

Senate Regulation 24

Doctoral Degree Programmes

1. Introduction

- a) The regulation sets out the core principles, structures and process that underpin the award of a research degree, aligned with Level 8 of the [Sector-recognised standards \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](https://officeforstudents.org.uk), and the FHEQ: [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(qaa.ac.uk\)](https://qaa.ac.uk), by City St George's, University of London (hereafter referred as the 'University').
- b) This regulation should be read in conjunction with, in particular:
 - Framework for Research Degrees, which sets out the scheme of delegation between University Senate, the Doctoral College and academic Schools and Departments;
 - The Programme Specification for the doctoral programme in the area of study;
 - Supplementary policies and guidance, as contained in the University's webpages.

2. Award of a degree

- a) The University will confer a Doctor of Philosophy, a Doctor of Medicine by research (MD(Res)), or a Doctor of Music (DMus) to candidates who successfully complete the requirements of an approved programme of research
- b) The award listed above may be supplemented by the addition of a named award title. Where two or more disciplinary specialisms feature in the named award title, there should be an appropriate balance of emphasis on each subject area. For instance, approximately equal balance for a joint (A and B) title and, for major/minor (A with B) titles, the minor discipline accounts for at least a quarter of the programme.
- c) Where more than one named award title is outlined, there shall be tangible and explicit differentiation in programme aims, structure and/or research emphasis that is specific to each named award. The City St George's Programme Approval Committee (CPAC) will ultimately confirm the appropriateness of award title(s).
- d) Joint and dual awards for doctoral programmes are to be made in accordance with any memoranda of agreement with a partner awarding institution.
- e) The University's framework for research degrees apply equally to partnership and validation provision unless different and specific arrangements have been agreed as part of the formal agreement between institutions or as approved via the relevant Course Board or Board of Study that oversees the partnered or validated programme.
- f) The approval of new awards and development of new programme schemes is

delegated by Senate to the relevant School Programme Review Committee and the City St George's Programme Approval Committee (CPAC), with oversight by the Doctoral College Board of Studies. The Committees and Board can, at their discretion, refer matters to Senate for discussion.

3. Award Transfer

- a) Candidates registered for MD(Res), with the approval of the School Research Degrees Programme Committee and the Doctoral College Board of Studies, may transfer to the MPhil/PhD degree, provided they have not entered for the degree for the examination of an MD(Res); or from the MPhil/PhD degree to the MD(Res) degree provided they have not entered for the examination of the MPhil or PhD degree.

4. Admissions

- a) This regulation should be applied in conjunction with:
- [Senate Regulation 14](#) on Admission of Students and Occasional Students;
 - The [Admissions Policy for Research Degrees](#);
 - Any other policies for admission which cut across all students, under the responsibility of the University's Admissions Office.
- b) The candidate is normally expected to hold, or achieve before admission, an upper second- class or first-class honours degree or Master's degree in a relevant subject, or an equivalent overseas qualification. MD(Res) candidates must have a primary medical qualification and normally be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC). If they are not a graduate or currently enrolled at the University, candidates will be required to send an original or certified copy of the certification for their qualification(s) to the School or Department.
- c) If the candidate holds other non-standard qualifications or equivalent professional experience, they will be approved on a case-by-case basis, with the departmental Senior Tutor for Research making a recommendation to the School Research Programmes Committee and Doctoral College Board of Studies for consideration.
- d) If the candidate satisfies the requirements for admission, their candidature is also dependent on the University being satisfied with their research subject and that the University has the appropriate resources, facilities, and supervisory arrangements in place to allow their enrolment.
- e) The candidate should follow the application procedures as set out on the programme webpages and programme specification for the programme. The School in which the programme is based will, provided it is satisfied with their academic fitness for the programme of research, recommend their application for admission to the School Course Officer and Doctoral College Board of Studies, along with its nomination of a supervisor or supervisors and such other information as required. This shall include a short description of the subject of research, and recommendations on the category and effective date of registration. If they are already registered for the Degree of Master of Philosophy, the effective date of registration shall normally be the date on which they were first registered for that degree.

5. Mode of Study/Category of Registration

- a) Candidates can enrol on either a full-time or part-time basis.

- b) Candidates for a PhD by Prior Publication can only enrol on a part-time basis.
- c) Full-time candidates are expected to dedicate a full working week (35 hours) to their doctoral programme on average throughout the year, except when on approved annual leave.
- d) A full-time candidate may, with the permission of their internal supervisor and Head of Department, undertake additional paid work providing that this is not detrimental to the progress of their PhD. Such work should amount to no more than an average of six hours per week across the academic year. Note that student visa holders may be subject to additional limits on the amount of work that may be undertaken and they should check with the International Student Advice team before engaging in any such work if they are unclear about the government limits currently in force.
- e) Part-time candidates are expected to dedicate at least 16 hours (equivalent to two working days) to their doctoral programme on average throughout the year, except when on approved annual leave.
- f) Candidates can change their mode of study from full-time or part-time, or vice versa, during their period of study if the programme allows part-time study. This will usually only be allowed once, and not normally in their final year of study. Where this is a requirement of the candidate's funder, their rules will apply.

