated on the basis of the number of credits from which the student has been exempted, and shall be communicated to the student as part of the formal notification of the outcome of the request for exemption.
- 3.4.4 Applications for exemption are considered by the Research Degrees Committee before the applicant first registers on the programme of study. If the application is approved, the Committee will clarify whether any conditions apply.
- 3.4.5 In all cases a student must complete at least 12 months of full-time study or 18 months of part-time study at the University before submitting work for the final examination, subject also to the requirements of final submission.

### **3.5 Pre-registration**

- 3.5.1 Excluding applicants to Professional Doctorates and Doctor of Philosophy by Published Works, applicants who fulfil the admissions requirements and the potential to study for a PhD programme but whose proposal requires further development, may be offered the opportunity to pre-register on the programme. The pre-registration period is designed to enable students to develop their research proposals with the assistance of the proposed Director of Studies and the use of University resources.
- 3.5.2 The pre-registration period is for a maximum of twelve months and the applicant is required to enrol with and pay fees to the University.
- 3.5.3 During the pre-registration period, applicants work with potential supervisors to develop and improve their research proposal for submission with an accompanying application for full registration on the PhD programme.

### **3.6 Interim and Annual Monitoring Review**

- 3.6.1 Students will be required to undertake an interim and annual review with their supervisory team to monitor and support their progress, except for those students registered for PhD by Published Works or Part 1 of the Professional Doctorates (see Annexes 1 & 2).



### 3.6.2 The Interim Review

Directors of Study are required to produce an interim report on student progress against any previously determined objectives; identify any issues to note with the research supervisory arrangements or resources available, proposing strategies to overcome these; and a note of any actions required in the next six months to be revisited at the Annual Monitoring Review. The report will be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee for review and action as necessary.

### 3.6.3 The Annual Monitoring Review

The purpose of the annual monitoring review is to monitor the progress of each student on a regular yearly basis and to ensure that the supervisory process is working well.

3.6.4 Each student must submit an Annual Monitoring Report. This will usually be between May and July each year. A student who is taking an approved leave of absence at that time must submit instead an update of their plans not more than two months after re-registering. The Annual Monitoring Report comprises:

- (i) A record of the supervisions which have taken place over the previous year;
- (ii) A written account of work which has been undertaken and a plan of work which remains to be done, including where appropriate a plan for the format of the final submission;
- (iii) An account of research training undertaken by the student during the year, including sessions attended in person or accessed online on the Researcher Development Programme.

3.6.5 The Director of Studies will arrange a meeting between the student and all the members of the supervisory team to discuss the Annual Report and the student's progress generally. Each member of the supervisory team will add written comments to the Annual Monitoring Report, recording the outcomes of the meeting and giving views on the student's progress over the previous year and the plan of work which remains to be done.

3.6.6 The Annual Monitoring Report, including the supervisors' written comments, will be considered by the Research Degrees Committee against the following criteria:

- (i) Evidence of satisfactory progress over the previous year;
- (ii) Evidence that the student is working at an appropriate level;
- (iii) Evidence that any developments or changes to the project are appropriate and can be supported;
- (iv) Evidence that the plan of work which remains to be done can realistically be achieved within the normal period of study.

3.6.7 The Research Degrees Committee will determine any action to be taken in light of the Annual Monitoring Report. This may include:

- (i) Confirmation that progress satisfactory and that the student is eligible to re-register for the coming academic session;
- (ii) Confirmation that progress is not yet satisfactory and that re-assessment is required in order to become eligible to re-register for the coming academic session.
- (iii) An application to temporarily interrupt studies;
- (iv) Changes to the supervisory arrangements;
- (v) Progress is considered not satisfactory and studies are terminated or, in the

case of a student whose registration at PhD level has previously been confirmed in accordance with Regulation 3.7 below, a recommendation is made to re-register at MPhil level and submit within the MPhil timeframe outlined in Regulation 3.2 above.

- (vi) In exceptional circumstances, students may request to defer their annual monitoring review meeting due to mitigating circumstances as set out in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

3.6.8 A student will only be eligible for a single re-assessment opportunity in any given academic session. Where a student has been reassessed, the annual review will normally lead to one of the following two outcomes:

- (i) Progress now satisfactory: eligible to re-register for the coming academic session;
- (ii) A recommendation is made to re-register at exit award level and submit within the timeframe outlined in Regulation 3.2 above.
- (iii) Progress still not satisfactory: studies terminated.

### **3.7 Confirmation of Registration**

3.7.1 PhD students (excluding those who are on the route for a PhD by published work or are on Professional Doctorate programmes) will be required to have a formal confirmation review to confirm their registration.

3.7.2 Confirmation of registration will normally take place 15 to 24 months after registration for full-time students and 24 to 36 months for part-time students. 3.7.3

3.7.3 The Confirmation Review Report presented by the student must include supporting evidence as follows:

- (i) A significant piece of scholarly work produced by the student, such as draft chapters for the final submission of normally 20,000 words in length, or in the case of a student who is undertaking performance- or practice-based research, a combined submission of scholarly writing and creative work in the ratio which has been agreed with the supervisory team; the content of the piece of scholarly work should be such as to provide evidence demonstrating the student's ability to sustain work and scholarly writing at the doctoral level;
- (ii) A written account of work which has been undertaken and a plan of work which remains to be done, including a plan for the format of the final submission.

3.7.4 The Director of Studies will convene a panel composed of a chair, an independent reviewer and the supervisory team. The student will attend a panel event in which his/her work will be reviewed.

3.7.5 The Chair and the Independent Reviewer will:

- (i) Have undertaken confirmation training if they have had no prior experience of reviewing a confirmation;
- (ii) Not have had any involvement with the project or student that could give rise to a conflict of interest.

3.7.6 The Confirmation Registration panel will assess the application against the criteria set in the guidance and make recommendations on the outcome to the Research Degrees Committee

3.7.7 Evidence from the work which has been undertaken and the plan of work which remains to be done that the project has the potential to meet the requirements for the final submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, including the intended contribution of the research and its scope for originality;

3.7.8

- (i) The student be permitted to continue registration on the degree;

- (ii) Evidence demonstrating the student's ability to sustain work and scholarly writing at doctoral level;
- (iii) The adequacy of Progress to date with the programme of work and the suitability of any adjustments made to the project, including steps taken to address any problems which have been encountered;
- (iv) Evidence that the plan of work which remains to be done can realistically be achieved within the normal period of study;

