



SCHOOL OF  
ADVANCED STUDY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

# Quality Assurance Framework for Postgraduate Teaching and Supervision

With effect from October 2024

[sas.ac.uk](https://sas.ac.uk)



# Quality Assurance Framework 2024–2025



**UK Quality Assured**

The Quality Assurance Agency's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education. Its kitemark assures students that the School of Advanced Study, University of London has undergone a review and achieved a successful result through an independent quality assurance process.

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## Section A

### Essential background

The Quality Assurance Framework should be read in conjunction with the School's policies which can be found here: <https://www.sas.ac.uk/about-us/how-we-are-run/policies>

Of particular note are:

[Acceptable Use Policy](#)

[Admission Policy](#)

[Research Ethics Policy](#)

[Tuition Fee Policy](#)

[Disability Policy](#)

[Research Code of Good Practice](#)

[Student Terms and Conditions](#)

[Student Engagement Policy](#)

[Emergency Contact Protocol](#)

[Mitigating Circumstances and Assessment Board Policy](#)

**A.1** The following degrees of the University of London may be awarded on the basis of programmes of study offered in the School:

PG Certificate (PG Cert)	Master of Science (MSc)
PG Diploma (PG Dip)	Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
Master of Arts (MA)	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Master of Research (MRes)	Doctor of Pastoral Theology (DPT)

**A.2** A person may be enrolled as an occasional student at an institute as following a programme of study or a programme of research that does not have the purpose of obtaining any degree or diploma of the University (see A.5).

**A.3** Degrees and diplomas based on programmes of study offered in the School of Advanced Study are awarded by the Vice-Chancellor to students registered in the School, under regulations made by, or under procedures approved by, the Collegiate Council of the University. See also the Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations of the University of London.

**A.4** Regulation 1, Section D, 68 provides that the academic quality assurance procedures of the School shall be approved by the Collegiate Council and determines the matters that shall be included, particularly that regard shall be had to the relevant provisions of the Academic Infrastructure issued by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

**A.5** Definitions for the purposes of this Quality Assurance Framework are as follows:

'School' denotes the School of Advanced Study;

'Board' denotes Academic Board of the University of London;

'Directorate' denotes the Directorate of the School of Advanced Study;

'Dean' denotes the Dean of the School of Advanced Study;

'Institute' denotes an institute of the School of Advanced Study.

Students are also registered with our specialist centres, of Public Engagement, Digital Humanities and Refugee Law.

There are eight institutes, as follows:

Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS)

Institute of Classical Studies (ICS)

Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICWS)

Institute of English Studies (IES)

Institute of Historical Research (IHR)

Institute of Languages, Cultures and Societies (ILCS)

Institute of Philosophy (IP)

Warburg Institute (WBG)

Students studying at the University of London campus in Paris are regarded as SAS students.

‘degree’ and ‘diploma’ denote a degree and a diploma of the University of London;

‘student’ denotes a student proceeding to a degree or a diploma of the University, based on a programme of study offered in the School;

‘programme’ denotes the overall package of courses or modules and dissertation (if appropriate) taken by a student leading to a degree or diploma;

‘programme regulations’ denotes the regulations specific to a programme of study, supplementary to the general regulations;

‘programme specification’ denotes the description of a programme in terms of learning outcomes and the means by which those outcomes are achieved and demonstrated, as required by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA);

‘Occasional student’ status shall be accorded to persons, not being students or external students, who are registered by the School whilst taking a module(s) but with no intention of studying for an award of the School. Such students may be registered at another institution.

#### **1.6** Common acronyms are as follows:

AQSC	Academic Quality and Standards Committee
AQAC	Academic Quality Advisory Committee
AB	Academic Board
HC	Heythrop College
HC-RDC	Heythrop College – Research Degrees Committee
MCP	Mitigating Circumstances Panel
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
UoLW	University of London Worldwide
ULIP	University of London Institute in Paris.



## Section B

### Key Contacts for Students

#### Registry Office Location

School of Advanced Study, University of London  
Stewart House, Russell Square, London

#### Admissions Enquiries

[admissions@sas.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@sas.ac.uk)

#### Tuition Fee and Payment Enquiries

[sas.fees@sas.ac.uk](mailto:sas.fees@sas.ac.uk)

#### Research Degrees Student Enquiries

[research.degrees@sas.ac.uk](mailto:research.degrees@sas.ac.uk)

#### Taught Student Enquiries

[taught.degrees@sas.ac.uk](mailto:taught.degrees@sas.ac.uk)

#### Registry Staff

Kalinda Hughes, Head of Registry Services

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T: +44 (0)20 7862 8873

Shaneeka Petrie-Belmar, Senior Registry and Student Services Officer

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Katalin Koblos, Admissions Officer

E: [katalin.koblos@sas.ac.uk](mailto:katalin.koblos@sas.ac.uk)

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(Vacancy), Registry and Student Services Officer

#### Doctoral Centre

Rachel Shaw (Doctoral Centre Manager)

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T: +44 (0) 20 7862 8320

Matt Clancy (Research Student Coordinator)

E: [research.degrees@sas.ac.uk](mailto:research.degrees@sas.ac.uk)

T: +44 (0) 20 7862 8725

#### Quality and Standards

Rachel Sutton, Associate Director, (Quality), UoLW

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T: +44 (0) 207 862 8296

#### Operations, Quality, Standards and Policy

Elaine Walters, Chief Operating Officer, School of Advanced Study

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## Section C

### School of Advanced Study Student Charter

The School is the UK's national centre for the support and promotion of research in the humanities and social sciences. Its nine research institutes at the University of London offer a unique scholarly community in which to pursue postgraduate study and research.

The Charter below sets out the rights and responsibilities of the School and its students. Additional rights and responsibilities in connection with research students are set out at the beginning of Section 4.

### The School's Responsibilities

The School undertakes to

- encourage its employees to treat students and colleagues equally and respectfully

and to provide

- high standards of teaching, support, advice and guidance
- access to activities that will enhance employability and personal development
- support for student participation in academic development and programme management, including elections of representatives
- clearly defined access to library and IT facilities
- clear deadlines and timeframes – in programme handbooks – for feedback on work submitted by students.
- programme handbooks for students which detail assessment criteria, contact hours, mode of delivery
- details on examination arrangements and regulations, academic guidance and support, appeals and complaints procedures
- clear information on programme costs, payment options and deadlines
- provision of services relating to wellbeing and disability
- provision of careers advice

Its teaching staff undertake to

- treat students responsibly and with respect
- familiarise themselves with the Quality Assurance Framework and School supervisory practice
- keep themselves up to date with best practice in relation to teaching and supervision, including undertaking, where appropriate, training in research student supervision
- be accessible to students during term time and advise them of any absences likely to exceed two successive weeks during the vacation
- respond to emails from students within a reasonable time-frame, and generally within three working days during term-time
- keep students informed in advance about prospective periods of leave and planned supervisory arrangements during the leave
- advise students on progress in a timely fashion and warn where work is not of the appropriate standard or is being produced too slowly, and of steps which might be taken to remedy the situation
- provide constructive timely feedback in writing on all written work submitted by the student and keep copies on file
- ensure that students understand the requirements of the degree, provide guidance on the examination process, and help students to prepare offer guidance and support on research ethics and maintaining academic integrity
- provide students with guidance as to essential reading, including information on where this may be found, before the start of the academic year if possible, or at induction
- avoid cancelling classes or meetings unless for a completely unavoidable reason, and always advise in good time; rearrange any cancelled classes/meetings
- treat student data with integrity and be aware of responsibilities in relation to the Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Equality Acts

## Students' Responsibilities

Students undertake to:

- observe the Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations of the University of London
- treat staff and their fellow students equally and respectfully
- attend induction, read documentation provided, including regulations for their degree and student handbooks
- participate in timetabled classes, attend meetings with tutors
- obtain agreement from their tutors, in advance, for any essential absences
- take responsibility for managing their own learning: actively engaging in their course; ensuring they spend sufficient regular time in private study; participating fully in group learning activities; maintaining a record, in consultation with their supervisors, of supervisory meetings; inform supervisors promptly if circumstances arise which are likely to affect their work; discuss any teaching/supervisor problems with their supervisor(s) or with the Institute Director (or other senior staff member)
- submit assessed work by stated deadlines; actively participate in feedback
- comply with guidelines on ethical research, data protection matters, and be aware of health and safety and intellectual property implications. Failure to comply with the SAS Code of Good Practice may give rise to an allegation of misconduct. Breach of the UoL Research Ethics Policy 'will be taken extremely seriously' and may result in disciplinary action.
- make prompt payment of charges made by the institution
- support programme representatives and participate in systems which will lead to improvements in the quality of learning and teaching
- respect the physical environment of the University of London undertake any mandatory training as the School deems necessary including training in research ethics

## Harassment and Discrimination

The School has expectations of student conduct and asks that all students comply with its regulations on harassment and discrimination.

The following paragraphs reflect the provisions of Ordinance 19: Student Complaints (Annex 2: Model Procedure on Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying of Students).

- The University does not consider it to be acceptable for a student to be subjected to discrimination or harassment in any form by a fellow student, a member of staff, or by any other person on University premises or in connection with their study in the University. If possible, the student should make it clear to the person causing offence that their behaviour is unacceptable. If direct representation is not possible, or is not effective, the student may seek help and advice as follows.
- The student is advised to seek a confidential interview with the person designated in the student's institute.
- The 'person designated' shall be the Director of the institute unless otherwise stipulated. If the Director (or other person designated) is the subject of the complaint, the person designated will be the Dean of the School. The purpose of a confidential interview is to discuss the nature of the problem and arrive at an acceptable solution. Further action will not normally be taken without the express permission of the student. However, it will usually not be possible to deal with the matter adequately if such permission is withheld.
- If the problem is serious or has not been resolved as a result of the confidential interview, the student may make a formal complaint (as set out in Annex 1 to Ordinance 19) which will lead to the initiation of disciplinary proceedings. It will be useful for the student to keep a note of the details and dates of relevant incidents.
- The School will keep lists of organisations and individuals which will provide additional help and advice, especially in more serious cases.
- The University's 'Policy in Respect of Offences that are also Criminal Offences' is set out at Annex 1 to Ordinance 17: Code of Student Discipline. A student who is the victim of a racial, sexual or physical assault may seek help from appropriate organisations and may report the matter to the police.

# 1. Admission of students

See also [Admissions Policy](#) and the [Accreditation of Prior \(Experiential\) Learning Policy](#)

- 1.1 The School and its institutes shall provide clear, accurate and up-to-date information to prospective applicants, to persons offered a place, and to students, through information on websites, prospectuses, regulations, individual letters, emails and so on. Hard copy publicity material must be checked and verified annually, along with the annual verification of online information. All references to institutes also refer to the Central Academic Initiatives of the School.
- 1.2 Application for admission must be made in a form approved by the School and must follow the procedures of the School.
- 1.3 Information may be provided in different formats at different times, as appropriate. It should include the following:

## General

- (a) the conditions for admission to a programme of study leading to a degree or other award;
- (b) application and admissions procedures (including a commitment to respond to enquiries and applications within a stated period);
- (c) information and guidance for disabled students;
- (d) fees and the payment of fees, including provision for payment by instalment; it should be stated clearly that non-payment of fees will result in de-registration; penalties for late payment should be stated;
- (e) bursaries and scholarships, including eligibility conditions, mode of application;
- (f) information for MPhil/PhD study should include the conditions under which 'continuation' (writing-up) fees may be payable by MPhil and PhD students;
- (g) accommodation, careers and other student services;
- (h) academic and non-academic support services;

## For postgraduate taught programmes

- (i) regulations, relevant guidelines and procedures; teaching methods; information about the modules which may run, and clear details on restrictions or availability conditions;
- (j) programme specifications making explicit the intended learning outcomes of a programme in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and other attributes. They should set out the teaching and learning methods that enable the learning outcomes to be achieved; the assessment methods that enable achievement to be demonstrated; and the relationship of the programme and its study elements to the qualifications framework and to any subsequent professional qualifications or career;
- (k) the conditions to be satisfied for the award of the degree and for the award of the marks of Distinction and Merit; methods and timing of assessment, including (where appropriate) the period within which students can expect coursework to be marked and returned;

## For MPhil/PhD programmes

- (l) the duration of the course of study; supervision arrangements, including the name(s) of the supervisor(s); procedures for monitoring and reviewing progress, for transfer from MPhil to PhD, and for transfer to 'continuation fee' (writing-up) status;
  - (m) the code of conduct for supervisors and students;
  - (n) information about skills and research training.
- 1.4 Information to accompany the offer of a place should make clear the obligations placed on and undertaken by students and should include information about the code of academic discipline, and appeals and grievance procedures (the offer of a place should state how they can be obtained if these particulars are not routinely provided).
  - 1.5 Information should be given to applicants offered a place on the arrangements for enrolment, registration, induction and so on.