- g) The duration of each doctoral programme is set out in the following table:

Degree	Minimum length of candidature		Maximum length of candidature (including writing-up)	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
PhD	2 years	3 years	4 years	7 years
PhD (by prior publication)		1 year		2 years
MD(Res)	1 year	2 years	2 years	3 years
MPhil	1 year	2 years	3 years	5 years

- h) The period of candidature ends when the candidate submits their thesis for examination.
- i) If they fail to submit their thesis for examination by the maximum period of candidature, they will be deemed to have withdrawn from their degree.
- j) Candidates can register for a doctoral programme in one of the following categories:
 - Internal Candidates
Internal candidates are registered with the University and receive supervision by

staff appointed by the University.

- External Candidates
External candidates are registered with the University and receive supervision by external staff, recognised by the University for this purpose. External candidates have at least one supervisor from the University, except where the research programme is delivered by a validated partner institution.
 - Staff Candidates
Staff candidates of all categories are members of staff of the University or retired members of staff. Staff candidates are subject to the same minimum and maximum periods of candidature as any other candidate registered under these Regulations. Supervision arrangements for staff candidates are the same as those for internal candidates.
- k) If a candidate is registered as an external candidate, they can be based overseas, provided there are the appropriate resources, facilities and supervisory support to carry out their research satisfactorily to completion. They are required to spend a minimum of four days per year at the University, to include meeting with their internal supervisor and giving a presentation on their research. The University does not offer research degrees entirely by distance learning.

6. Category of Study

- a) The doctoral programme will fall into one of the following categories of study:
- By major thesis
The candidate registers for and pursue a programme of research study (which may include composition and performance) on either a part-time or full-time basis.
 - By structured components
The candidate registers for, and pursue, a programme of structured research study consisting of a variety of doctoral level components (which may include composition and performance) on either a part-time or full-time basis.
 - By prior publication
A candidate registers for, and submit evidence of, a body of published work or portfolio of original creative work. Candidates shall in addition submit a critical analysis in support of the publications (normally no more than 20,000 words). This critical analysis shall be considered as part of the submission and shall be examined as such. Applicants for submission by prior publication are required to submit evidence of a body of published work which is likely to be of suitable type and quality. The applicant should be nominated by a member of the University's professoriate who demonstrates a common research interest with the candidate. The structure of the portfolio should be approved by the Doctoral College Board of Studies and may include original creative work such as musical composition, choreography and/or audio/visual recordings of performances where appropriate.

The candidate will need to demonstrate through this medium an original and significant contribution to knowledge. Five areas are paramount:

- i. critical appraisal of previous work
- ii. design and methodology for investigation(s)
- iii. conduct/execution of research

- iv. analysis of data evidence or outcomes
- v. theoretical interpretations.

- By prospective publication

A candidate registers for and pursues a programme of research, which may include composition and performance, on either a full-time or part-time basis. Candidates prepare articles or other works for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals, or professional equivalent, as they proceed through their period of study. In addition, candidates must critically analyse the issues raised by the articles or other works.

In the thesis, the published articles may be embedded within chapters which also contain the critical analysis, or they may be interspersed among chapters written in traditional thesis style. Whichever format is chosen, it is essential that the final result conveys a logical and complete summary of the research undertaken and a clear explication of the outcomes. This will also apply to manuscripts in preparation and those under review. All elements of the thesis shall be considered as part of the submission and shall be examined as such.

- b) The candidates award will not usually indicate under which category they fulfilled the requirements of their programme of study.

7. Supervision

- a) The candidate will be allocated a supervisory team, nominated by their School to the Doctoral College Board of Studies. Their supervisory team will consist of at least two members of staff. Where they are undertaking research at or in conjunction with another institution, industrial partner, or commercial organisation, an additional supervisor can be appointed to the team. Supervisors based at the University or outside of will be distinguished as Internal and External Supervisors, respectively.
- b) Where they are undertaking research at or in conjunction with another institution, industrial partner, or commercial organisation, the candidate may alternatively have a consultant designated, who does not have a contractual relationship with the University but may provide specialist advice on a particular area of research which is outside the expertise of the supervisory team.
- c) The candidate's First Supervisor will be an academic member of staff, in accordance with the criteria for a Category A Supervisor as set out in the University's policy on [Doctoral Degree Supervisors policy](#). Their employment contract must be valid for the typical duration of candidature; staff on probation or a professor emeritus may not act as First Supervisor. External supervisors may not act as the First Supervisor.
- d) The candidate's second supervisor will be either an academic member of staff or affiliated to the University with a formal contract, in accordance with the criteria set out for at least a Category B Supervisor as set out in the University's policy on [Doctoral Degree Supervisors policy](#).
- e) New supervisors, changes to a supervisor's category, and changes to the supervisory team during the period of candidature are approved by the Doctoral College Board of Studies.
- f) The supervisory team is responsible for supervision of the design and progress of the research project and for providing academic advice, as well as ensuring required administrative processes are completed during the period of candidature.