### **3.8 Upgrade from MPhil to PhD (for legacy students initially registered on the MPhil Programme)**

- 3.8.1 Students who initially chose to register for an MPhil may apply, with the approval of their Director of Studies, to undertake the upgrade to PhD process.
- 3.8.2 This process is to determine, on the basis of the work which has been undertaken for the MPhil and the plan of work which remains to be done, whether a student who has registered initially for the degree of Master of Philosophy should be permitted to undertake further study with the aim of submitting work for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
- 3.8.3 The application to upgrade is normally made shortly after the student has produced a significant piece of scholarly work and should normally be submitted within two years of initial registration for full-time students and three years of initial registration for part-time students.
- 3.8.4 The application must include supporting evidence, as follows:
  - (i) A significant piece of scholarly work produced by the student, such as draft chapters for the final submission, with an indicative length of 15,000 to 20,000 words. For students undertaking performance- or practice-based research, an equivalent combined submission of scholarly writing and creative work in the ratio which has been agreed with the supervisory team should be submitted;
  - (ii) A written account of work which has been undertaken, work which is in progress, and a plan of work which remains to be carried out, including a plan for the format of the final submission (e.g. thesis chapter outline).
  - (iii) The content of the confirmation review report should be such as to provide evidence that demonstrates the student's ability to undertake research and communicate such work at doctoral level;
- 3.8.5 An upgrade panel will be convened by the Director of Studies, comprising an independent chair, an independent Reviewer and the supervisory team.
- 3.8.6 The upgrade panel will assess the application against the following criteria and make recommendations on the outcome to the Research Degrees Committee:
  - (i) Evidence from the work which has been undertaken and the plan of work which remains to be done and that the project has the potential to meet the requirements for the final submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, including the intended contribution of the research and its scope for originality;
  - (ii) Evidence demonstrating the student's ability to sustain work and scholarly writing at doctoral level;

- (iii) The adequacy of progress to date with the programme of work and the suitability of any adjustments made to the project, including steps taken address any problems which have been encountered;
  - (iv) Evidence that the plan of work which remains to be done can realistically be achieved within the normal period of study;
  - (v) The suitability of the chapter outline.
- 3.8.7 Having considered the upgrade panel's recommendations, the Research Degrees Committee will:
  - (i) Approve the upgrade to PhD; or
  - (ii) Not approve the upgrade to PhD and permit the student one further attempt; or
  - (iii) Not approve the upgrade and recommend that the student remains on the MPhil programme.
- 3.8.8 Upgrades which are approved are backdated to the date of the student's initial registration on the programme i.e. the maximum time allowed to submit the thesis will be calculated on the basis of the PhD durations set out in Regulation 3.2 starting from the date of initial registration for the MPhil.
- 3.8.9 If a student does not achieve the upgrade on the first attempt, s/he will be given one further opportunity to submit a revised application within three months or six months later for part-time students. The independent Reviewer will provide feedback on the student's first application within a reasonable period of time.
- 3.8.10 If a student does not achieve the upgrade after two attempts, or does not apply, they will remain registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy.
- 3.8.11 For a second examination, the only outcomes shall be:
  - (i) Progress justifies transfer: all subsequent annual registrations to be for PhD;
  - (ii) Progression unsatisfactory: remain on MPhil and all subsequent registrations to be MPhil;
  - (iii) Progress unsatisfactory: studies terminated.
- 3.8.12 A student who has achieved the upgrade may transfer back to the degree of Master of Philosophy at any time up to the date of entry for the final examination, in which case the Research Degrees Committee will clarify the period of study and any deadlines or other conditions which apply.
- 3.9 Change to mode of study**
  - 3.9.1 Except for those undertaking Professional Doctorates, which are studied part-time, students may, at any point up to one year before the end of the maximum duration between initial registration and the submission of the thesis or portfolio, formally request a transfer from part-time study to full-time study or vice-versa.
  - 3.9.2 Such requests shall be initially considered by the Director of Studies and the supervisory team. The Director of Studies will submit a recommendation to the Research Degrees Committee for approval. Registry Services will inform the student that the change of mode of study has been approved and the student's programme end date will be adjusted accordingly.

### **3.10 Extensions and leave of absence**

3.10.1 A student retains the right to permanently withdraw from a research degree.

#### **3.10.2 Extension of Studies**

The Research Degrees Committee will consider requests for an extension where there has been:

- (i) Failure or unavailability of specialist equipment or resources required for research that causes significant delay to progress that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal;
- (ii) A gap in supervision where a supervisor leaves or is absent for more than three months and cover has not been put in place that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal. There will need to be a demonstrable impact on the progress of the project;
- (iii) Where there has been a breakdown in the supervisory team/student relationship that has impeded progression on the programme. This will need to be evidenced by notes from meetings with either the supervisory team, Doctoral Programme Lead or Research Services;
- (iv) Physical and/or mental health-related circumstances that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal.

3.10.3 A student may apply for an extension of up to six months to the maximum period of registration or re-submission period, by submitting a request to the Research Degrees Committee. If a student is not granted an extension and has reached the maximum period of registration, then their registration will be terminated on the grounds that it has lapsed. A request for extension requires the support of the supervisory team.

3.10.4 All requests for extension will be made by the student on the standard pro-forma and accompanied by supporting evidence. Requests for extension without supporting evidence will not be considered by the Research Degrees Committee. Students are required to provide a timeline for submission with interim, testable milestones.

3.10.5 Students in receipt of funding are advised to check the terms of their scholarship before making a request for extension. International students are also advised to check their visa status before making a request for extension.

3.10.6 Retrospective applications for extensions will not be considered without valid extenuating circumstances.

#### **3.10.7 Leave of absence**

The Research Degrees Committee will consider requests for a leave of absence where there has been:

- (i) Bereavement through the death of a close relative or significant other that in employment would lead to a reasonable employer to grant compassionate leave. In such cases the Committee will require independent evidence of the nature of the relationship;
- (ii) Serious short-term illness or accident of a nature that, in employment, would lead a reasonable employer to agree absence on sick leave;
- (iii) A long-term (chronic) health problem suddenly worsening;

- (iv) For part-time students in full-time employment only, a significant increase in their workload due to circumstances beyond their control. Those on the full-time programme who experience similar circumstances will be encouraged to change to part-time study, in the first instance;
    - A period of maternity, paternity, or adoption leave taken;
    - A gap in supervision where a supervisor leaves or is absent for more than three months and cover has not been put in place;
  - (iv) A break down in the supervisory team/student relationship resulting in a material impact on the progress of the project;
  - (v) A recommendation from Student Wellbeing Services for a learning adjustment that necessitates a temporary withdrawal;
  - (vi) Difficulties in research beyond the student's control;
  - (vii) Failure or unavailability of specialist equipment or resources required for research that causes significant delay to progress;
  - (viii) Other exceptional circumstances.
- 3.10.8 Where a leave of absence is approved, the student's registration will be extended by the same period of time as the withdrawal period.
- 3.10.9 Retrospective applications for leave of absence will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.10.10 Students in receipt of funding are advised to check the terms of their scholarship before making a request for temporary withdrawal. International students are also advised to check their visa status before making a request for temporary withdrawal.