- 1.6 The School and the institutes should carry out inductions for students to provide information and guidance on organisation, resources, the facilities available and the academic context, including, where appropriate:
- (a) the location of the institutes/centres within the School and the University;
  - (b) information on libraries and resources, including entitlement and conditions of use;
  - (c) computer facilities;
  - (d) research and skills training;
  - (e) provision for disabled students, social, welfare, careers and advisory provision and so on.
- 1.7 In all aspects of the provision of information and the admission of students, due attention must be paid to the University's Equal Opportunities policy and Data Protection guidelines, and the duties imposed on public bodies under the Equality Act.
- 1.8 All staff involved in the admissions process within the School and the institutes should be appropriately informed about policies and procedures. All academic staff involved in admissions decisions must have undergone training in diversity and equality.
- 1.9 The School should make appropriate provision for appeals in regard to admissions (see 1.29-1.33).

#### **Recruitment of research students**

- 1.10 Where a proposed PhD project concerns a sensitive topic or travel to an insecure location, staff involved in recruitment should consider whether appropriate support for such research can be offered to the student throughout the degree programme. Any special provisions, facilities or resources, including access to nominally prohibited sites or to secure storage of materials should be identified by staff. Prior to issuing an offer letter, the School should confirm that special arrangements can be provided throughout the length of the research degree programme.

#### **Application deadline**

- 1.11 Application for registration as a student must normally be made by 31 July for October entry and by 31 October for January entry.

#### **Entrance requirements (see also [Admissions Policy](#))**

- 1.12 In order to be registered for a degree, postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate programme in the School, a candidate will normally satisfy the entrance requirements and the conditions of admission set out in sections 1.16 – 1.28, as appropriate. The School does, however, recognise that some education and professional experience (APL/APEL) can be suitable preparation and proof of ability and therefore a valid route into study. See Admissions Policy.
- 1.13 An applicant for registration will be required to meet any additional entrance requirements specified in the relevant programme regulations, including language and other tests prescribed by the institute.
- 1.14 An applicant for admission to a degree, postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate who fails to pass a prescribed qualifying examination, other than tests falling into the categories in 1.12 above, may only re-enter for the qualifying examination by special permission of AQSC.
- 1.15 Students attaining credit from modules undertaken as part of summer schools may accumulate that credit over a specified period to lead to an award of PGCert, Diploma or an MA. No more than 60 credits may be accumulated in one academic year.

#### **Taught programmes (MA, LLM, MRes)**

- 1.16 The normal minimum entrance qualification for registration for a Master's degree in the School is:
- (a) an upper second class honours degree of a UK university or an overseas qualification of an equivalent standard obtained after a programme of study extending over not less than three years in a university (or educational institution of university rank), in a subject appropriate to that of the programme to be followed; or
  - (b) a professional or other qualification obtained by written examination and approved by AQSC as an appropriate entrance qualification for the degree in question.

- 1.17 Applicants possessing alternative qualifications obtained by written examination may be considered by an institute. An institute may take into account experience or work, at an appropriate level, evidenced by referees and written material. The institute may require such persons to pursue the programme for a period longer than the minimum period prescribed in the programme regulations and/or may prescribe a qualifying examination for such a candidate; such additional period shall be at least one year.
- 1.18 Applicants must satisfy any additional entrance requirements specified in the relevant programme regulations, including language and other tests prescribed by the institute.
- 1.19 An applicant who fails to pass a prescribed qualifying examination, other than tests falling into the categories in 1.16 above, may only re-enter for the qualifying examination by special permission of AQSC.

### **Postgraduate diplomas and certificates**

1.20 The following paragraphs indicate instances of variation from the above.

1.21 The normal minimum entrance requirement for registration for the Postgraduate Diploma or certificate is:

- (a) a second class honours degree of a UK university or an overseas qualification of an equivalent standard obtained after a programme of study extending over not less than three years in a university (or educational institution of university rank), in a subject appropriate to that of the programme to be followed; or
- (b) appropriate previous education and experience deemed by the institute where the student is to be registered to be equivalent to graduate standing.

### **Research programmes (MPhil/PhD)**

1.22 The normal minimum entrance qualification for registration for MPhil/PhD in the School is:

- (a) a Master's degree of a UK university or an overseas qualification of an equivalent standard in a subject appropriate to the programme to be followed; or
- (b) a professional or other qualification obtained by written examination and approved by AQSC as an appropriate entrance qualification for the degree in question; this category includes Master's degrees of a UK university other than the University of London and overseas degrees or other relevant qualifications of equivalent standard.

1.23 Additionally the School will accept alternative professional or other qualifications as appropriate on the advice of the potential supervisor(s) following approval by the AQSC.

1.24 An applicant for registration will be required to meet any additional entrance requirements specified in the relevant programme regulations, including language and other tests prescribed by the institute including a writing sample.

1.25 A candidate for a research degree will be registered initially for the MPhil degree.

1.26 The School may register for the MPhil or PhD degree, with exemption from part of the course of study, a person who has commenced elsewhere a relevant course of study for the MPhil/PhD or equivalent degree.

1.27 Admission of MPhil/PhD students shall require the agreement of the institute's RDC. Applicants should be interviewed when possible; when this is not practical other appropriate measures must be taken. The admission procedure should normally include the nomination of a main supervisor and co-supervisor(s).

1.28 The School's procedures, involving the Chair of RDC's oversight of application documentation, must be completed before an offer of a place is made to a prospective student.

### **University of London Admissions Appeals Procedure**

1.29 All decisions concerning admissions should be clear, transparent, and consistent. Students can challenge admissions decisions.

1.30 Applications for appeal should be made to the SAS Registry. Students should state the basis of their appeal and include any additional information (such as further qualifications or references) that were not submitted originally.

1.31 In the event that no additional evidence is required, the School aims to review and respond to admissions appeals within ten working days.

### The admissions appeals procedure

1.32 The procedure is as follows:

- (a) the appeal is considered by the relevant Course Director;
- (b) if there is no resolution, the appeal is considered under Stage 2 of the University of London Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedure.

1.33 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) cannot consider complaints about admissions.

## 2. Registration and Student Status

### Registration as a Student of the School

2.1 Students register at an institute or one of the School's specialist centres except that, where a Master's programme involves collaboration with a College of the University it may be agreed between the institute or CAI and the College that a student should register at the College. Such a student shall, nevertheless, be treated in all relevant respects as if they were registered at the School. Concurrent registration

2.2 Except with the special permission of AQSC, a student:

- (a) may not register concurrently for more than one degree, or postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate of the University, or for any combination of such awards, except where the student wishes to register as part of a prescribed overseas study placement;
- (b) if they have entered an examination for a degree, postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate of the University, may not register in the School for another degree, postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate until the examination requirements for the first qualification are completed;
- (c) may not be registered as a student while registered as a student for an equivalent qualification of another university or other institution;
- (d) may not enter an examination leading to an award of the University if they have been admitted as a candidate for examination leading to a comparable award of another university or other institution unless they have pursued a different and separate curriculum;
- (e) special arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis, subject to the approval of AQSC, for students registered under joint supervision ('co-tutelle') agreements with higher education institutions outside the UK – see 7.11.

2.3 Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2.2 above, an institute may register for a taught Master's degree a person who is registered for a qualification at a university or comparable institution outside the UK, provided that such registration has been approved by AQSC.

2.4 No person who is registered as an external student of the University or as an occasional student of another higher education institution may be registered or enrolled concurrently as a student of the School.

### Further registration for the same degree

2.5 Except where the regulations provide otherwise, a student who has been awarded a qualification by the University may enter for the same qualification in a different subject or field of study provided that on each occasion the student shall register anew and shall comply with all regulations as if they were entering for the first time.

### Attendance and academic performance

2.6 Attendance or engagement will be measured by the number of points of contact over a particular period of time. These are as follows:

- For taught students, attendance at a timetabled lecture, tutorial, workshop or seminar within a calendar week. Online engagement – engagement at module level with the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) within a calendar week. A test, examination or assessment; a research training session; an appointment with a welfare advisor or a formal appointment with professional services or academic staff; registration or enrolment.

- For research students, regular supervisory meetings, a research training session, an appointment with a welfare advisor or a formal appointment with professional services or academic staff within a calendar month.
  - Submission of assessed or unassessed coursework, an interim dissertation, draft thesis chapters or a progress report.
- 2.7 For taught students there is a minimum requirement that the regularity of expected contact points is **weekly** during term-time regardless of mode of study;
- 2.8 For research students there is a minimum requirement that the regularity of expected contact points is **monthly**;
- 2.9 Expected contact points are not required during authorised periods of interruption, i.e. when a student is formally permitted by the School to defer their studies for an agreed period.
- 2.10 Expected contact points are not required outside of term time, however, the following exceptions apply:
- (i) Postgraduate taught students on a 12-month programme are expected to be engaged with their individual project during the summer, i.e. after the end of term (June). During this period there is a minimum requirement that the regularity of expected contact points is monthly.
  - (ii) Postgraduate research students do not operate within conventional term times. Any time taken away from study is done in agreement between the student and their Supervisor, during which expected contact points are not required.

**What constitutes a contact Contacts include:**

- (a) Attending formal academic or pastoral care activities including:
  - (i) a lesson, lecture, tutorial or seminar;
  - (ii) a test, examination or assessment board;
  - (iii) a meeting with a supervisor or personal tutor;
  - (iv) a research-method or research-panel meeting, writing up seminars or doctoral workshops;
  - (v) an appointment with a welfare advisor or international student advisor;
- (b) Submitting:
  - (i) assessed or unassessed coursework; or
  - (ii) an interim dissertation, coursework or progress report;
- (c) Registration (for enrolment or matriculation)

The module leaders for taught programmes and PhD supervisors will keep records of attendance. A student must contact their Student Officer in Registry or their supervisor by email if they wish to request to miss a contact due, for example, to illness. This request must be authorised and will be kept on file. Failure to do so will result in this being counted as a missed contact.

**Attendance Policy for students with visas**

- 2.11 In addition to the above, if a student on a visa does not attend ten expected consecutive contacts, we are required to inform the Home Office, and this might lead to withdrawing our sponsorship. The Institutes of SAS and Registry shall monitor visa student contacts on a termly basis.

Where permission for absence is not sought the following procedures will apply:

- (i) after three missed contacts, the student will be contacted by their Student Officer or Supervisor to ascertain the reason for absence;
- (ii) after six missed contacts, the student will be contacted again by the Student Officer or Supervisor to ascertain the reason for absence and to inform them that the Programme Director and Head of Registry Services will be notified;
- (iii) after eight missed contacts, the student will be invited to a meeting with the Programme Director and/or Head of Registry Services to discuss their attendance;
- (iv) after nine missed contacts, the student will be written to officially informing them that they must get in touch and that the Home Office will be informed if one further contact is missed.



### All students

- 2.12 If a student is unable to make an agreed contact, they must notify the University; if this is not done, the absence will count as a missed point of contact.
- 2.13 For absences of more than 10 consecutive working days, students must complete an [authorised absence form](#). This form must be authorised by their Programme Director or supervisor, and lodged with the Registry.
- 2.14 Where possible, a request for authorised absence should be submitted in advance. Authorisation for unplanned absences may be submitted up to 5 working days after the last day of absence. Requests for authorised absence submitted after 5 working days may not be considered.
- 2.15 Authorised absence forms must be supported by appropriate evidence. This may include, but is not limited to, medical evidence such as a doctor's note where this has been necessary invitations to family events, confirmation of a job interview or other official documentation.
- 2.16 The School will consider requests for authorised absence sensitively and will try to accommodate all reasonable requests. However, where an absence may have a detrimental effect on a student's academic progress, or where absence levels are already of concern, such requests may not be granted.
- 2.17 Prolonged absence caused by sickness must be reported to the registry , and where relevant medical evidence must be provided

### Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students

- 2.18 Attendance will usually be monitored in at least one timetabled session per module per week. These could be workshops, seminars, tutorials etc.
- 2.19 An entire week with no attendance at any module will normally be considered as a missed contact.
- 2.20 Where a taught student is studying overseas as part of a distance learning programme, Erasmus exchange or on study abroad, responsibility for recording attendance will lie with the partner institution, who must inform the student's course director /registry of four consecutive days missed contact within 7 working days and must supply attendance records on request within 5 working days.
- 2.21 Where a taught student is undertaking a work placement, regular contact with the placement tutor or placement team will serve as evidence of ongoing attendance and engagement. Such contact is usually expected to take place on a monthly basis. An entire calendar month without a point of contact will normally be considered as a missed contact.