- g) In the first three months of candidature, candidates must complete a Training Plan in conjunction with their supervisors. Throughout their programme, candidates are also expected to participate as appropriate in the compulsory and optional elements of the University's Doctoral Researcher Development Programme, as specified by Schools and the Doctoral College in relation to their programme of study.

8. Progression

- a) The [Doctoral Degree Progress Review policy](#) gives details about candidates' progression. The policy is aligned with this Regulation.
- b) The candidate may appeal against a decision made in relation to their progression and, where appropriate, withdrawal in accordance with [Senate Regulation 21](#).

9. Transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD

- a) The candidate will initially be registered on a MPhil/PhD programme (or equivalent), and will be transferred to the intended doctoral-level award following successful completion of the Transfer of Registration process, as set out in the policy on transfer of registration.
- b) If the candidate does not successfully complete the required transfer process, they may be offered the opportunity to submit for a master's degree by research, in accordance with Senate Regulation 23.
- c) If the candidate has transferred from another institution, their requirement to complete the transfer process may be waived, subject to serving a minimum 12-month period of candidature prior to submission of thesis for examination.
- d) At any point, the candidate may transfer to a programme leading to the award of an MPhil, subject to the approval of the School and Doctoral College Board of Studies. Their period of candidature to date will be counted towards their period of candidature required for the MPhil, though their previous registration will be withdrawn.

10. Transfer to writing up

- a) The transfer to writing up status occurs once the candidate has served the minimum period of candidature, the data collection/empirical work has been completed and when the candidate requires supervision on the thesis chapter and the final thesis draft. Transfer to writing-up is an academic judgement made on the recommendation of their supervisors to the Doctoral College Board of Studies.
- b) Once they have transferred to writing up, they will only receive minimal supervision required to complete and submit their thesis within their maximum period of candidature.
- c) The candidate is not required to pay fees in writing-up status beyond an initial registration fee. This fee may be waived by their School under certain circumstances.
- d) If the candidate does not submit for examination within twelve months (eighteen

months for part- time students) and their maximum period of candidature has not elapsed, they will revert to normal registration status and be liable for full tuition fees.

11. Interruption of Studies

- a) The candidate is expected to remain registered and have a continuous period of candidature, except in circumstances where an interruption of studies is approved by the Doctoral College Board of Studies in accordance with the [University's policy on Interruption of Studies \(Research Degrees\)](#).
- b) Candidates for a doctoral programme will typically only be permitted up to two periods of interruption of between 3-12 months each to ensure the currency of the research project. These limits do not apply to periods of parental leave. If the candidate is holding a studentship, the rules on interruptions stipulated by their funding body will apply.
- c) A period of interruption will not count towards the maximum period of candidature.
- d) They will neither receive supervision during a period of interruption nor be expected to complete scheduled progression milestones, but they will retain access to IT and library facilities.
- e) If the candidate is a student visa holder, an interruption of studies may affect their ability to remain in the UK as per the conditions of their visa, and they should discuss their circumstances with the University's Visa Advice team before applying for an interruption.

12. Extension of Candidature

- a) The candidate is expected to complete their research project and submit for examination within the minimum and maximum periods of candidature for their intended award. In a limited set of circumstances, they may be permitted by the Doctoral College Board of Studies to extend their period of candidature in accordance with the University's [policy on Extension of Candidature \(Research Degrees\)](#).
- b) Extensions of candidature will normally only be permitted once they have transferred to writing-up status, and approved for six months in the first instance, renewable on one further occasion.
- c) The University will take into consideration any limits or conditions placed on extensions by their funding body (if they are a studentship holder) and their expectation of submission within a specific funded period, as well as any penalties or sanctions that may apply to the University from the funding body if the University allows the candidate to extend their candidature.