### **3.11 Causes of concern**

#### **Unsatisfactory academic progress**

- 3.11.1 A student's registration may be terminated on the grounds of unsatisfactory academic progress. Consideration of academic progress is undertaken at the interim and annual review points during each academic year as well as the confirmation of registration review and upgrade, where requested, from MPhil to PhD. The recommendation will be ratified by the Research Degrees Committee.

#### **Loss of contact**

- 3.11.2 In cases where the student appears to have withdrawn from the research degree and failed to make contact with the Faculty/Institute (normally for three months or more), it will be sufficient for a recommendation of termination to be made to the Research Degrees Committee solely on the basis of evidence showing that reasonable efforts have been made to contact the student at the last email provided and warning the student of the consequences of not contacting the Faculty/Institute within ten working days.

#### **Fitness to study**

- 3.11.3 The University's Fitness to Study Policy - <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/policies/fitness-to-study.aspx> applies to research students and should be consulted where there are concerns about a student's fitness to study and/or practice.

### **3.12 The Supervisory Team**

- 3.12.1 Each student will be assigned a Director of Studies and, except for those on Part 1 of the Professional Doctorates, one research supervisor as a minimum.
- 3.12.2 In addition to the Director of Studies and research supervisor/s, a research adviser may be allocated to a supervisory team due to their specific subject specialist knowledge pertinent to the student's programme of research.
- 3.12.3 The Faculty/Institute Doctoral Programme Lead, who is responsible for the overview of the research degree programmes in each Faculty/Institute will follow the process for changing a supervisory team as outlined in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and seek approval from the Research Degrees Committee for any changes to supervisory teams.
- 3.12.4 Students will have a minimum number of supervisory sessions per calendar year as specified in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes
- 3.12.5 Students and supervisors will agree at the outset a programme of discipline-specific and skills courses, as necessary. Students and supervisors will regularly review this and formally report on progress every six months.
- 3.12.6 Student progress will be formally monitored at six-month intervals through the interim review and end of year review procedures (see Regulation 3.6).
- 3.12.7 The responsibilities of members of the supervisory team are set out in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

#### **Director of Studies**

- 3.12.8 The Director of Studies will be responsible for the overall direction and development of the student's programme of study. They will normally:
- (i) Hold a doctoral award;
  - (ii) Possess academic expertise in an area relevant to the student's discipline;
  - (iii) Hold the non-probationary appointment of Professor, Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow or Research Fellow at the University and have an expectation of holding such an appointment with the University for the remainder of the student's period of study;
  - (iv) Have a minimum of one successful completion at doctoral programme level.

#### **Research Supervisor**

- 3.12.9 The research supervisor should normally be:
- (i) Hold an appointment as Professor, Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Research Fellow, Professorial Teaching Fellow, Senior Teaching Fellow and Teaching Fellow and have an expectation of holding such an appointment with the University for the remainder of the student's period of study, or else should be a suitably qualified and experienced individual from outside the University;
  - (ii) Hold a doctoral award and;
  - (iii) Have had prior experience of supervising at doctoral level for at least one year;

- (iv) Possess academic expertise in an area relevant to the student's discipline.

### **Research Adviser**

3.12.10 A research adviser may be appointed in situations where additional expertise is required which would be of benefit to the research student and project. The appointed advisor should normally:

- (i) Hold a doctoral award and/or;
- (ii) Be a member of academic staff or a post-doctoral researcher and/or
- (iii) Possess academic expertise in an area relevant to the student's discipline.
- (iv) Prior experience of supervising doctoral students is not necessary.

Refer to the [supervisor policy](#) for further guidance.

### **3.13 Completing status**

3.13.1 A student may apply to register at the beginning of an academic year in the completing status mode whilst they are in the final stages of preparing the thesis or portfolio. The following criteria must be fulfilled for a student to transfer to the completing status mode:

- (i) That the Director of Studies confirm that they are satisfied that submission of the thesis or portfolio within six months is feasible;
- (ii) That all data collection is complete and the students will no longer be using specialist resources for their research.

3.13.2 In order for the request to be considered, the following must be provided:

- (i) A detailed plan covering both student and supervisory team responsibilities for submission within the first six months of completing status or by the end of registration, if completing status will last for fewer than six months;
- (ii) A draft table of contents for the thesis;
- (iii) An indication on the annual monitoring review outcome that the supervisory team supports the transfer to completing status.

3.13.3 The application to register for completing status will be agreed by the Doctoral Programme Lead (or equivalent) in the Faculty/Institute and will be approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

3.13.4 If the thesis is not submitted within the initial six-month period of completing status, then an updated plan for submission within the remaining period of registration will be required in order to continue on completing status.

3.13.5 Retrospective applications for completing status will not be considered.

### **3.14 Examination of Research Degrees**

**Requirements for the final submission for the degree of MPhil, Professional**

**Doctorates or PhD (except that by Published Works)**

3.14.1 Except for the provisions of (b) below, the final submission for the degree of Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy will comprise a piece of scholarly writing with a full



bibliography and references. The submission will not exceed 60,000 words for the degree of Master of Philosophy and the Professional Doctorate programme and 100,000 words for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The word counts include references in the text, footnotes and endnotes but exclude the bibliography and any appendices.

- 3.14.2 A student who has undertaken performance- or practice-based research may include in the final submission, creative work which has been generated as an integral part of the research process and that, together with the piece of scholarly writing, substantiates the argument(s) of the research project. The form that the final submission takes will be determined at the point of project confirmation, so that the piece of scholarly writing is a minimum of between 20,000 and 30,000 words in length and the scope of the submission as a whole meets the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy, as appropriate. The final submission must be accompanied, where appropriate, by an archival record (such as video or photographic record) of the candidate's practice. Such a record must be in a standard retrievable form.
- 3.14.3 An electronic (pdf) version of the thesis will be submitted to Research Services for distribution. The thesis or portfolio will be temporarily bound before it is examined.
- 3.14.4 No alterations or additions may be made to a thesis or portfolio after it has been submitted, except with the agreement of the examiners.
- 3.14.5 Following recommendation by the examiners that an award be made, the final version of record of the thesis or portfolio will be uploaded by the student to the University's online open-access research archive (SORA).
- 3.14.6 The final submission must be presented after the minimum period of study for the relevant award and before the individual student's period of study has expired.