### Postgraduate Research (PGR) students

- 2.22 The attendance of Postgraduate Research (PGR) students is monitored through regular supervisory meetings – whether on campus, by telephone or online. Each supervisory meeting is considered to be a point of contact.
- 2.23 Students are normally expected to engage with their supervisor on a monthly basis. An entire calendar month without a point of contact will normally be considered as a missed contact.
- 2.24 PGR students are expected to demonstrate attendance at all points up to submission of their thesis for examination and this includes work done during a formal writing up period.

### Distance learning students

- 2.25 Distance learning students' engagement is also measured by the means outlined above. Engagement will be determined and monitored by the programme team. The University retains the right to withdraw a student for lack of engagement, following prior warning emails.

### Cause for concern

- 2.26 The school defines the maximum length of time during which contact does not take place and is therefore deemed a cause for concern as two weeks plus for taught students or two months for postgraduate research students regardless of mode of study. Following this period the cause for concern will be escalated.

### Escalation

- 2.27 The University will make every effort to avoid having to initiate the formal attendance escalation procedure. However, if informal attempts to contact and re-engage a student are unsuccessful, the following procedure will apply:

- (a) At the point that a cause for concern has been raised by a tutor or supervisor a formal email will be sent from the registry warning the student about attendance and requesting that they contact their Tutor/ Supervisor/Registry to discuss any issues.
- (b) If after 7 days there is no response, the student will be contacted again to ascertain the reason for absence and to inform them that the Programme Director/ Supervisor and Head of Registry services will be notified.
- (c) If after 14 days there is no response, the student will be invited to a meeting with the Programme Director or Supervisor and/or Head of Registry Services to discuss their attendance and a warning will be issued that the student is in danger of being withdrawn from the programme.
- (d) If the student is studying on a student visa, then the student is warned that further missed contacts would necessitate a report to the Home Office and the visa being revoked.
- (e) The student is given 10 days to respond to this invitation.
- (f) During this 10-day window, if a student supplies new evidence to support their absence, the school may use discretion to consider this. Where appropriate, this may halt withdrawal proceedings, if it is deemed that the evidence is sufficiently strong to retrospectively grant authorised absence, and the student is able to catch up with their studies.
- (g) If a student fails to submit a request for interruption within 10 working days, they will be written to again stating that they will be withdrawn if they do not engage with the process. The student is given a further 10 working days to respond after which the student will be informed in writing that formal withdrawal will take place. This withdrawal should happen no later than the 12th working day after the written notification.
- (h) Repeated patterns of intermittent unauthorized absence may also be considered sufficient grounds to initiate a withdrawal.

### Appeals against a withdrawal Grounds for Appeal

2.28 Students have the right to appeal against a withdrawal by default on the following grounds:

- 2.29 That there are extenuating circumstances relating to ill health or personal difficulties which the student was unable to raise prior to or during the escalation procedure detailed in Section 7 and/or
- 2.30 That the information held by the School relating to the student's attendance and/or engagement is incomplete or inaccurate, and the student was not in a position to correct this information at an earlier stage.
- 2.31 Students wishing to appeal must show a compelling reason why this information could not be made available before the decision to withdraw was reached, and provide supporting documentary evidence. Where the student could have made the information available prior to the decision being made, such evidence cannot normally be accepted as grounds for appeal.

### How to Appeal

- 2.32 Appeals must be received no later than **10 working days** after the date of email notification of the withdrawal. An acknowledgement email will be issued on receipt of the appeal.
- 2.33 Appeals received after the 10 working day deadline will be deemed out of time and will not normally be considered. The student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter including details of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator Scheme (see Section 9).
- 2.34 In exceptional cases only, a late appeal may be considered provided that the submission is accompanied by detailed and supported reasons for the late submission.
- 2.35 The appeal should be submitted in writing using the Student Attendance Monitoring Policy Appeal Form.
- 2.36 Original evidence must be provided in support of the appeal and listed on the Appeal Form. If evidence cannot be provided with the appeal form, it must be submitted no later than 5 working days after submission of the appeal form.

### Consideration of the Appeal

- 2.37 The appeal will be forwarded in its entirety to the Head of Registry Services, where it will initially be established that School records are accurate in relation to the issues raised in the appeal.

- 2.38 The Head of Registry Services will liaise with the Programme director to provide a response to the student within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal.
- 2.39 The School is empowered to make one of the following decisions:
- 2.40 To dismiss the appeal if it is determined that no substantive case has been established. The appeal procedure within the University will be at an end, in which case the student will be given the reasons for the decision in writing. This will contain a Completion of Procedures statement including details of the OIA Scheme (see Section 9).
- 2.41 To uphold the appeal and request Registry to reinstate the student's registration with or without a recommendation that the student be granted a retrospective period of authorised absence. The School may specify conditions of reinstatement and the consequences of the student failing to adhere to these conditions. Should subsequent failure to adhere to these conditions result in the student's withdrawal, the student has a further right of appeal on the grounds detailed in 8.1 above.
- 2.42 To rescind the withdrawal decision and offer a period of interruption in light of relevant issues which may be raised in the appeal submission. If the offer of interruption is rejected by the student, the original withdrawal decision stands. The student will be given a Completion of Procedures letter containing details of the OIA Scheme (see Section 9). If the issues raised within the appeal submission are considered to potentially affect the student's ability to study on return to the University, the case may be referred to the Fitness to Study procedure.
- 2.43 To refer the appeal to a meeting of the Academic Appeals Committee, in which case the procedure outlined in Sections 7 and 8 of the Academic Appeals Procedure will apply.

#### **External Adjudication**

- 2.44 Students who have been issued with a Completion of Procedures letter may be able to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if they remain dissatisfied with a final decision of the University, providing that their complaint is eligible under its Rules, which are available on the OIA website at [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

### **Length of Study**

- 2.45 A programme of study must extend over the normal period of time prescribed in the programme specifications for each programme (see below).

#### **Maximum duration of study Taught programmes**

- 2.46 The maximum period of study for a taught postgraduate programme run by the School, including interruptions of study, and satisfactory completion of all examinations, shall be no more than three years for full time and five years for part-time students for any single continuing registration.

#### **Research degrees**

- 2.47 The maximum period of study for PhD, including interruptions, shall be six years for full time and nine years for part time students.

A student's period of registration may only be extended beyond the maximum years through successful application to the AQSC.

### **Changes to Student Status**

- 2.48 Students may not change their registration circumstances / status retrospectively or during the third term of any academic year. This includes, for example, changing from full-time to part-time (and vice-versa) or changing to writing-up status. Changes can be notified in the third term for application the following academic year. The Registry must always be notified in advance of any changes and normally within the first two weeks of term may not interrupt their studies retrospectively. The Registry must be notified in advance of any interruption in order for requests to interrupt to be approved at School and/or institute level as appropriate. Requests to interrupt studies are usually only considered on the basis of extenuating circumstances.

#### **Interruptions of study**

- 2.49 Except for periods of maternity leave (see 2.50), students may interrupt their studies for one year. Students may continue their interruption for one further year only (maximum permitted interruption being two years) through successful application to the AQSC. Students who have not re-enrolled or communicated their intentions towards their studies by the end of the period of interruption shall be withdrawn from the programme.

### General Provisions for Maternity and Paternity

- 2.50 The School adopts a flexible approach in compliance with the Equality Act. Students are encouraged to disclose their pregnancy to a nominated staff member to enable the School to support the student.
- 2.51 Students are advised to inform the School about antenatal appointments where they affect attendance.
- 2.52 Pregnant students and their partners can use Special examination arrangements (see 3.27), Deferral and withdrawal from examination or part of an examination (see 3.61) and Mitigating circumstances procedures (see 3.77) with regard to issues such as pregnancy-related illness, absence due to attendance of antenatal appointments and special examination arrangements.
- 2.53 The maternity and paternity provisions in 2.54 and 2.56 are applicable to still birth and neonatal death.

### Maternity Leave

- 2.54 Students are entitled to maternity leave following the birth of their child. The period of leave will be agreed with the student on the basis of her personal circumstances and the structure and content of her course. At a minimum, students are required to take two weeks' compulsory maternity leave.
- 2.55 Students must inform the School in writing using the [Parental Leave Form](#) about their decision to take maternity leave at least 15 weeks before their due date. This will allow the School sufficient time to liaise with the student regarding the length of their leave and any necessary arrangements (such as communications during leave) for the duration of their leave.

### Paternity Leave

- 2.56 Students are entitled to two weeks (10 days) paternity leave within three months following the birth of their child.

### Adoption Leave

- 2.57 The provisions for maternity and paternity leave are valid for adoption leave.

## Termination of Registration

### Fees

To be read in conjunction with the [School's Tuition Fee Policy](#) and the [University's Ordinance 18: Suspension and Termination of Registration of Students in Debt](#) and the School's [Terms and Conditions](#).

- 2.58 Tuition fees are normally paid to the institute where the student is registered, except as noted in 2.1, where fees may be paid to the institute or to the collaborating College, according to arrangements for the particular programme.
- 2.59 The procedures for payment of fees, including provision for payment by instalment, will be determined by the School. The Registry office will be responsible for implementation of the procedures, which may be subject to discretionary variation in particular circumstances.
- 2.60 Full registration or continued registration is conditional on the appropriate fee being paid. Penalties for late or non-payment will be as indicated in the School's Tuition Fee Policy.

### Student indebtedness

- 2.61 In addition to the provisions of 2.60, under the terms of Ordinance 18, an institute or the School may recommend to the Dean that the registration of a student who is in tuition fee debt to the University be suspended or terminated.
- 2.62 A recommendation for suspension of registration shall include a recommendation for the conditions that must be satisfied before suspension is lifted. These shall normally include a requirement that the outstanding debt be paid in full and may include undertakings to be given about future payments or other matters. Recommendations for termination of registration will only be made in serious cases of debt.
- 2.63 The Head of Registry Services shall maintain a register of persons whose registration is suspended or has been terminated. Information on examination performance will not be withheld from a person on the register, but they will not be allowed to graduate.

**Termination of registration on academic grounds (see also section on academic conduct in Section 5).**

- 2.64 The provisions of [Ordinance 15](#) [Termination of Registration on Academic Grounds (other than failure in a prescribed examination)] shall apply. A student's registration may be terminated on academic grounds where their academic performance, progress, attendance or attainment falls below the required standard in a way which suggests that the programme of study is unlikely to be completed satisfactorily or successfully. This includes (but is not limited to) absence from classes, seminars or other required activities, failure to submit required work, submission of work significantly below the required standard, and any other factors that impede academic progress, such as lack of cooperation with a tutor or supervisor.
- 2.65 Lateness in submitting written work in taught Master's degrees and diplomas, without cause acceptable to the institute, will result in a penalty in the mark awarded, or in the work not being marked. The sanctions, and the conditions for their application, must be included in the relevant guidelines and communicated to students.
- 2.66 The Board of Examiners will receive a report on mark deductions or other penalties for late submission of work.
- 2.67 Proceedings under Ordinance 15 are not disciplinary proceedings and termination of registration is not a disciplinary sanction. If the academic grounds constitute misconduct as defined in the Code of Student Discipline: Ordinance 17), then proceedings shall be instituted under that Code. This procedure shall not be used where separate procedures are provided under other Ordinances such as those in the case of debt (which includes a failure to pay fees or other charges) or where specific conditions relating to registration are not fulfilled, leading to cancellation of registration, failure to register or failure to renew registration.

**Warnings about academic performance**

- 2.68 A student whose academic performance gives cause for concern will:
- (a) receive a written warning from the programme director (or equivalent) or supervisor, including the conditions that must be satisfied to remedy performance, when the conditions must be met, and to whose satisfaction;
  - (b) be offered counselling by his or her personal tutor or by a senior officer of the School.
- 2.69 The warning may be repeated and the conditions may be varied after further meetings with the student. A written record shall be retained of any such warning and a copy sent to the student.
- 2.70 Registration may be terminated as set out in 2.58 – 2.67 below in serious cases where:
- (a) a warning would not be appropriate; or
  - (b) a warning cannot be issued (e.g. because the student cannot be contacted); or
  - (c) the warning is ignored; or
  - (d) academic performance remains unsatisfactory after due warning has been given.

**Academic insufficiency caused by medical or health reasons**

- 2.71 If it appears, or if the student alleges, that the academic grounds for termination of registration may be brought about by medical or health reasons, including mental ill health or substance abuse, the student's institute, before commencing proceedings may seek, and may require the student to seek, professional advice. The institute may require a student to undergo a medical examination or to provide evidence from a medical practitioner.
- 2.72 The institute shall consider the evidence and medical advice and the prospects of improvement enabling completion of a programme. In the light of this advice, the institute shall consider whether a period of interruption of study would be more appropriate than termination of registration. Any material available to the institute shall normally be supplied to the student.