13. Notification of Withdrawal

- a) The candidate may choose to withdraw from their doctoral programme, in accordance with the [policy on Notification of Withdrawal](#). They will be liable for fees until such point as their withdrawal is approved by the Doctoral College Board of Studies.
- b) The University may also initiate their withdrawal, subject to approval by the

Doctoral College Board of Studies, because of:

- the recommendation of an Annual Progress Review or MPhil to PhD Transfer due to poor academic progress, having been given a second opportunity to improve and resubmit for the same milestone;
 - the recommendation of a progress review convened by the School due to significant academic concerns;
 - the outcome of an academic misconduct or research misconduct panel in line with the [Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy](#);
 - non-academic misconduct, in accordance with [Senate Regulation 13](#);
 - lack of contact/engagement with the University (over 3 months);
 - failure to submit the thesis for examination by the end of the maximum period of candidature.
- c) The candidate may appeal a decision to be withdrawn in accordance with [Senate Regulation 21 on appeals for Research Programmes](#).

14. Examination

- a) The [Doctoral Degree Examination policy](#) gives details about the preparation of candidates thesis and the viva voce examination. The policy is aligned with this Regulation.
- b) For candidates based at Clerkenwell or Moorgate the examination process must be undertaken using the University's online system for managing doctoral students. Candidates based at Tooting will use existing processes until alignment of students' systems has been completed. The key stages in the examination process must be approved by the Doctoral College Board of Studies upon the recommendation of the School Research Degrees Programme Committee or equivalent, and the Senior Tutor for Research.
- c) The candidate must demonstrate that they meet the requirements described in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (section 4.18). These state that doctoral degrees will be awarded to candidates who have demonstrated:
- vi. 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;
 - vii. 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;
 - viii. 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;
 - ix. a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

15. Notification of Examination Outcome

- a) If the examiners wish to advise the candidate orally and informally of their decision at the conclusion of their deliberations following the examination, it is on the basis that the result is not formal and final until confirmed and notified by a letter from the University.

- b) A letter will be sent to the candidate officially informing them of the result.

16. Appeals against the outcome of an examination

- a) The candidate may request a review of the examiners' decision in accordance with the University's Appeal Regulations for Research Programmes (see [Senate Regulation 21](#)).
- b) The candidate is expected to pursue any grievances concerning the adequacy of supervisory or other arrangements which arise during the period of study through the University's Complaints Regulations (see [Senate Regulation 26](#)).

17. Annual Leave

- a) Full-time candidates are entitled to 30 days of annual leave to a maximum of eight weeks per year to include public holidays. This is pro rata for part-time candidates. All leave must be agreed upon and approved by the supervisor(s) via the online system. Compassionate, parental and sickness leave are dealt with separately.

18. Posthumous Award

- a) Posthumous Awards are approved by the Academic Registrar, upon the recommendation from Doctoral College Board of Studies, on behalf of Senate. All decisions are reported to Senate. The Doctoral College Board of Studies may recommend that the award of a posthumous research degree be made where a candidate has died:
 - after the thesis has been examined but before the oral examination can be held. In such a case the Board of Studies shall consider the material presented and any preliminary judgment of the examiners. Provided that the Board of Studies is satisfied that the work is the candidate's own, and that it meets the standard normally required for the proposed research degree to be awarded, it may recommend that an appropriate award be made.
 - before submitting the thesis. In such a case the Board of Studies shall consider the available evidence of the research completed to date by the candidate. Such evidence shall normally be provided by the candidate's main supervisor. Examiners shall be nominated and approved by the Doctoral College Board of Studies. The Examiners shall be advised of the circumstances under which the material is being examined and shall be asked to provide an independent assessment of the material presented. The examiners shall be asked for an opinion on whether the quality of the research is sufficient to warrant the award of a research degree. The following criteria must be satisfied:
 - enough of the research project must have been completed to allow a proper assessment to be made of the scope of the thesis;
 - the standard of the research work completed must be of that normally required for the award of the degree in question, and must demonstrate the candidate's grasp of the subject;
 - the written material available must demonstrate the candidate's ability to write a thesis of the required standard.
- b) The University may award a posthumous research degree drawn from Clause 4 of these regulations or Clause 4 of Senate Regulation 23. The Doctoral College Board

of Studies will make a recommendation to the Academic Registrar, where this is the case, who may approve on behalf of Senate.

Approval Notes	Dates
Approved by Senate	22/10/80, 27/6/86, 11/3/87, 2/12/87, 11/3/92, 14/5/97, 14/6/00, 13/06/01, 29/09/04
Approved as a regulation (Senate)	4/4/07
Approved as a regulation (Senate)	27 June 2012
Amended and approved by Senate	13 July 2016
Amended and approved by Senate	14 July 2021
Amended and approved by Senate	15 December 2021
Amended and approved by Senate	14 December 2022
Amended and approved by Senate	13 December 2023
Amended due to Senate approving Regulation 24a, Professional Doctorates	15 May 2024
Amended and approved by Senate	23 January 2025
Merged regulations approved by Senate	21 July 2026