### **3.15 Examiners**

- 3.15.1 A student will be examined normally by at least two and not more than three examiners, at least one of whom must be external and one internal to the University.
- 3.15.2 Where the candidate is a member of staff at the University, both examiners will be external.
- 3.15.3 The examiners will be approved by the Research Degrees Committee on the recommendation of the Director of Studies. The aim of the approval process is to appoint examiners who will be able, and be seen to be able, to make a fair and independent assessment of the candidate and his/her work and to ensure the good standing of St Mary University research degrees through the consistent application of appropriate academic standards. To this end:
  - (i) The examiners will be of sufficient authority in the area to be examined to command the respect of the wider academic community;
  - (ii) The examiners will be familiar with current standards and procedures of research degrees in the UK and at least one of the examiners will have previous experience of examining a doctoral award in the UK;
  - (iii) The examiners individually will be experts in current research in the area to be examined; whilst it is accepted that each examiner individually may not have expertise in all parts of the precise topic, the examiners together should be able to cover sufficiently all aspects of the work to be presented by the student;

- 3.15.4 The examiners will be able to make an independent assessment of the student's work and will not previously have played an active role in supporting his/her academic progress on the programme of study, nor have had any other involvement with the student or with members of the supervisory team which might reasonably lead to an allegation of bias, or an allegation they could have a personal interest in the outcome of the examination.
- 3.15.5 Following his/her formal approval by the Research Degrees Committee, each examiner will be sent a letter of appointment and details of the University's rules, regulations and guidelines for the assessment of Research Degrees.
- 3.15.6 An external examiner would not examine more than three candidates of the University in any five-year period without permission from the Research Degrees Committee.
- 3.15.7 An independent Chair will be recommended by the Doctoral Programme Lead (or equivalent) and approved, together with the examiners, by the Research Degrees Committee.
- 3.15.8 The independent Chair will be a senior member of academic staff of the University with experience of and training in the University's procedures for examining research students. They will:
  - (i) Not have, nor have previously had, a personal relationship with the student;
  - (ii) Not have had any professional relationship with the student which may give rise to a conflict of interest (e.g. supervisory, collaborative research, co-authoring of papers);
  - (iii) Have experience of examining at doctoral level.

### **3.16 Examination arrangements**

- 3.16.1 The examination for the MPhil and PhD will have two stages: firstly, preliminary assessment of the thesis or portfolio and secondly its defence by oral or approved alternative examination.
- 3.16.2 The Director of Studies will make known to the student the procedure to be followed for the submission of the thesis or portfolio (including the number of copies to be submitted for examination) and any conditions to be satisfied before the student may be considered eligible for examination.
- 3.16.3 The Director of Studies will arrange for the student, all supervisors, Research Services and the examiners to be notified of the date of the oral examination (viva voce).
- 3.16.4 Research Services will send a copy of the thesis or portfolio to each examiner, together with the examiner's preliminary report form and the University's Regulations and Doctoral and MPhil Viva Voce examinations - Guidelines for Examiners, and should ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.
- 3.16.5 Each examiner must read and examine the thesis or portfolio and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent preliminary report on it to Research Services.
- 3.16.6 In completing the preliminary report, each examiner should consider whether the thesis or portfolio provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as set out in Regulation 2.3 and 2.4) and, where possible, make an appropriate provisional

Recommendation, subject to the outcome of the oral examination.

3.16.7 Research Services must ensure that all the examiners have completed and returned their preliminary reports to the University before the oral examination takes place. These reports will be shared with the examiners and independent Chair.

3.16.8 Following the viva voce examination, the independent Chair will submit a joint recommendation examination report from the internal and external examiners to Research Services.

### **Conduct of the viva voce examination**

3.16.9 The viva voce examination should normally be held not less than 30 days and not more than 90 days after submission of the thesis.

3.16.10 The content of the thesis, the conduct of the examination of a student and matters related thereto shall be regarded as confidential to those taking part in the examination and to appropriate officers of the University until such time as the outcomes of the examination are agreed by the Research Degrees Committee.

3.16.11 The viva voce examination is concerned with the content of the thesis, ensuring that the work is the student's own, and any related matters which the examiners consider appropriate. Examiners will be expected to include in their judgement, consideration as to whether and the extent to which a thesis is contributing to the literature and could thereby easily lend itself to publication in academic journals. The student should expect to be questioned by the examiners on matters including: the focus of the research, the applied value/implications of the research, existing literature, the methodology used, the conduct of the research, the outcomes and conclusions.

3.16.12 The viva voce examination will be conducted in the presence of the examiners at St Mary's University in Twickenham. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the Research Degrees Committee, the examination may be arranged at another venue, provided all parties, including the student, agree. Subject to the approval of the Research Degrees Committee, the viva voce examination may take place via video-conference.

3.16.13 One member of the supervisory team may be present at the viva voce examination. However, a candidate may request not to allow a member of their supervisory team to be present in the viva voce examination. Such requests should be made in writing directly to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee. The member of the supervisory team must not participate in the examination and may only speak at the behest of the independent chair.

3.16.14 No persons other than the above shall be present at or otherwise take part in the viva voce examination, however other supervisor(s) may be present for the examiners verbal recommendations after the viva.

3.16.14 Recording of the oral exam will not normally be permitted.

### **3.17 Examination outcomes**

3.17.1 Following the oral exam, the examiners should, where they agree, submit, on the appropriate form, via the independent chair, a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree to Research Services.

3.17.2 Following the completion of the examination, the examiners may recommend one of the following outcomes:

- (i) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should be awarded
- (ii) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should be awarded subject to corrections being made to the submission within three months. The corrections shall be of a level which does not require re-assessment, but one or more of the examiners shall be asked to verify that the corrections have been made before the degree is awarded.
- (iii) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should be awarded, subject to corrections of substance being made to the submission within six months. The corrections shall be of a level which does not require re-assessment, but one or more of the examiners shall be asked to verify that the corrections have been made before the degree is awarded.
- (iv) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should not be awarded, but the student may resubmit work for assessment within 12 months, with or without a further oral examination. The student will be required to re-enrol with the University during that time and will be entitled to supervision in accordance with University guidelines. The resubmission will be examined where possible by the same examiners who assessed the first submission. A student shall be given only one opportunity to resubmit.
- (v) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should not be awarded, but the degree of Master of Philosophy should be awarded under the PhD regulations subject to corrections being made to the submission within three months. The corrections shall be of a level which does not require re-assessment, but one or more of the examiners shall be asked to verify that the corrections have been made before the degree is awarded.
- (vi) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should not be awarded, but the student may resubmit work for assessment for the degree of Master of Professional Studies (MProf) within 12 months, with or without a further oral examination. The student will be required to re-enrol with the University during that time and will be entitled to supervision in accordance with University guidelines. The resubmission will be examined where possible by the same examiners who assessed the first submission. A student shall be given only one opportunity to resubmit.
- (vii) The student should fail the examination without an opportunity to resubmit and the student's registration should be terminated.