**Termination of registration**

- 2.73 Registration in respect of institutes of the School may be terminated on academic grounds by the Dean.
- 2.74 A recommendation that registration be terminated under Ordinance 15 may be made to a Director of an institute by a programme director (or equivalent) or the student's supervisor, but only after a warning has been issued and counselling has been offered as in 2.68b, the time for satisfying any conditions in that warning has elapsed, and in any event not less than four weeks have elapsed since the written warning was issued. Proceedings may be initiated by a Director without such a recommendation, provided that the conditions mentioned in 2.68 have been satisfied.

- 2.75 The Director may (a) summarily dismiss the recommendation, at the Director's discretion, or (b) arrange for an interview with the student.
- 2.76 The student shall be sent written notice at least ten working days in advance of the interview, including the reason for it, a copy of all relevant information received by the Director and a copy of this Ordinance 15. The student may be accompanied during the interview by a member of the University and will be given an opportunity to speak and ask questions.
- 2.77 The Director may require attendance at the interview of other persons from the institute (normally the student's personal tutor or supervisor) and shall consider a request from the student for attendance of other persons. The interview will be conducted at a time and place and in a manner, which seems to the Director most appropriate. The interview may be conducted notwithstanding the non-attendance of any other person provided that the Director and the student are both present.
- 2.78 The Director may reach a decision without interviewing if the student cannot be contacted or fails to attend after due notice.
- 2.79 After the interview, or the date fixed for the interview if the student was absent, the Director must within five working days reach one of the following decisions:
- (a) that termination of registration is not justified; or
  - (b) that termination of registration is not justified but there are sufficient academic grounds to justify a recommendation for termination of registration unless a particular course of action is followed, or on some future event; or
  - (c) that termination of registration is justified, and a recommendation will be made to the Dean for the termination forthwith of the student's registration.
- 2.80 The Director shall within ten working days of the decision inform the student of the decision either orally (in which case it shall be confirmed in writing), or in writing, stating any conditions required under 2.79(b).
- 2.81 Where a decision under 2.79 is taken, the student will be given at least ten working days to make a submission to the Dean, who will consider the submission together with the recommendation in making a decision under 2.73. The Director shall inform the student of the right to make such a submission at the same time as the decision under 2.79 is communicated.
- 2.82 In accordance with 2.79, the Dean, having considered the recommendation and any submission by the student, may either terminate the registration, refer the matter back for further consideration or determine that the matter is closed.
- 2.83 The Dean shall inform the Director and the student of the decision, and of the right of appeal.
- 2.84 A request for a review of determination by the Dean under 2.82 may be made by the student to the Vice-Chancellor. Fresh evidence may be advanced in support of a review only where it could not reasonably have been made available at the time of the interview.
- 2.85 The Vice-Chancellor shall review the case and make such enquiries, if any, as the Vice-Chancellor deems appropriate. The Vice-Chancellor shall hold an oral hearing only if the Vice-Chancellor so decides, but normally will not do so.
- 2.86 If a hearing is to be held, the student shall be sent written notice at least ten working days in advance of the hearing, including a copy of all relevant information available to the Vice-Chancellor. The student may be accompanied during the hearing by a member of the University and will be given an opportunity to speak and ask questions.
- 2.87 The Vice-Chancellor shall either:
- (a) rescind the decision to terminate registration, with or without conditions; or
  - (b) confirm the termination of registration.
- 2.88 The Vice-Chancellor's decision after the review shall be final.
- 2.89 The Vice-Chancellor shall arrange for the student to be informed of the decision within ten working days either orally (in which case it shall be confirmed in writing), or in writing. If the student's registration is not to be terminated, the communication to the student shall state any conditions the Vice-Chancellor requires.

## Occasional Students

- 2.90 A person may be enrolled as an occasional student at an institute as following a programme of study or a programme of research approved by the institute, such that it does not have the purpose of obtaining any degree, diploma or certificate of proficiency of the University. Occasional students are not formally students of the University.
- 2.91 An occasional student may not simultaneously be registered as a student for a degree of the University, or as an external student of the University.
- 2.92 The institute at which the occasional student is enrolled may, at its discretion, issue a certificate that they have completed a programme of study or a programme of research as an occasional student. If the Director of the relevant institute recommends it, such a certificate shall be issued to the student in such form as may be approved, signed by the Dean.

## 3. Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Degrees

### Programmes of Study

- 3.1 The taught postgraduate degree is intended for award on the satisfactory completion, including formal examinations (to include assessed coursework, written examinations, dissertation and such other forms of examination as prescribed in the relevant programme regulations), of a prescribed programme of full-time study beyond the Bachelor's degree level of at least 12 months or its equivalent in part-time study.
- 3.2 New programmes of study, and significant changes to programmes of study, are subject to approval (see Section 7).
- 3.3 The School may make provisions for credit for study undertaken by students at other institutions or in non-degree courses within the University, during their period of registration for a degree or diploma. Such provisions must ensure that at least one third of the programme and assessment is undertaken in the School and that this includes the final stage of the programme and assessment.
- 3.4 A list of the programmes of study for taught Master's degrees offered in the School can be found at: [www.sas.ac.uk/graduate-study/our-courses](http://www.sas.ac.uk/graduate-study/our-courses).

### Duration of programmes

- 3.5 Programmes of study and the examinations associated with them shall be organised so as to fall into one or both of the following categories:
- (a) a period of full-time study which shall normally be 12 months, the examinations being completed by the end of that period
  - (b) a period of part-time study normally of two years, during which candidates will be examined in accordance with the programme regulations
- 3.6 Notwithstanding the above, at the start of the programme or at a later stage the institute may require a student to pursue the programme for a period longer than the normal period. (All references to institutes include CAI.)

### Off-campus study

- 3.7 A student pursuing a taught postgraduate degree programme may be allowed, at the discretion of the relevant institute and provided that the programme regulations so permit, to spend a maximum period of six months, or an equivalent period in the case of a student pursuing a part-time programme, on project work under appropriate supervision at an organisation or institution approved by the institute as having a function relevant and suitable to the field of study.

## Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates

### Period of study and methods of examination

- 3.8 The minimum period of study will be as prescribed in the programme regulations for the particular diploma/certificate.



- 3.9 The programme of study shall require formal teaching and instruction, and/or project work, and shall normally involve not less than 24 hours study per week (contact hours and private study time) for a full-time programme, or the equivalent for a part-time programme.
- 3.10 Normally candidates pursuing a programme of study for a diploma/certificate will not be permitted to undertake their project work outside the School. Exceptionally, however, the programme regulations may permit this and in such a case the programme regulations shall specify the conditions in which it may be undertaken.
- 3.11 Students accumulating credit towards a Diploma or Certificate from a summer school will be required to register as students for a minimum period of 12 weeks;
- 3.12 Schemes of examination are as prescribed in the programme regulations, and the examination shall take place at the time or times specified in the programme regulations.
- 3.13 The regulations on entry and re-entry to examinations, examination procedures and conduct in examinations, illness, special examination arrangements and examination offences, representations from candidates concerning examination results and so on, are all as at 3.18 and onwards.
- 3.14 To be awarded a Diploma or Certificate a candidate must:
- (a) have completed to the satisfaction of the examiners the programme of study prescribed;
  - (b) have been examined in all parts of the examination prescribed and shown a competent knowledge in the examination as a whole;
  - (c) satisfy the examiners in the examination prescribed within a period of two years from the satisfactory completion of the prescribed period of study, unless otherwise provided for in the particular programme regulations. This period of two years may be extended at the discretion of the AQSC.
- 3.15 Marks and/or grades obtained by candidates at examinations for diplomas and certificates will routinely be issued to candidates in confidence following the examination concerned. Each candidate will be notified of the result of their examination by the relevant institute.
- 3.16 A diploma under the seal of the University will subsequently be delivered by the University to each candidate who has been awarded the diploma or certificate.

### **Postgraduate Taught Degrees by Distance Learning**

- 3.17 The taught degrees offered by the School via distance learning will conform to all the regulations and ordinances as set out above. the minimum entry criteria will be published in ways that are understandable in all parts of the world where the programme will be offered;
- (a) it will be made clear that English will be the language that is used for and in all tuition, materials, residential schools, counselling, examinations, assessment and administration in the University;
  - (b) students should receive a clear explanation of the expectations placed upon them for study and the nature of any autonomous, collaborative or supported aspects of the learning, and the time commitment that they should be making;
  - (c) the institute will clearly specify the student entitlement to learning resources and support, including any assumed entitlements, or support required to be in place, or to be obtained by the student;
  - (d) students will be informed of the technical requirements for the programme and the anticipated response times from those responsible for technical support;
  - (e) the schedule must make clear the sequence of the programme and the relationship between the whole programme structure and the individual modules. Students need to know when there will be an opportunity for support by tutors, and deadlines for formative and summative assessment;
  - (f) students will be provided with assessment criteria as the basis on which their achievement will be judged, and the relative weightings of each module;
  - (g) students should appreciate their own responsibilities in terms of responding to requests and for participation in individual or group activities. Information must be given on the ground rules and protocols for communication;
  - (h) students must be given appropriate opportunities to give formal feedback on their experiences; this could include online forms and web-conferencing.

## Examinations

- 3.18 Examination shall involve assessed coursework or unseen written examinations, or both, and a significant piece of individual work in the form of a dissertation or report; the latter may be based on a project or fieldwork. **In the following, ‘examination’ refers (unless specified otherwise) to the total schedule of assessment prescribed in the relevant programme regulations.** Schemes of examination are prescribed in the programme regulations for each programme.
- 3.19 The unseen written examination for each module, where applicable, shall take place on one occasion each year, as specified in the programme regulations, except where a special examination is permitted in the case of illness or other acceptable cause (see 3.61-3.65; 3.77-3.80).
- 3.20 The schedule for submission of assessed coursework shall be as determined in the particular programme regulations.
- 3.21 The dissertation or report designated in 3.18 above will be examined on one occasion only in each year and the date for submission will be specified in the programme regulations.
- 3.22 To be awarded a degree a candidate must have:
- (a) completed to the satisfaction of the School the programme of study prescribed;
  - (b) received ethical approval for their research via the UoL research ethics process
  - (c) been examined in all parts of the examination prescribed for the programme and shown a competent knowledge in the examination as a whole.
- 3.23 A candidate must satisfy the examiners in the examination prescribed within two years from the completion of the prescribed period of study. This two-year period may be extended at the discretion of AQSC, but in no circumstances go beyond three years.

### Entry to examinations

- 3.24 Entries to the examination must be received by the University by the date it has specified.
- 3.25 Candidates are bound by the regulations in force at the time of their entry to the examination.
- 3.26 No student will be admitted to an unseen written examination unless the certificate (on the examination entry form) of having attended the appropriate programme of study in accordance with the regulations has been completed by the authorised person (the Director, or an officer designated by the Director) in the institute to which the student is attached.

### Special examination arrangements

- 3.27 The University’s Regulations (Regulation 1: Section E, paragraph 92) for Special Examination Arrangements apply. The procedures in the School, pending approval by the Collegiate Council, are as follows: applications are sent to the University’s Special Examination Services Officer. The authorised person in the candidate’s institute must normally send an application for special examination arrangements in regard to a named candidate no later than six weeks before the date of the candidate’s first examination. Applications after this date will only be considered in the case of sudden illness or injury.

### Examination procedures

- 3.28 Candidates at any examination by written papers taken under supervision and within a defined time limit or at any practical, oral or similar examination will be allowed to use such books, notes, instruments or other materials or aids as are specifically permitted by the institute responsible for the programme of study in question.
- 3.29 Except as provided in 3.27 above, no books, notes, instruments or other materials or aids whatsoever may be introduced into an examination room or be handled or consulted during an examination. Any such materials or aids in the possession of a candidate on entry to the examination room shall be deposited immediately with the invigilator, and any unauthorised materials or aids introduced by a candidate into the examination room must upon request be surrendered to the invigilator.
- 3.30 Any such unauthorised materials may be handed by the invigilator to the appropriate officer of the University, who may make copies thereof; the originals and all such copies may be retained by the University at its absolute discretion.

- 3.31 Candidates shall not, unless expressly so authorised, pass any information from one to another during an examination, nor shall any candidate act in collusion with another candidate or other person, copy from another candidate or engage in similar activity.
- 3.32 At any examination by written papers taken under supervision or where the programme regulations provide for part of the examination to consist of papers, essays or other work written in a candidate's own time, coursework assessment or any similar form of test, the work submitted by the candidate must be the candidate's own and any quotation from the published or unpublished work of other persons, including work published in electronic format, must be duly acknowledged. Plagiarism – the unacknowledged use of the work of another person as the student's own original work, including copying another's work or collusion with another, copying or adapting paper-based, electronic or web-based information – is an examination offence.
- 3.33 Failure to observe the provisions of 3.28 to 3.32 above will constitute an examination offence (see below).
- 3.34 Answers to examination questions must be in English unless other instructions are given in the programme regulations or in the examination question paper.
- 3.35 Examination scripts for University degrees and diplomas are the property of the University and will not be returned to the candidate.