### **Submission of revised thesis following minor and major revisions**

3.17.3 If specified minor revisions are required to the thesis, the independent Chair will inform the student, supervisory team, and Research Services, of the nature of the corrections in the form of a written list.<sup>1</sup> The internal examiner will certify that any specified, minor revisions have been carried out satisfactorily. The recommendation of the examiners will be considered and approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

3.17.4 If specified major revisions are required to the thesis, the independent Chair will inform the student, supervisory team and Research Services of the nature of the corrections in the form of a written list.

3.17.5 Students will be required to submit a statement listing (with page number specified), the changes made against the changes required by the examiners.

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<sup>1</sup> The examiners may indicate in general terms a need to correct grammar and/or spelling, and, in addition, may return to the student an annotated copy of the thesis or portfolio.

3.17.6 Where there are major revisions, the independent Chair will ask the examiners to certify the completion of the major revisions. The recommendation of the examiners will be considered and approved by the Research Degrees Committee:

- (i) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should be awarded
- (ii) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should be awarded subject to corrections being made to the submission within three months. The corrections shall be of a level which does not require re-assessment, but one or more of the examiners shall be asked to verify that the corrections have been made before the degree is awarded.
- (iii) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should not be awarded, but the degree of Master of Philosophy should be awarded under the PhD regulations subject to corrections being made to the submission within three months. The corrections shall be of a level which does not require re-assessment, but one or more of the examiners shall be asked to verify that the corrections have been made before the degree is awarded.
- (iv) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy should not be awarded, but the student may resubmit work for assessment for the degree of Master of Professional Studies (MProf) within 12 months, with or without a further oral examination. The student will be required to re-enrol with the University during that time and will be entitled to supervision in accordance with University guidelines. The resubmission will be examined where possible by the same examiners who assessed the first submission. A student shall be given only one opportunity to resubmit.
- (v) The student should fail the examination without an opportunity to resubmit and the student's registration should be terminated.

**Re-submission of revised thesis for re-examination**

3.17.7 A student may submit a revised thesis once only, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee.

3.17.8 A student will be informed in writing within a reasonable period after the viva voce of the reasons for the examiners' rejection of the original thesis, normally by being sent by the independent Chair a statement of requirements prepared by the examiners listing the principal aspects of the thesis which require improvement, a copy of which will be appended to the Examination Report Form.

3.17.9 The student is entitled to supervisory support in the form of monthly meetings during the resubmission period.

3.17.10 In the case of any re-submission of a revised thesis for re-examination, the student will be liable for additional fees.

3.17.11 Students will be required to complete an Intention to Submit form again but the original examination team will remain in place.

3.17.12 A revised thesis shall normally be examined by the original examiners but the Research Degrees Committee may appoint different examiners in exceptional cases. Examiners may not recommend re-submission for a second time but may make one of the following recommendations, as appropriate, and should do so within 90 days of receipt of the revised thesis:

- (i) That the degree be awarded;

- (ii) That the degree be awarded, subject to specified, minor revisions<sup>1</sup> being made to the thesis or portfolio to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within a period not exceeding three months;
- (iii) That for those students registered for the degree of PhD, that the degree not be awarded but that the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded, if appropriate, after specified minor revisions have been made to the thesis or portfolio, and if the student submits the thesis for that degree within six months;
- (iv) That the degree not be awarded and the student will be withdrawn from the programme.

#### **Disagreement between the examiners**

3.17.13 In the case of disagreement between the examiners, the Chair should mediate to endeavour to help the examiners reach an agreed position. Where this is not possible the Chair will bring the issue to the attention of the Research Degrees Committee in the form of a report. The Research Degrees Committee will consider and decide on next options.

### **3.18 Copyright and intellectual property**

3.18.1 Dissemination of knowledge is one of the objectives of the University. Copies of theses and portfolios accepted for research degrees are stored in an open-access research archive and are available for anyone to consult. The thesis is the intellectual property of the student and as such, they own the copyright. Students are therefore advised to mark the thesis as copyright once they submit the final document following approval from the examiners.

3.18.2 Students are required to deposit their thesis in the St Mary's Open Research Archive prior to graduation. If there is a legitimate reason why the thesis should be embargoed, e.g. commercial sensitivity or confidentiality, students should follow the appropriate procedure.

3.18.3 Postgraduate research students are required to adhere to the University's Intellectual Property Policy.

### **3.19 Award and Conferment**

3.19.1 The degree shall be awarded to a successful student by the Research Degree Committee on behalf of Academic Board. The date of the award shall be the date on which the degree is awarded by the Research Degrees Committee.

3.19.2 Degrees shall be formally conferred at a congregation held for the purpose. After the formal conferment, each graduate shall be given a degree certificate. The certificate shall either be handed to the graduate or sent through the ordinary post to the student's address as listed in the University records. A replacement certificate can be issued only on receipt of a written request from the graduate and on payment of the appropriate fee.

3.19.3 No student shall be entitled to the award of a degree unless all fees for tuition have been paid and any other outstanding debts to the University cleared (e.g. Library fines).

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<sup>1</sup> "Minor revisions" are those which do not involve further supervision or any further original research. Such additions might include, for example, additional sentences, tables, paragraphs or pages but not normally additional chapters. They may additionally include specified minor corrections.

### **3.20 Appeals and complaints**

- 3.20.1 The grounds for and procedures for appeals are set out in the University's Academic Appeals Policy and the grounds and procedures for complaints are set out in the Student Complaints Procedure.

### **3.21 Academic Misconduct**

- 3.21.1 The grounds of academic misconduct are set out in the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure.

# Annex 1 - Regulations for Professional Doctorates

## 1. Structure of Programme

- 1.1. All Professional Doctorate programmes will consist of 540 credits equating to 10 hours of student engagement per module.
- 1.2. The intended learning outcomes for all taught elements (Part One) of Professional Doctorate programmes will be constructed to match the University's Qualification Descriptors for the award of Master's degrees.
- 1.3. All Professional Doctorate programmes will consist of two parts as follows:

### Part One (Taught Courses)

- 1.4. A taught course approved for the student's route to the value of 180 credits, of which all 180 credits will be at Level 7, and 60 credits will be specifically devoted to preparation for the thesis (Part Two), to include the development by the student of a formal research proposal.

### Part Two

- 1.5 The preparation and submission of a thesis as set out in the Regulations for Research Degrees.

## 2. Duration of Programme

### Normal durations

- 2.1 Students will normally complete Part One over a period of two years part-time.

### Minimum and Maximum duration

- 2.2 Students will submit their final thesis no earlier than four years and no later than seven years' after initial registration.

### Extended Durations for Part One

- 2.3 In the event of evidence demonstrating exceptional mitigating circumstances, the relevant Board of Examiners will be empowered to extend the maximum duration allowed to complete Part One by a maximum of one year.

## 3. Assessment of Taught Courses

- 3.1 Except where specified otherwise, taught courses will be assessed and moderated in line with the St Mary University's University Assessment Criteria.
- 3.2 For the Level M [7] courses, the marking scale used will be the University's scale for taught Masters Degrees.

## 4. External Examiners

- 4.1 Normally, one External Examiner will be appointed for each route. They will be required to submit an annual report in accordance with standard procedures.



## 5. Standard Progression Points

- 5.1 The Board of Examiners will, on an annual basis, review the progress of those students who have not yet undertaken all the assessment required for Part One.
- 5.2 The Board will normally determine that such students are eligible to continue with their studies UNLESS:
- a. The student has failed, without providing evidence of mitigating circumstances, to undertake tasks expected of them; or
  - b. The student will be unable, as a result of leave of absence, reassessments or some other cause, to complete Part One by the deadline specified.
- 5.3 The Board will determine, for each module undertaken, whether students have gained a Pass with Merit result or are eligible for a redemption opportunity. The Board will also stipulate the date by which any redemption opportunity shall be completed.

## 6. Completion of Part One and Eligibility to be Assessed for Progression to Part Two

6.1 The Board of Examiners will, normally at the end of the second year after initial registration, review the eligibility of students to complete Part One and to be assessed for to progress to Part Two.

6.2 The Board's decisions will normally be in accordance with the following regulations:

- a. In order to be eligible to complete Part One, a student will normally be required to have passed or been granted exemption from] taught courses to the value of 180 credits;
- b. In order to be eligible to be assessed for progression to Part Two, a student will normally be required to have achieved, in the 180 credits of Part One, a level of performance commensurate with the University's regulations for the award of a Master's degree with Merit [the Research Proposal being treated as the equivalent of a Dissertation];
- c. Students who fail to achieve a Pass with Merit grade for one or more taught courses will normally be eligible to undertake further assessment by a date to be specified by the Board;
- d. Students who fail a reassessment for one or more taught courses, or who obtain less than 25 on the initial assessment for one of more taught courses, shall normally be eligible to retake the relevant course[s] with attendance on one occasion;
- e. No student will normally be offered an opportunity to redeem a fail if, by so doing, the student would exceed the maximum period allowed for the completion of Part One.
- f. Students who are eligible to be assessed for progression to Part Two, but who formally indicate to Research Services that they wish to discontinue their studies, will be eligible for the award of a Master's degree [any eligibility for an award with Merit or Distinction will be determined in accordance with the University's regulations for taught postgraduate programmes];

- g. Students who gain 180 credits, but EITHER remain ineligible, following the redemption opportunities outlined above, to be assessed for progression to Part Two, OR who formally indicate to Research Services that they wish to discontinue their studies, will be eligible for the award of a Master's degree [without Merit or Distinction];
- h. Students who gain 60-179 credits, but EITHER remain ineligible, following the redemption opportunities outlined above, to complete Part One, OR who formally indicate to Research Services that they wish to discontinue their studies, may be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate or a Postgraduate Diploma [any eligibility for such an award will be determined in accordance with the University's regulations for taught postgraduate programmes].

## **7. Progression to Part Two**

- 7.1 Where the Board of Examiners determines that a student is eligible to be assessed for progression to Part Two, the student will be required to attend a Confirmation of Doctoral Registration Interview conducted by the Supervisory Team Designate and an Independent Chair within one month of the final marks having been uploaded the student records system.
- 7.2 The Confirmation of Doctoral Registration Interview will focus on the potential of the student's Research Proposal to lead to research that meets doctoral standards, and will normally lead to one of the following four outcomes:
  - The student may progress to Part Two of the Professional Doctorate;
  - The student is not yet eligible to progress to Part Two, but is required to undergo a second interview, to be held no later no later than three months after the publication of the outcome of the first interview;
  - The student is not yet eligible to progress to Part Two and is required to revise the Research Proposal AND undergo a second interview, to be held no later than three months after the publication of the outcome of the first interview;
  - The student is not eligible to progress to Part Two, and so is to be awarded a Master's degree with Merit.

For a second Confirmation of Doctoral Registration Interview, the only outcomes will be:

- The student may progress to Part Two of the Professional Doctorate;
- The student is not eligible to progress to Part Two, and so is to be awarded Master's degree with Merit.

## **8. Boards of Examiners**

- 8.1 For Part One, each Route will, in common with other taught programmes, have its own Examination Board which shall operate in accordance with the St Mary University's Assessment Regulations.

8.2 The final task of this Board will be to confirm a student's eligibility for assessment for progression to Part Two.

## **9. Professional Master's Degrees**

9.1 Candidates who complete Part One but either do not complete Part Two or whose thesis is judged to have Failed, will be eligible for the award of a Master's degree.

9.2 The degrees will be classified in accordance with St Mary University's standard regulations governing the granting of Master's awards with Merit or Distinction.

## Annex 2 - Regulations for PhD by Published Works

### 1. Eligibility

1.1 Applicants may apply for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Works on the basis that they fulfil the general admissions criteria for the Research Degree Programme (Regulation 3.3 above) and that:

- There are at least five single-authored or ~~co~~-senior authored publications. If a publication is co-authored, then the candidate must provide written evidence of their contribution to the publication
- The publications on which the application is based must have been accepted for publication or published

### 2. Application

2.1 An applicant will only be admitted to a research degree programme where:

- The University is able to provide appropriate supervision.
- The applicant would have access to the necessary resources including access to library, doctoral study space and Researcher Development Programmes.
- Any issues relating to commercial funding, intellectual property and research ethics have been considered and are being addressed appropriately.

2.2 The applicant will send to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee:

(i) a list of the publications on which the application is based; (ii) a

cover letter of no more than 1000 words outlining:

- the area(s) in which the applicant has been working
- a brief description of the research undertaken
- a statement as to when and where the research was undertaken
- for any co-authored works, a statement as to the contribution the applicant made to the publication
- the applicant will also declare if any of the works on which the application is based have formed part of the submission for any other degree awarded to the candidate. Works submitted for another degree awarded to the candidate will not be accepted in the submission;
- Evidence (possibly as appendices) that issues around ethical approval, commercial funding and intellectual property have been properly considered.

(iii) a letter of support for the application from an academic who knows the applicant professionally.

### Role of the Research Degrees Committee

2.3 The Research Degrees Committee will review the application in order to determine:

- whether or not the applicant meets the eligibility criteria to be a candidate for the award
- whether or not the applicant has made a sufficiently strong case for candidature

- 2.4 The Faculty PGR Lead will refer the case to an independent reviewer. The independent reviewer will be an active researcher in an area related to the application and will not have had any personal or professional involvement with the applicant which may give rise to a conflict of interest. The independent reviewer may be internal or external to St Mary's University. The report of the independent reviewer will be brought before the Research Degrees Committee. If there is a lack of clarity about whether a publication has been peer-reviewed in the usual way, two independent reviewers will be appointed to review the application.