### Marking

- 3.36 The School will publicise and use clear assessment criteria and marking schemes, and ensure that students are aware of, and understand, the criteria that will be used. Grade descriptors (see Annex) should be included in programme handbooks. They should be supplemented, where necessary, with discipline-specific guidance.
- 3.37 The practice of submission of early drafts of dissertations and (in some programmes) assessed work should be clearly stated in programme handbooks, and should be consistently and transparently implemented.
- 3.38 Marking schemes for taught Master's degrees shall specify that the mark for a pass shall be 50% overall and the mark for Distinction, awarded to a candidate who has shown exceptional merit, shall be 70% overall or above, with a mark of at least 70% in the dissertation. Merit will be awarded for a mark of 60–69% overall, with a mark of at least 60% in the dissertation. Within these parameters, regulations particular to each programme will apply. See also Annex (grade descriptors).
- 3.39 All assessed work must be submitted and marked anonymously. Marking and moderation practice should be consistently applied to ensure that assessment is, and can be demonstrated to be, appropriate to the discipline being taught; suitable for the material being assessed; appropriate to the means of assessment being used; accurate, consistent, fair, and impartial. To this end, as a minimum all assessed work must be open double marked with theses and dissertations blind double marked. The double marking should be clearly evidenced (e.g. in the feedback provided to students, on the feedback cover sheet. This will also enable the external examiner to undertake their role).
- 3.40 There should be a clear procedure in place for the agreement of marks and markers and for the resolution of any differences.
- 3.41 First and second markers will discuss all discrepancies of marks. Where this is 5% or less of the mark for the entire module, and where the mark does not span a classification border, they may simply take an average of the two marks.
- 3.42 Where it is more than 5 % or crosses a classification border the procedure below should be adopted;
- (i) To be nominated for the award of distinction the borderline student (with an overall mark of 68 or 69) must:  
Have achieved distinction for at least half of their marks  
Have achieved distinction for their final dissertation.
  - (ii) To be nominated for the award of merit the borderline student (with overall marks of 58 and 59 must:  
Have achieved merit for at least half of their marks
  - (iii) Have achieved merit for their final dissertation.

### Moderation

- 3.43 Moderation is the process by which marks are checked against feedback to ensure that the mark awarded is appropriate. The role of the moderator is to ensure that the scale, range and standards of first marking are appropriate, with recommendations for change being applied to an entire run of work.

- 3.44 Moderation should ensure an appropriate range of assessments are considered by use of a representative sample. The sample will include assessments across the range with at least one assessment from each classification band and roughly equal numbers from each band; all fails and at least 20% of the module cohort or at least 5 students whichever is greater. Where numbers of scripts are less than 5 that will mean sending the entire cohort's scripts to the examiner.
- 3.45 External examiners (see 3.84) are required to oversee the moderation process but not act as a second marker or a moderator themselves. In the event of resolving differences between markers, there should be an audit trail to show how the final mark was agreed and clear evidence that moderation has taken place, such as feedback to the student by both markers either on the piece of work itself or by a separate feedback sheet.
- 3.46 If the dissertation or report is otherwise adequate but requires minor amendments, the examiners may require the candidate to make, within one month, amendments specified by them, to be approved by them jointly or by one or more of their number nominated by them.
- 3.47 There can be no appeals concerning matters of academic judgement.

#### **Automatic extensions**

- 3.48 Students will be offered one opportunity across all modules per academic year to submit for an automatic extension for up to 7 days. This applies to all modes of study.
- 3.49 Automatic assessment extensions are not eligible for presentations, performance or other practicals, un-seen and take home examinations, placements and or internships with an element of assessment where students may gain unfair access to questions or answers.
- 3.50 For extensions of more than 7 days the student should submit the coursework at a date agreed by the course director and apply via the mitigating circumstances process to the Board of Examiners.
- 3.51 Any more than one request for an extension per academic year is submitted as a mitigating circumstance.

#### **Dissertations**

- 3.52 Dissertations are subject to the same rules as outlined in 3.48 where students can confirm they wish to take up the allowance of late submission for up to 7 days after the submission date. Such confirmation MUST be submitted where possible a minimum of 7 days before the due date. Failure to confirm will mean that the automatic renewal is not applied and the penalty for late submission will be applied.
- 3.53 Requests or submission longer than 7 days can be agreed by submission to the mitigating circumstances panel.
- 3.54 Students should note that such submission will have implications for marking and exam board verification and the student in this situation will be asked to register for a term in the new academic year for which a fee will be payable.

#### **Marking Penalties**

- 3.55 Candidates must pay attention to word limits. For coursework exceeding the upper word limit by at least 10%, the work will be reduced by five percentage marks, subject to a minimum mark of a minimum pass.
- 3.56 A student who fails to submit material for assessment or submits after the deadline and has not made a request for an extension will receive a mark which has been adjusted according to the scale for that assessment, with the following penalties:
- (a) Coursework for assessment but not including the dissertation, will be subject to the deduction of marks as follows:
    - (i) a penalty of 10 percent of the mark awarded for work up to one week late except where the student has indicated that they are using their automatic extension;
    - (ii) a penalty of 20 percent of the mark awarded for work between one and two weeks late except where the student has applied for mitigating circumstances to be taken into account;
  - (b) non-submission of work or work that has been submitted late and without an approved extension will be awarded a mark of zero and an attempt will be used.
  - (c) Submission of work as a second attempt will be capped at the pass mark of 50.

- (d) A dissertation handed in after the deadline will be subject to the same penalties as above, except that the institute reserves the right not to accept and/or mark a dissertation that is handed in after the deadline.
- (e) Such a student may, at the discretion of the relevant Board of Examiners and on the recommendation of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel, be permitted to attempt the assessment again if the regulations for the programme permit such reassessment. The panel will also decide if the second attempt mark is capped as in para. 3.57.3 feedback

3.57 For the purpose of guidance, feedback must be given to students on their performance in assessed coursework, using the approved feedback coversheet.

3.58 Where feedback includes a mark or grade, students must be advised that marks are provisional until confirmed by the Examination Board which may amend marks in reaching its decision.

3.59 In accordance with the Data Protection Act, an examiner's comment sheet should be attached to assessed written work; comments and marks should not be shown on an exam script, essay or dissertation.

3.60 Students have a responsibility to consider feedback on their work, to seek to understand it, and to act upon it. Such feedback must be:

- (a) Timely. It is acknowledged that students benefit from feedback on their work at a time when they will be able to use it and are most likely to take notice of it – for example, during a module rather than at the end. Timescales for feedback will be set out in student handbooks and students will be notified of any changes which may take place during the course of the year. The normal expectation is that no student should wait more than 28 calendar days for the return of assessed coursework.
- (b) Constructive. Constructive criticism should be the overriding feedback style. Feedback is intended to identify areas for improvement as well as commending achievement and where possible relating to learning outcomes and grades; further reading, where appropriate, should be indicated. Students should be encouraged to reflect on their own performance, as well as receiving feedback from others.
- (c) Personal. Written comments should be provided for all exam scripts and coursework and be clear and legible. These should be provided in a separate document but should enable students to understand to which part of their work the comments refer. Opportunities should be made for students to discuss feedback in person with the module tutor(s), and within reason to seek clarification and further feedback.
- (d) Where feedback includes a mark or grade, students must be advised that marks are provisional until confirmed by the Examination Board which may amend marks in reaching its decision. There can be no appeals concerning matters of academic judgement.

#### **Deferral and withdrawal from examination or part of examination**

3.61 Except where a student has been granted an automatic extension a student may be permitted to withdraw from an examination for which they are registered, or be granted an extension to an assessment deadline, at the discretion of the Programme Director of Studies, for an extension of assessment deadline, or the Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP; see 3.77-884 for details) for all other cases, provided that they supply evidence of illness or other good cause not less than seven working days before the commencement of the first examination which they are expected to sit or before the date of submission in the case of other assessed work. Evidence should be submitted on the form provided for this purpose.

3.62 For extensions longer than 7 days or where the automatic extension has already been granted once in an academic year, the MCP must be satisfied that:

- (a) the illness or other good cause would render the student unfit to enter the examination or to complete the assessment by the deadline;
- (b) that the illness or other good cause would either:
- (c) have a significant and adverse impact on the student's performance in the examination or other assessment; or
- (d) would prevent the student from sitting the examination or prevent the student from completing or submitting the assessment within the given time-frame.

- 3.63 Where the MCP is satisfied that the above conditions have been met, the student will both be withdrawn from the examination and deferred, or, for other assessment, a new submission deadline will be set.
- 3.64 Except as provided for in 3.65 below, a student who is absent from an examination for which they are registered without having been permitted to withdraw, according to the provisions of Regulation 3.49 above, will be regarded as having attempted the examination, and will be awarded a mark of zero for that examination. Such a student may, at the discretion of the relevant Board of Examiners and on the recommendation of the MCP, be permitted to attempt the examination again if the regulations for the programme permit such reassessment (see 3.67 below).
- 3.65 A student who is registered for an examination and who is absent from that examination without having been withdrawn, or who fails to submit material for assessment by the deadline without an extension, according to the provisions of 3.61–64 above, may be retrospectively withdrawn in that examination, or granted a retrospective extension to the assessment deadline at the discretion of the Board of Examiners on the recommendation of the MCP, provided that they provide evidence of illness or other good cause prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners at which the results for that examination will be determined and normally within seven working days of the examination having taken place or the assessment deadline. Evidence should be submitted on the Mitigating Circumstances form provided for this purpose.

#### **Illness**

- 3.66 Special provision for illness or other good cause is given in the withdrawal regulations (see 3.61–65 above). Where a candidate believes that their performance has been adversely affected by circumstances beyond their control, a case, with appropriate documentation, should be submitted to the chair of the MCP prior to the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners, using the form provided for this purpose (MCF) and normally within seven working days of the examination having taken place or the assessment deadline.

#### **Condoned fails**

- 3.67 A student must achieve a pass in the dissertation to be awarded the degree. However
- (a) a marginal failure in one module may be condoned at the discretion of the Examination Board provided that the overall mark for the programme is at least 50%; where the programme includes half-module units the condonation may, at the discretion of the Examination Board, be applied to two half- units
  - (b) the definition of ‘marginal failure’ is at the discretion of the relevant Examination Board but will not normally extend to a mark below 47%; the Examination Board may condone a mark below this norm when:
    - i) the overall mark for the programme is at least 50%, and
    - ii) the student achieves a mark of 60% or above in at least one significant element of the programme
  - (c) the original mark shall be recorded, with condonation noted as approved by the Examination Board.

#### **Re-entry**

- 3.68 A candidate who does not at the first entry successfully complete an examination or intermediate part of the examination (defined as the examination required to permit a student registered part-time to proceed from one year to the next, or one stage to the next where the programme is so organised), may re-enter that examination (or intermediate part) on one occasion. Such re-entry will be subject to the agreement of the institute when it would involve further attendance at the institute, and it will be at the next following examination except where an institute has granted permission for a candidate to defer re-entry. The dates of the written examination and for the submission of an essay, report or dissertation (where required) shall be as specified in the relevant programme regulations.
- 3.69 The examiners may determine that a candidate who has been examined in all elements of the examination or intermediate part of the examination and who fails to satisfy the examiners may be exempt on re-entry from one or more of the following:
- (a) one or more of the written papers;
  - (b) essay/report/dissertation;
  - (c) assessment of coursework;
  - (d) practical examinations;
  - (e) oral examinations.

- 3.70 A candidate who is permitted to retake examinations or resubmit work for assessment under the terms set out above will not be formally registered as a student in the period leading to resubmission; however, an administration fee may be charged by the institute, at its discretion.

#### Examination offences

- 3.71 The University of London Assessment Offence Regulations, Procedures for the Consideration of Allegations of Assessment Offence apply (see Section 5.44).

#### Representations from candidates concerning examination results

- 3.72 Appeals against the results of examinations on academic grounds will not be considered. The University will consider representations made on the grounds of administrative error or where there is concern that the examination may not have been conducted in accordance with the relevant instructions and/or regulations.
- 3.73 Any representation regarding unseen written examinations should be addressed to the Director of the UoLW, or forwarded to the Director of UoLW by the institute concerned.
- 3.74 Any representation regarding assessed coursework or the dissertation should be addressed to the Director of the institute. The Director will investigate the matter, and will attempt to resolve it. If the matter cannot easily be resolved, it will be referred by the Director to the Board of Examiners for decision. The Board of Examiners shall be informed of all matters raised under this rubric.