### **Application approval**

- 2.5 The Research Degrees Committee will be responsible for the approval or rejection of the application. A decision to approve an applicant for candidature will be made in the Committee's best judgement. However, it must be clearly understood that the Committee is neither qualified nor empowered to predict the outcome of the examination process: this judgement can only be made by the examiners.

### **Application rejection**

- 2.6 Where the Research Degrees Committee rejects an application, the applicant is at liberty to submit a revised application on one occasion only, on the condition that the revised application demonstrates a significant improvement such as demonstrates a significant improvement in addressing the concerns of the RDC.

## **3. Supervisors**

- 3.1 Upon approval of candidature for the degree, the candidate will be allocated to a Faculty/Institute and the Faculty/Institute Doctoral Programme Lead will appoint a supervisory team (Director of Studies and Research Supervisor).

## **4. Examination Arrangements**

### **4.1 Submission of Published Works**

- 4.2 Within twelve months of confirmation of candidature, a candidate is required to submit to Research Services one temporarily bound copy of the submission for each examiner.
- 4.3 Candidates need to ensure that the range of publications demonstrates that their work forms a coherent and significant contribution to knowledge or scholarship. This should be of an acceptable national or, preferably, international, standing. For a substantial proportion of all the publications submitted, the candidate must be the sole or senior author. The work submitted must, in aggregate, be broadly comparable in quality and quantity to that expected to be embodied in a PhD thesis in the same discipline.
- 4.4 The submission will consist of:
- A bound portfolio of works accompanied by an analytical commentary that explains the unifying themes that run through the research and places the works in the context of existing work in the field and the applicant's research career. This section should be between 10,000 and 15,000 words in length.
  - In cases where the works are jointly authored by the applicant and other persons, the analytical section should also describe the roles played by those joint authors and contain percentage estimates of the applicant's input into each jointly authored work.

- appendices – candidates may wish to submit a full CV and any additional publications which do not form a part of the submission but which may help the examiners to see how the candidate’s research has developed over time
- 4.5 A student will be required to notify the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee (via their Director of Studies) of their intention to submit their work, using an Intention to Submit Form, at least two months and maximum six months prior to submission.
- 4.6 Successful submission will trigger a change to the student’s registration status to ‘submission pending’ and authorise the Director of Studies to initiate the process for the selection and appointment of examiners.
- 4.7 The Director of Studies will be required to complete an examination entry form no later than two months before the work is presented and approved by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.

### **Lapsed registration**

- 4.8 The registration of a candidate who fails to submit the thesis within eighteen months of confirmation candidature will be deemed to have lapsed and will be terminated except in the case of Extenuating Circumstances presented to the University EC Board.

## **5 Examination Process**

- 5.1 The examiners will be nominated by the Director of Studies. The appointment of the examination panel is subject to the approval of the Research Degrees Committee.

### **Examination Panel**

- 5.2 The Director of Studies must ensure that the examiners are familiar with/accepting of the selected presentation format.
- 5.3 Upon despatch of the thesis, examiners should be reminded that it includes Published Works.
- 5.4 The candidate will be examined by viva voce. The examination shall be conducted by at least two examiners. In the case of students who are also St Mary’s University staff, all examiners will be external to the University.
- 5.5 The examiners will be approved by the Research Degrees Committee on the recommendation of the Director of Studies. The aim of the approval process is to appoint examiners who will be able, and be seen to be able, to make a fair and independent assessment of the candidate and his/her work and to ensure the good standing of St Mary University research degrees through the consistent application of appropriate academic standards. To this end:
- The examiners will be of sufficient authority in the area to be examined to command the respect of the wider academic community;
  - The examiners will be familiar with current standards and procedures of research degrees in the UK and at least one of the examiners will have previous experience of examining a doctoral award in the UK;
  - The examiners individually will be experts in current research in the area to be examined; whilst it is accepted that each examiner individually may not have expertise in all parts of the precise topic, the examiners together should be able to cover sufficiently all aspects of the work to be presented by the student;
  - The examiners will be able to make an independent assessment of the

student's work and will not previously have played an active role in supporting his/her academic progress on the programme of study, nor have had any other involvement with the student or with members of the supervisory team which might reasonably lead to an allegation of bias, or an allegation they could have a personal interest in the outcome of the examination.

5.6 Following his/her formal approval by the Research Degrees Committee, each examiner will be sent a letter of appointment and details of the University's rules, regulations and guidelines for the assessment of Research Degrees.

5.4 An external examiner would not examine more than three candidates of the University in any five-year period without permission from the Research Degrees Committee.

5.5 An independent Chair will be recommended by the Doctoral Programme Lead and approved, together with the examiners, by the Research Degrees Committee.

5.6 The independent Chair will be a senior member of academic staff of the University with experience of and training in the University's procedures for examining research students. They will:

- Not have, nor have previously had, a personal relationship with the student;
- Not have had any professional relationship with the student which may give rise to a conflict of interest (eg supervisory, collaborative research, co-authoring of papers);
- Have experience of examining at doctoral level.

### **Viva voce examination**

5.7 The viva voce examination should normally be held not less than 30 days and not more than 90 days after submission of the thesis. Only with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee, the written agreement of the examiners and the candidate, the viva voce examination may exceptionally be held earlier.

5.8 The content of the thesis, the conduct of the examination of a candidate and matters related thereto shall be regarded as confidential to those taking part in the examination and to appropriate officers of the University until such time as the outcomes of the examination are agreed by the University.

5.9 Each appointed examiner will receive a copy of the thesis to be examined in advance of the viva voce examination and will prepare an independent, written report on the content and style of the thesis in advance of the examination. The reports will be submitted and considered at the viva voce examination.

5.10 The viva voce examination is concerned with the content of the thesis and any related matters which the examiners consider appropriate. The candidate should expect to be questioned by the examiners on matters including: the focus of the research, the existing literature, the methodology used, the conduct of the research, the outcomes and conclusions.

5.11 The viva voce examination shall be conducted in the presence of the examiners at the University in Twickenham. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the Research Degrees Committee, the examination may be arranged at another venue, provided all parties, including the student, agree. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the Research Degrees Committee, the viva voce examination may take place via video conference.

5.11 One member of the supervisory team may be present at the viva voce examination. However, a candidate may request not to allow a member of their supervisory team to be present in the viva voce examination. Such requests should be made in writing directly to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee. The member of the supervisory team must not participate in the examination and may only speak at the behest of the independent chair.

5.12 No persons other than the above shall be present at or otherwise take part in the viva voce examination.

5.13 In examining the candidate, the examiners should determine whether the works submitted show that the candidate had carried out a programme of research at least comparable with that required to prepare a PhD thesis in the field concerned, and whether the thesis demonstrates:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry

#### **Examiners' report**

5.14 After the examination, the examiners shall prepare a report on the viva voce examination, they shall preferably prepare a joint report but are at liberty to prepare separate ones if they so wish.

#### **Examinations outcomes**

5.15 The examiners' recommendations will be limited to the following outcomes:

- That the award of the degree of PhD should be made;
- That the candidate be allowed to resubmit the portfolio with a revised analytical commentary;
- That the material submitted in the portfolio falls short of the requirements, and the degree should not be awarded.
- In the case of recommendation in bullet point two above, the candidate must be provided with written guidelines on the additional material required and/or corrections to be made to the introductory section. In the case of recommendation in bullet point three, the candidate will be informed that no further submission of this portfolio will be accepted for consideration for the award of PhD.
- That the degree be awarded, subject to specified minor revisions<sup>1</sup> being made to any aspect of the thesis, other than the Published Works, to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding three months of receipt of the corrections.

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase "minor revisions" shall be taken to include the correction of minor corrections, minor errors of fact, typography, grammar, style, syntax and/or layout of graphs/tables, additional sentences, tables, paragraphs or



- That the degree be awarded, subject to specified, major revisions<sup>1</sup> being made to any aspect of the thesis other than the Published Works to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding six months.

## 6. Submission of revised thesis

6.1 In the case of any resubmission, the student will normally be liable for re-examination fees.

6.2 A student may submit a revised thesis once only, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee.

6.3 A student shall be informed in writing within 10 working days after the viva voce of the reasons for the examiners' rejection of the original thesis. This notification will include a Statement of Requirements prepared by the examiners listing the principal aspects of the thesis which require improvement, a copy of which will be appended to the Examination Entry Form.

6.4 The examiners shall determine the date by which the revised thesis shall be submitted, normally twelve months from the date that the Statement of Requirements is sent to the student. It is recommended that the student engages with supervisory support in the form of monthly meetings during the resubmission period.

6.5 The procedure for submitting a revised thesis shall be the same as that for submitting the original one.

6.6 A revised thesis shall normally be examined by the original examiners but the Research Degrees Committee may appoint different examiners in exceptional cases. Examiners may not recommend re-submission for a second time but may make one of the following recommendations, as appropriate, and should do so within 90 days of receipt of the revised thesis:

- That the award of the degree of PhD should be made;
- That the candidate be allowed to resubmit the portfolio with a revised analytical commentary;
- That the degree be awarded, subject to specified minor revisions<sup>2</sup> being made to any aspect of the thesis, other than the Published Works, to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding three months of receipt of the corrections.
- That the degree be awarded, subject to specified, major revisions<sup>3</sup> being made to any aspect of the thesis other than the Published Works to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding six months.

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pages but not normally additional chapter(s). These revisions would enhance the readers' understanding of the author's argument but which does not alter the intellectual content and reasoning of the thesis.

<sup>1</sup> The examiners may indicate in general terms a need to correct grammar and/or spelling and, in addition, may return the student an annotated copy of the thesis or portfolio.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase "minor revisions" shall be taken to include the correction of minor corrections, minor errors of fact, typography, grammar, style, syntax and/or layout of graphs/tables, additional sentences, tables, paragraphs or pages but not normally additional chapter(s). These revisions would enhance the readers' understanding of the author's argument but which does not alter the intellectual content and reasoning of the thesis.

<sup>3</sup> The examiners may indicate in general terms a need to correct grammar and/or spelling and, in addition, may return the student an annotated copy of the thesis or portfolio.

- That the material submitted in the portfolio falls short of the requirements, and the degree should not be awarded.

## **7 Disagreement between examiners**

- 7.1 In the case of disagreement between the examiners, the Chair should mediate to endeavour to help the examiners reach an agreed position. Where this is not possible the Chair will bring the issue to the attention of the Research Degrees Committee in the form of a report. The Research Degrees Committee will consider and decide on next options.

## **8 Copyright and intellectual property**

- 8.1 Dissemination of knowledge is one of the objectives of the University. Copies of theses and portfolios accepted for research degrees are stored in an open-access research archive and are available for anyone to consult. Students are therefore advised to mark the thesis as copyright.
- 8.2 Students are required to deposit their thesis in the St Mary's Open Research Archive prior to graduation. If there is a legitimate reason why the thesis should be embargoed, e.g. commercial sensitivity or confidentiality, students should follow the appropriate procedure.
- 8.3 Research students are required to adhere to the University's Intellectual Property Policy.

## **9 Award and Conferment**

- 9.1 The degree shall be awarded to a successful student by the Research Degree Committee on behalf of Academic Board. The award date shall be the date on which the Research Degrees Committee approves the award.
- 9.2 Degrees shall be formally conferred at a congregation held for the purpose. After the formal conferment, each graduate shall be given a degree certificate. The certificate shall either be handed to the graduate or sent through the ordinary post to the student's address as listed in the University records. A replacement certificate can be issued only on receipt of a written request from the graduate and on payment of the appropriate fee.
- 9.3 No student shall be entitled to the award of a degree unless all fees for tuition have been paid and any other outstanding debts to the University cleared (eg. Library fines).

## **10 Appeals and complaints**

- 10.1 The grounds for and procedures for appeals are set out in the University's Academic Appeals Policy and the grounds and procedures for complaints are set out in the Student Complaints Procedure.

## **11 Academic Misconduct**

- 11.1 All postgraduate research students at St Mary's are required to adhere to the [University's Academic Regulations](#), including those that relate to [Academic Misconduct](#). Further guidance for students on the issue of academic integrity, and how to develop ethical academic practices is available via the dedicated Academic Integrity resources provided by our [Centre for Teaching Excellence and Student Success](#). CTESS also provide a ['Top Tips'](#) resource aimed at raising

awareness of academic integrity and good academic practices. This includes a link to a series of Academic Integrity Training Modules that are available to all students (free) at St Mary's. These are mandatory – all postgraduate students are expected to complete the 5 modules within the first year of their studies at the University.

## Annex 3 – Doctoral Degree Awards and Exit Awards

Programme	Award title on certificate
PhD <sup>^</sup>	Doctor of Philosophy
EdD	Doctor of Education
DMin	Doctor of Ministry
DProfS&C	Doctor of Strength and Conditioning
MPhil	Master of Philosophy+
MEd	Master of Education+
MMin	Master of Ministry+
MSc	Master of Strength and Conditioning+
DipEd	Postgraduate Diploma of Education+
DipMin	Postgraduate Diploma of Ministry+
DipS&C	Postgraduate Diploma in Strength and Conditioning+
PGCertEd	Postgraduate Certificate of Education+
PGCertMin	Postgraduate Certificate of Ministry+

<sup>^</sup> - by submission of a thesis and by submission of Published Works

+ - exit award titles for those registered for either PhD, EdD, DMin or DProf.