#### Results and Diplomas

- 3.75 Every candidate will be notified by the University of the result of their examination. Candidates will be informed of the marks obtained in those elements in which they have been examined.
- 3.76 A diploma under the seal of the University will subsequently be delivered by the University to successful candidates.

### Mitigating Circumstances

- 3.77 The aim of a mitigating procedure is to give students a fair opportunity to show that they can reach the required academic standard. It acknowledges that sometimes performance is affected by unexpected events beyond our control. Students should ensure that they have read the mitigating circumstances procedure to ensure that they understand the types of circumstance which may be accepted as being mitigating. The policy can be found here: [Mitigating Circumstances and Assessment Board Policy \[PDF\] September 2023.pdf \(sas.ac.uk\)](#)
- 3.78 The School has a right to request evidence to support submissions. Examples of such evidence can be found in the above policy.
- 3.79 The Deadline for making mitigating circumstances requests should allow enough time for students to obtain supporting evidence including time for evidence to be translated if in a foreign language.
- 3.80 The policy allows for students who have experienced a short illness that has had a significant impact on their exams or assessments but did not require medical intervention to request additional consideration without needing to obtain supporting medical evidence. In other words to 'self-certificate'. The School allows such mitigation for a maximum of two occasions per academic year

#### Disabled students

- 3.81 Reasonable adjustments will continue to be made when a student declares a disability; examples include changes to the physical environment to improve access; providing or allowing students to use assistive technology; adjustments to teaching and learning; giving information in a variety of formats; adjustment to exams and practical assessments such as extra time, rest breaks, use of a scribe etc; extensions to deadlines. These will usually be outlined in learning agreements.
- 3.82 The School is likely to support further adjustments to those specified in the learning agreement.
- 3.83 Where a student has decided not to declare a disability at the outset and then retrospectively and requests an adjustment for an assessment there will not be automatic agreement. The case will be considered on its own merits.

#### Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP)

##### Constitution of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP)

- 3.84 The MCP will comprise the Dean or her nominee; the Head of Registry Services; an external member of the AQSC and a Director of a non-teaching institute. It will be chaired by the Dean or her nominee. The panel will



sit at various times during the academic year but as a minimum at least one week before the date of the first School Examination Board.

### Mitigating circumstances procedures

3.85 In exercising its discretion, the MCP must be satisfied that:

- (a) the illness or other good cause rendered the student unfit to enter the examination or to complete and submit the assessed work by the deadline;
- (b) that the illness or other good cause would either:
- (c) have had a significant and adverse impact on the student's performance in the examination or assessed work; or
- (d) have prevented the student from sitting the examination.

3.86 Additionally, the MCP must be satisfied that the student was unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to request to be withdrawn from the examination or to request an extension to a deadline in accordance with 3.61-65 above.

3.87 A student must not re-submit evidence they have relied on in previous submissions as part of their mitigating circumstances submission

3.88 Where the MCP is satisfied that the above conditions have been met, it will recommend to the Board of Examiners that the student either be retrospectively withdrawn from the examination or deferred, or, for other assessment, a new submission deadline will be set.

3.89 A student who presents themselves for an examination or submits material for assessment will be deemed to have considered themselves fit to enter that examination or to undertake the assessment within the given time-frame, and any mark achieved in that examination/assessment will stand. Exceptionally, a student who entered an examination and completed that examination, or who was present at the examination but was unable to complete the examination, or who submitted material for assessment may, at the discretion of the MCP, be retrospectively withdrawn in that examination or offered another opportunity to undertake the assessment, provided that they supply evidence of illness or other good cause prior to the meeting of the MCP, prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners at which the results for that examination will be determined and normally within seven working days of the examination having taken place or the assessment deadline. Evidence should be submitted on the form provided for this purpose (Mitigating Circumstances Form).

3.90 In exercising its discretion, the MCP must be satisfied that:

- i) the illness or other good cause rendered the student unfit to enter the examination or to undertake the assessment, or, in the case of a student who failed to complete the examination, prevented the student from completing the examination
- ii) the illness or other good cause had a significant and adverse impact on the student's performance in the examination/assessment

3.91 Additionally, the MCP must be satisfied that the student was, for good reason, unable at the time of entry or submission to recognise that they were unfit to enter the examination or undertake the assessment during the specified time-frame.

3.92 Where the MCP is satisfied that the above conditions have been met, it will recommend to the Examination Board that the student will either be retrospectively withdrawn from the examination and deferred, or, for other assessment, a replacement opportunity to submit material for assessment with a new submission deadline will be offered.

3.93 Where a student is deferred in an examination, the student will be required to enter a replacement examination, where they will be examined as if for the first time (or second time if the deferred examination was itself a second attempt), normally at the next occasion when the examination is offered and the mark for the original attempt will be annulled. Where a student is deferred in an examination and required to enter a replacement examination, the Board of Examiners on advice of the MCP shall determine whether the student is required to sit the examination with or without further attendance.

3.94 Under no circumstances may examination marks be raised due to illness or other good cause in relation to a student's performance in an examination. However, where a candidate has submitted evidence of illness

or other good cause, and the MCP is satisfied that the conditions for the exercise of its discretion have been met, the Board of Examiners on the advice of the MCP may, instead of retrospectively withdrawing the candidate, give the candidate special consideration under the provisions of paragraph 3.67.

#### **Fees and Mitigating circumstances**

3.95 Students whose periods of study exceed the standard programme duration as a result of a mitigating circumstance claim will be transferred to writing up and the writing up fee charged.

#### **Outcomes arising from an MC panel**

3.96 If satisfied with the MC claim and supporting evidence, the MC panel may select one or more of the following outcomes (not exhaustive):

- A student may be granted a replacement opportunity to be taken at a later date
- A student may be granted an alternative assessment opportunity to be taken at a later date
- A student may be granted an extension to submit at a later date
- The late submission penalty may be suspended
- The cap of a re-entry /re-sit attempt may be removed
- A student may be permitted to defer their examination to the next assessment period.
- An element of assessment will be voided, and the module re-scaled so that the overall mark is based only on the elements of assessment the student has completed.

3.97 Under no circumstances will mitigation be grounds for adjusting marks awarded.

### **Governance**

#### **Boards of Examiners ('Exam Boards')**

3.98 The Board of Examiners shall act as (a) sub-Committee(s) to the AQSC and report to the Academic Board.

3.99 The Membership of the Board of Examiners shall be a representative sample of all the teachers on the relevant programme(s), an external examiner and an intercollegiate examiner.

3.100 The Terms of Reference of the Board of Examiners shall be received at the outset of each meeting, and are as follows:

- a) to monitor marking schemes and other criteria of assessment, including assessment of coursework, in order to ensure comparability and consistency between the various components of the programme;
- b) to monitor any other information required in order to fulfil the requirement of appropriate external quality assurance organisations that the totality of the programme of study and the requirement for progression within it, and the requirement for the student to achieve a satisfactory standard overall, are met
- c) to ensure that assessment is, and can be demonstrated to be, fair and impartial (as by second or double marking of scripts and anonymity of candidates at written examinations) to agree and confirm the marks awarded for examination scripts and dissertations;
- (d) to allow, within its powers of discretion, candidates to re-sit all, or parts, of an examination;
- (e) to consider special cases to report in the required form to the UoLW the results of candidates and any relevant special matters including the award of Distinction and Merit, or the equivalent process under successor quality assurance reporting arrangements;
- (f) to keep an accurate record of discussions and decisions made, for transmission to the AQSC.
- (g) to ensure that the provisions outlined in the School's No Detriment Policy (relating to Covid 19) are applied fairly and appropriately across the School.

#### **Boards of Examiners for distance learning programmes**

3.101 Programmes shall have a Board of Examiners which shall consist of all tutors associated with it and an external or intercollegiate examiner who has experience of distance learning.

- 3.102 The terms of reference for the Board of Examiners shall be as listed above but shall have particular regard for ensuring that the academic standard of the award is demonstrably comparable to those of awards delivered in the conventional manner.

#### **External and Intercollegiate examiners Nomination and appointment**

- 3.103 Regard shall be given to the following:

- a) only persons of seniority and experience who are able to command authority should be appointed;
- b) an external/intercollegiate examiner should not normally be appointed from a department in an institution where a member of the inviting institution is serving as an examiner, although exceptions may on occasions be unavoidable; for example, in the case of subjects taught only in a very small number of institutions
- c) former members of staff shall not be appointed at their former institutions before a lapse of at least three years or sufficient time for students taught by that member of staff to have passed through the system, whichever is the longer.

- 3.104 Persons invited to act as external/intercollegiate examiners will be invited to advise the School if they have any connections with any candidate on, or member of academic staff involved with, the relevant course, which would make it desirable for their appointments to be reconsidered.

- 3.105 External and intercollegiate examiners will be appointed annually. After service for a period of not more than four (normally consecutive) years, or, in exceptional circumstances, for such limited extension of this period as the AQSC shall determine he/she shall not be eligible for re-appointment until after a lapse of two further years.

- 3.106 External/intercollegiate examiners wishing to resign during their period of office should write formally to the Dean, giving sufficient notice for the appointment of a replacement.

- 3.107 The termination of an external/intercollegiate examiner's appointment during his/her period of office shall rest with the Vice-Chancellor as Chairman of the Collegiate Council. This power shall only be exercised after consideration of a formal report on which the Chairman of the Board of Examiners and the Chairman of the AQSC shall have had the opportunity to comment. Grounds for such termination shall include that criteria for appointment are found to have been breached, and failure to fulfil duties in a timely way.

#### **Duties and reporting**

- 3.108 The duties of external and intercollegiate examiners include the requirement that they have regard to the totality of a degree programme and that they be involved in and particularly influential in the decisions relating to the award of every degree. The external and intercollegiate examiner(s) does/do not have the power of veto. The Board of Examiners, in reaching a decision which is at variance with the view of the external and intercollegiate examiners(s), must be confident of the grounds for its decision and its minutes must provide a reasoned explanation for such decision. If an external or intercollegiate examiner is not able to endorse the Board's decisions the chair of the Board and the external/intercollegiate examiner shall make written statements to the Vice-Chancellor, who will assess and if possible resolve the issue.

- 3.109 External and intercollegiate examiners' reports should assess at least the following:

- a) the aims and objectives of the programme of study and the appropriateness of these to the level of the award to which they lead;
- b) the suitability of methods of teaching and the adequacy of teaching as indicated by students' performance in examination (including coursework or continuous assessment);
- c) the suitability of examination methods to the aims and objectives of the programme of study;
- d) the appropriateness of marking schemes for each element of assessment, of overall marking schemes for the programme and/or of schemes for the award of Distinction and Merit;
- (e) the fairness and impartiality of assessment procedures;
- (f) the standard of internal marking in the various modes of study included in the overall examination of the programme of study;
- (g) compliance with the regulations (e.g. on double marking, blind marking, approval of question papers and dissertation titles);

- (h) the comparability of standard of programmes of study and of standard of assessment with equivalent programmes and assessment in the same or similar disciplinary areas in the UK (or, in the case of intercollegiate examiners, comparability with Colleges of the University), or such other comparison as may be appropriate;

- 3.110 External and intercollegiate examiners are additionally invited to highlight areas of good practice with a view to enhancing the School's programmes generally.
- 3.111 External and intercollegiate examiners are required by the University to send their reports to the University within 15 days of the final examiners' meeting.
- 3.112 The reports of external and intercollegiate examiners are sent to the Directors of the relevant institutes. It is expected that the institutes will share these reports with at least the student representatives, and ideally with all students. The Institute Director, or nominee, will formally respond to the External Examiners' reports outlining where action has been taken and/ or where action is still required and what is proposed. External Examiners' reports and responses are considered through Institute academic meetings prior to being taken through the Annual Programme Planning and Review (APPR) process and AQSC will receive the resulting Annual Programme Report (APR) and an annual summary of all External Examiners' reports, responses and areas of good practice across the School. Where AQSC is not satisfied with the action taken or proposed to be taken by an institute in response to a report, it may suggest action under 6.10 or, if the urgency and importance of the matter warrants it, may proceed under 6.16.
- 3.113 External examiners' reports should be placed online where possible.

## 4. Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees

- 4.1 This section provides for registered students undertaking a research degree with a view to being awarded an MPhil or PhD.
- 4.2 The criteria for award of MPhil and PhD are set out in the [University Regulations for the Degrees of MPhil and PhD](#) and the criteria applicable to the award of the professional doctorate in pastoral theology (DPT; see 4.129-131 below).
- 4.3 The School's Quality Assurance Framework is supplementary to the University's Regulations. Where there appears to be a contradiction or inconsistency between the two, the University Regulations shall take precedence. Research Degrees by Distance Learning are subject to additional guidance at 4.20-25.

### Responsibilities of Research Students and Supervisors

- 4.4 The School's Student Charter sets out general expectations of students, and the support that the School provides. This section outlines the particular responsibilities of students, their supervisors, and the School with regard to research degrees. The appointment of supervisors is covered by 4.37-43 below.
- 4.5 The research student is expected to:
  - (a) agree with their supervisor or supervisory team the topic for research, and work on that topic;
  - (b) discuss with their supervisor(s) the type of guidance and form of comment found most helpful;
  - (c) agree with their supervisors a schedule of meetings (whether in person or remote) and other forms of contact;
  - (d) take appropriate initiative in raising problems or difficulties in research;
  - (e) discuss training needs and opportunities, and undertake any research training or taught course or seminar required by their supervisor(s);
  - (f) comply with the School's ethics procedures and policies;
  - (g) produce work in accordance with a plan and schedule agreed with their supervisor(s), and, in particular, submit written material in sufficient time to allow for proper comment and discussion;
  - (h) keep records of meetings with supervisor(s), provide formal progress reports as required (normally twice a year), discuss with their supervisor(s) the preparation of the thesis, and decide when to submit.

4.6 The supervisory team is expected to:

- (a) give guidance on the nature of the research and the standard expected;
- (b) advise on the planning of the research programme and appropriate training, and on the relevant literature and sources;
- (c) encourage familiarity with developments in the subject;
- (d) give advice about techniques and methods;
- (e) ensure that the student is fully aware of the progress of their work in relation to the expected standard and the agreed programme;
- (f) promote awareness of ethical and legal matters relevant to research, including plagiarism and provide guidance on maintaining academic integrity during research;
- (g) maintain contact through regular personal supervision in arrangements agreed with the student (which may include videoconferencing), at intervals of not more than two weeks during term times in the first year of study, and provide reasonable access for consultation at other times;
- (h) direct the student to undertake research training, attend taught courses, seminars, workshops and so on as necessary;
- (i) request written work as appropriate and return it with constructive criticism and in good time;
- (j) give detailed advice on completion dates of successive stages of the work, including the transfer from MPhil to PhD, so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time;
- (k) arrange for the student to present work to staff/graduate seminars;
- (l) keep records of meetings with students and record any recommendation made;
- (m) write formal reports on the progress of the work, normally at least twice a year. These reports to be considered by the appropriate Research Degrees Committee within the prescribed progress review procedures and to be kept in the student's record;
- (n) record milestones achieved, such as transfer from MPhil to PhD, such reports to be kept in the student's record and arrange for the necessary administrative steps to be taken and ensure the student receives any help necessary.

## Governance

### Research Degrees Committees (RDC)

- 4.7 The RDC shall be responsible for implementation of the University's and the School's regulations in relation to programmes of study offered by the institute for MPhil and PhD degrees.
- 4.8 The student's institute (or, where appropriate, Central Academic Initiatives) is responsible through the appropriate RDC and by other means, for ensuring that appropriate administrative procedures are followed, including the maintenance of records of meetings (of the RDC or of other bodies or persons in the institute if appropriate) and reports concerning progress of MPhil and PhD students. (Where a student is attached to a Central Academic Initiative, Digital Humanities Hub, Refugee Law Initiative or Public Engagement, the responsibilities for institutes detailed throughout this section will also apply to them.)

### Membership and constitution

- 4.9 There are four Research Degrees Committees covering the various institutes and departments as follows: (i) IALS, ICwS; (ii) ICS, IHR, WRB; (iii) IMLR, IES, CAI, IP, ULIP; (iv) Heythrop
- 4.10 Apart from the RDC for Heythrop College, each RDC shall include (i) at least one representative from each institute or other body; (ii) two persons of academic standing who are not members of the School; (iii) the chair of the committee, who will not normally combine this role with serving as an institute representative; (iv) a student representative from each institute or body, who shall be present for items of non-confidential business and to provide feedback from the student body; (v) such other persons as may be appropriate.
- 4.11 The RDC for Heythrop College has a distinctive composition, reflecting its special circumstances. Membership of the Heythrop College – Research Degrees Committee (HC – RDC) will include all those who are part of a supervisory team for students at SAS.

4.12 The RDC shall meet once a term or at least twice a year usually January and June of each year.

4.13 The RDC shall be responsible for:

- (a) implementation of the University's and the School's regulations in regard to monitoring and quality assurance of programmes for the degrees of MPhil and PhD and the professional doctorate in pastoral theology (DPT);
- (b) keeping under review the areas of research available in the institute for the degrees of MPhil, PhD and DPT;
- (c) admission of students in accordance with the procedures determined by the School (see Section 1);
- (d) appointment of supervisors in accordance with the procedures determined by the School (see 4.43-51);
- (e) implementation of the School's practices in regard to the responsibilities of students and supervisors, administrative, ethics and grievance and complaints procedures (see Section 5);
- (f) monitoring research students' progress;
- (g) approval of transfer of a student's registration from MPhil to PhD or from PhD to MPhil;
- (h) monitoring progression, supervision and examination of students registered for the DPT;
- (i) approval of transfer of a student's registration to writing-up status;
- (j) arrangements for supervision, and monitoring and review of such arrangements;
- (k) proposal of examiners for research degrees.

4.14 In carrying out its responsibilities the RDC shall have regard to the adequacy of the staffing and other resources available to support the programmes of the institute, including (but not limited to) the adequacy of readily available library resources.

4.15 The RDC shall forward its minutes to AQSC and shall, through its minutes or otherwise, report to AQSC the following:

- (a) compliance with the requirement as to provision of information;
- (b) any action taken in implementation of special procedures and grievance procedures;
- (c) permission to a student to undertake off-campus study and the conditions attached (see 4.19);
- (d) fulfilment of its obligations under 4.13;
- (e) any other information that AQSC may from time to time request.

### **Registration, Attendance and Interruptions**

4.16 The requirement of the University is that the minimum length of a course of study for the degrees of MPhil and PhD shall be two calendar years of full-time study or its equivalent in part-time study- four years.

4.17 The normal minimum period of full-fee registration in the School shall be three years full-time for PhD and two years full-time for MPhil, or four years part-time study. The maximum period of study for PhD, including interruptions, shall be six years for full time and nine years for part time students for any single registration. A student's period of registration may only be extended beyond the maximum years through successful application to the AQSC. In such instances the maximum period of registration may only be extended for a period of one academic year at a time to a maximum period of no more than seven years for full time and ten years for part time students.

4.18 Students will register as either on-campus students or distance learning students.

#### **Attendance for on-campus students**

4.19 On-campus students shall centre their academic activities on the institute, and are expected to be resident in the UK for the entire period of their research degree. Notwithstanding this requirement the minimum time a student must be resident in the UK is for the first two years (full time) or first four years (part time). Subject to this, the RDC may permit the student to spend part of the programme in 'off-campus' study in order to carry out research for their thesis and shall prescribe the conditions which shall apply, which shall include regular contact with their supervisor. The RDC shall record in its minutes the periods of

off-campus study allowed to a student, and the conditions attached, which is reportable to the AQSC. The student will continue to be registered during a period of off-campus study. Such period will count towards the overall registration period, and normal fees are payable during such off-campus study.

#### Distance Learning Students

- 4.20 All Distance Learning students need to maintain regular contact with their supervisor throughout their period of registration as a student. In the first year that will be on a fortnightly basis as a minimum.
- 4.21 Students who fail to make contact for more than six months (unless due to deferral, temporary withdrawal or maternity leave) will be deemed to have withdrawn.
- 4.22 Students are required to complete a range of compulsory generic research training conducted through either face to face sessions or online at induction and through engagement with the online learning portal thereafter.
- 4.23 Students may be required to compulsorily attend for registration and induction (year 1), upgrade and for their viva voce examination. This will take place at the University of London headquarters in London.
- 4.24 Students who register for on-campus degrees will not usually be eligible for transfer to distance learning. An RDC will consider such cases positively with good reasoning.
- 4.25 In all other respects distance learning students are required to abide by the Regulations relating to admission, registration, conduct, progression and academic conduct which are in place for on campus students.

#### Interruption of study

- 4.26 Except for periods of maternity leave, an institute may, following the recommendation of the supervisor(s), and with the approval of RDC, allow an interruption in the programme of study on grounds of illness or other adequate cause for a maximum period of one year. Students may continue their interruption beyond the stated period only through successful application to the AQSC. In such cases an interruption for one further year only can be made (maximum permitted interruption being no more than two years). Students who have not re-enrolled or communicated their intentions towards their studies by the end of this period shall be withdrawn from the programme.

#### Continuation fees 'writing up'

- 4.27 At the end of the normal period of full fee registration, where the student is in the final process of writing up or editing their thesis prior to submission for examination, but not before the third year (full time) or sixth year (part time) of continuous registration, the institute may permit a student to continue their registration on payment of a reduced 'continuation fee.'
- 4.28 Continuation fee status will not be granted before the transfer from MPhil to PhD registration (see 4.67-71 and 4.87-91).
- 4.29 Transferring to continuation fee status is not automatic and will only be granted through successful application to the Institute's RDC. In order to transfer to writing up status, a student is required to have completed all experimental work or collection of material related to their thesis and the supervisor should have seen a draft of most (60% or more) chapters, and, in the judgement of the supervisor, be in a position to submit the thesis within 12 months. The RDC may request to review work completed to date.
- 4.30 The continuation fee shall be the same in all institutes in the School, and shall be the same for home/EU and overseas students. The fee will be no more than 25% of the standard full-time home/EU fee.
- 4.31 Students are obliged to give as much notice as possible that they intend to move to writing up status, preferably in the preceding academic year. The full fee is charged regardless of the period of time spent in writing up status. No refunds will be given if a student submits their thesis early i.e. before the end of the continued year.
- 4.32 Subject to the provisions of the following paragraph, the maximum period of registration on continuation fee status will normally be 12 months; permission to continue for a further 12 months will be at the discretion of the institute. Students may continue on the 'continuation fee' beyond two years only through successful application to the AQSC. In such cases the fee can be applied for one further year only (maximum permitted time on the continuation fee being no more than three years). Students who have not submitted by the end of the third year will be returned to the relevant PhD fee. The fee charged is at the discretion of the institute,



but it is to be higher than the continuation fee.

4.33 The institute may require a student who has been examined and been required by the examiners to carry out corrections and/or further work on the thesis to pay the full fee or other such fee as the institute shall determine.

4.34 The liability for payment of fees will normally continue until the date of award of the degree.

#### **General Provisions for Maternity and Paternity**

4.35 The School adopts a flexible approach in compliance with the Equality Act. Students are encouraged to disclose their pregnancy to a nominated staff member to enable the School to support the student.

4.36 Students are advised to inform the School about antenatal appointments where they affect attendance.

#### **Appointment of Supervisors**

4.37 The supervisors for each student will be appointed by the institute where the student is registered, by decision of each institute's RDC.

4.38 Typically a supervisory team of two supervisors shall be appointed: the main supervisor must be appointed before the student registers; the co-supervisor(s) may be appointed after registration, but within the first term of study. Monitoring and review will thus be undertaken by a supervisory team of academics with defined responsibilities (see 4.44-51).

4.39 Only in exceptional circumstances will a student be assigned to a single supervisor.

4.40 The School will encourage its new, less experienced supervisors and those not holding a PhD to develop competence through appropriate training and mentoring. New School supervisors who have not yet supervised a thesis to successful completion may not act as main supervisors. They should instead co-supervise with more experienced supervisors. All staff who have not supervised a thesis to completion are required to complete supervisor training in order to be eligible to supervise.

4.41 The School will encourage the continuing enhancement of relevant skills among all its academic staff engaged in supervision. Experienced School supervisors should aim to engage, once a year, in an activity which enables them to reflect on and develop their supervisory practice. This activity may take the form of informal, short, issue-focused sessions, as required.

4.42 Persons to be appointed as supervisors will normally have a PhD qualification. This requirement may be waived where the supervisor has appropriate research or professional experience. In these circumstances, this arrangement should be agreed by both the institute RDC and ratified by the AQSC which should be satisfied that the additional safeguards such as compulsory supervisor training and the prominence of the supervisor of record role are in place. There must be robust arrangements in place to ensure quality and continuity of supervision, taking into account the duration of employment contracts or contracts for service. A main supervisor should normally be appointed from within the School. In the unusual circumstances that where a main supervisor is appointed from outside the School, this should be under a contractual relationship, affording the necessary degree of academic and administrative control. In such circumstances, the external supervisor should be furnished with all relevant documentation relating to the programme, the School and University of London regulations. Further, in these circumstances, the role of the Supervisor of Record assumes prominence.

4.43 Whenever possible, the appointed supervisors will see the student through to completion. If the main supervisor moves to another institution, (a) supervision may be transferred to another member of staff in the original institute, or (b) the student may continue to be registered at the institute, with a member of the academic staff of the institute appointed as main supervisor and the original supervisor as co-supervisor, and the role of the supervisor of record assumes prominence, or (c) the student may, subject to the agreement of all parties, be transferred to the supervisor's new institution. If the supervisor retires, or their fixed term contract expires, the same provisions should apply – except that option (c) may not be available.

#### **Definitions and Responsibilities Main Supervisor**

4.44 The Main Supervisor is formally responsible for supervision of the student, with primary responsibility for the student's academic progress. The main supervisor will be the normal point of contact for the student. Even in circumstances in which two supervisors are contributing equally to the academic development of the project, one must always be assigned as Main Supervisor and thus the main point of contact for the student.

4.45 In order to be eligible for appointment as a main supervisor, staff must have undertaken University of London supervisor training and be:

- (a) Academic staff in the institute with appropriate knowledge and experience. Part-time academic staff must have a contract of employment at the institute for not less than two days per week and for a period extending at least three years from the student's registration date:
- (b) Research fellows with appropriate knowledge and experience, on Academic-Related Research Staff grades – subject to terms of their appointment, and under similar conditions as for part-time academic staff above.
- (c) External academics of high standing and experience, subject to satisfactory contractual agreement and to the approval of the RDC and AQSC. Institutes must provide an explanation of why an external main supervisor is to be appointed

#### **Co-Supervisor**

4.46 A Co-Supervisor is appointed to provide particular expertise, or to support the main supervisor in other defined ways. Co-supervision allows the formal involvement of academics from member institutions and from outside the University. The proportional responsibilities of main supervisor and co-supervisor will vary according to the requirements of each case but must be made clear when the supervisory team is approved.

4.47 In order to be eligible for appointment as a co-supervisor, individuals must either meet the conditions described above for main supervisor, or should be:

- (a) academic staff and research fellows in member institutions of the University or other HEIs, subject to satisfactory contractual agreement;
- (b) suitable persons employed in 'academic-related' trades and professions – e.g. British Library, British Museum, the Bar and independent researchers/scholars, subject to satisfactory contractual arrangements and formal safeguards for continuity of supervision (see above);
- (c) academic staff and research fellows in the institute who have insufficient experience to be appointed as main supervisors.

#### **Supervisor of Record**

4.48 The Supervisor of Record will usually be the Director, or another member of the academic staff of the institute with appropriate seniority and experience. The Supervisor of Record has formal responsibility for students registered in the institute in particular to ensure that students are properly supervised, that appropriate records are kept and that proper reporting is made within the institute, the School and beyond.

4.49 The Supervisor of Record may also be the main supervisor or co-supervisor of particular students in the institute. Where a student's main supervisor does not have an appropriate position in the institute (e.g. if he or she is not a full-time member of the institute's staff) the Supervisor of Record will be part of that student's supervisory team and therefore will be one of the named supervisors for the student.

4.50 For former Heythrop students, a Supervisor of Record with responsibility for the HC-RDC will be appointed by the School.

4.51 The HC-RDC will normally be chaired by the supervisor designated by SAS who will also oversee all support arrangements.

### **Supervision Meetings**

4.52 It is expected that in their first year students should meet their main supervisor at least once a fortnight during term time. In subsequent years they should meet at least every four to six weeks. Supervision meetings may take place via online conferencing. Supervisors should agree to meet students in person if that is the student's preference.

4.53 Supervision meetings may take place between the student and the main supervisor and co-supervisors (the supervisory team), or just with the main supervisor. If the latter, students are expected to meet with their co-supervisor separately and ideally six times a year as a minimum in the first two years.

4.54 Feedback to research students on work submitted should be provided in as timely a manner as possible and normally within 21 calendar days of receipt.

## Monitoring and Review of Research Student Progress

- 4.55 Institutes should monitor and review the progress of their research students through regular reports and contact.
- 4.56 There should be a formal review at RDC of each student's progress twice a year, at set times. The review, normally on a recommended template, should include written reports by both student and their supervisory team, and a formal log of the training undertaken.
- 4.57 The results of progress reviews, including an agreed action plan and/or target, plus deadlines, should be recorded in the minutes of the RDC and in the student's file.
- 4.58 The HC-RDC will follow the practice whereby the supervisory team will meet to monitor progress, with the assistance of the supervisor of record appointed by SAS, as appropriate.
- 4.59 Subject to the above framework, institutes will determine the procedures for regular formal review and report of students' progress. The procedures and timetable should be clearly set out in the institute's regulations and guidelines, and information should be readily available to students.

## Progression and Upgrading of Research Students

- 4.60 The following timetables assume a normal rate of progress and a September registration.

### Full-time students: year 1

- 4.61 All students are registered initially as MPhil students.
- 4.62 At the start of their studies, students will be required to submit a research plan to their supervisor(s) outlining the thesis topic and broad aims, projected timetable and methodology, proposed sources and initial bibliography.

### Full-time students: progression from year 1 to year 2

- 4.63 In order to progress to a second year of study, students will be required, to submit to their supervisor(s) before the end of year 1, a portfolio of work including:
- (a) a substantial piece of written work based on original research and at least equivalent to a chapter in length;
  - (b) a brief outline of the whole thesis, a preliminary bibliography, evidence of research or technical skills development or research methods training course undertaken.

- 4.64 The work submitted must demonstrate the student meets the following criteria:

- (a) commitment to pursuing research at SAS leading to the PhD degree;
- (b) satisfactory participation in relevant research or technical skills development or research methods training courses;
- (c) that the student has identified and can describe the key questions to be addressed by the thesis;
- (d) that the student has identified the most important secondary literature bearing upon the questions addressed.

Furthermore the assessors will expect to find evidence of the student's ability:

- (e) to engage critically with a range of primary sources and to provide an independent interpretation of them;
- (f) to synthesise information and demonstrate that it provides context for the study;
- (g) to organise arguments and ideas in a logical fashion.

- 4.65 Having considered the written work, the supervisor(s) may recommend:

- (a) that the student progress to year 2;
- (b) that the student's registration be terminated;
- (c) deferral of a decision for an agreed period, up to a maximum of six months, to allow the student time to rectify problems identified by supervisor(s). Deferral of a decision may only take place once per candidate.

4.66 The supervisory recommendation is then submitted to the RDC of the institute for consideration. All recommendations are subject to the approval of the institute's RDC and the usual academic appeals processes of the University of London.

**Full-time students: years 1–2: upgrading from MPhil to PhD**

4.67 If the student is considered to have progressed quickly enough by the end of year 1, the upgrade procedure may replace the year 1 to year 2 progression procedure described above. Normally, however, at some point between the end of year 1 and the end of year 2, a student is required to upgrade.

4.68 The upgrading procedure provides a valuable opportunity:

- (a) To consider whether the student is working to a standard and a pace that can reasonably be expected having completed 12-24 months of a full-time programme (or equivalent) and whether the written submission and response at the meeting of the Upgrade panel provides evidence that the student has the potential to complete a successful thesis within the normal maximum period of registration.
- (b) To provide constructive feedback on the student's work from academic experts;
- (c) To make suggestions in respect of the further development of the research project.

4.69 The work submitted must demonstrate the following:

- (a) Satisfactory progress in the work so far
- (b) Satisfactory technical and generic skills development
- (c) Formulation of a viable plan for completion of the work within the normal time-frame of the PhD programme
- (d) Consideration of the ethical dimensions of the project, and application for ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee
- (e) a familiarity with appropriate research methods and approaches to the topic.
- (f) that the approaches, methods and theoretical framework to be applied have been identified and explained;
- (g) that the student is thinking critically and analytically not merely descriptively;
- (h) that the student has developed a comprehensive intellectual and practical plan for completion of the thesis.

4.70 Furthermore, the assessors will expect to find evidence of the student's ability:

- (a) To identify, understand and engage critically with relevant research literature
- (b) To formulate clear and cogent lines of argument
- (c) To articulate a coherent research focus;
- (d) To adhere a coherent research focus;
- (e) To adhere to a high standard of presentation in written style and in accurate and consistent referencing;
- (f) To make a distinctive and original contribution to knowledge or understanding of the field in question.

4.71 In order to upgrade from MPhil to PhD, students are required to submit:

- (a) substantial portion of the draft thesis (usually a chapter of at least 10,000 words) demonstrating capacity for PhD level writing and research;
- (b) A thesis outline setting out the research question or questions to be addressed. Whilst the exact nature of the information provided will depend on discipline, it should typically cover at least the following elements (not necessarily as discrete items):
  - i. an introduction giving the context of the work;
  - ii. a literature review
  - iii. a research question and hypothesis
  - iv. a section on methodology;
  - v. a Chapter plan;

## vi. a Bibliography.

This written material will form the basis of discussion for the examination conducted by the upgrade panel.

4.72 The composition of the upgrade panel should be as follows:

- (a) an external assessor (drawn from outside the School; assessors from the University of London colleges are acceptable);
- (b) an assessor from the School (who may if necessary, be drawn from the same institute as the student, but who must not have had any previous association with the project; for instance as a secondary supervisor);
- (c) the student's supervisor(s).

4.73 Both of the appointed assessors should have a broad understanding of the topic, but it is only necessary that the external assessor be a subject specialist.

Additional examiners or, if it is felt necessary, an independent chair may be appointed by prior arrangement with the chair of the institute's RDC. If an independent chair is appointed their role is identical to that described below (4.143-4.150) for the final viva.

4.74 Upgrade examiners are not permitted to serve as final examiners. If it intended that a particular scholar should serve as a final examiner of the thesis. That person should not be put forward as an examiner for upgrade.

4.75 The Upgrade Panel will meet to exchange and read written reports and to determine the order and line of questioning. The Candidate will participate in the meeting to discuss the work submitted and to respond to Panel questions.

4.76 Having considered the written work and performance at interview, the upgrade panel may recommend to an institute's RDC

- 4.77 a) that the student be upgraded to PhD registration;
- b) that the student should be advised to proceed towards a less substantial thesis for the degree of MPhil;
- c) that the student should be allowed to reapply for upgrading, within a specified period (not more than nine months), to allow time to rectify problems identified by the panel. Reapplication for an upgrade decision may only take place once.

4.78 The upgrade panel's recommendation is then submitted to the RDC of the institute for consideration.

4.79 All recommendations are subject to the approval of the institute's RDC and the usual academic appeals processes of the University of London. The full report including the reports of individual assessors as an appendix will be submitted to registry for the student record.

4.80 Upgrade to PhD registration is conditional upon the RDC of the institute being satisfied that the work is of a sufficiently high standard.

4.81 Deferral of the upgrade procedure may be made for six months in exceptional cases (for example, if students are away for long periods of fieldwork).

4.82 In exceptional cases, the upgrade process may allow the student to submit written work to an upgrade panel without the accompanying interview. In these cases, the panel recommendation, once it has been endorsed by the institute's RDC, must be considered by the AQSC, accompanied by (a) a statement from the supervisor(s) as to why an upgrade interview is not necessary and (b) approval from the RDC of this exemption.

#### Part-time students: progression from year 2 to year 3

4.83 In order to progress to a second year of study, students will be required, to submit to their supervisor(s) before the end of year 1, a portfolio of work including:

- (a) a substantial piece of written work based on original research and at least equivalent to a chapter in length;
- (b) a brief outline of the whole thesis, a preliminary bibliography, evidence of research or technical skills development or research methods training course undertaken.

4.84 The work submitted must demonstrate the student meets the following criteria:

- (a) commitment to pursuing research at SAS leading to the PhD degree;

- (b) satisfactory participation in relevant research or technical skills development or research methods training courses;
- (c) that the student has identified and can describe the key questions to be addressed by the thesis;
- (d) that the student has identified the most important secondary literature bearing upon the questions addressed.

Furthermore the assessors will expect to find evidence of the student's ability:

- (e) to engage critically with a range of primary sources and to provide an independent interpretation of them;
- (f) to synthesise information and demonstrate that it provides context for the study;
- (g) to organise arguments and ideas in a logical fashion.

4.85 Having considered the written work, the supervisor(s) may recommend:

- (a) that the student progress to year 2;
- (b) that the student's registration be terminated;

4.86 Deferral of a decision for an agreed period, up to a maximum of six months, to allow the student time to rectify problems identified by supervisor(s). Deferral of a decision may only take place once per candidate.

**Part-time students: year 3–4: upgrading from MPhil to PhD**

4.87 If the student is considered to have progressed quickly enough by the end of year 2, the upgrade procedure may replace the year 2 to year 3 progression procedure described above. Normally, however, at some point during year 3 and the first half of year 4, an upgrade procedure is required.

4.88 The upgrading procedure provides a valuable opportunity:

- (a) To consider whether the student is working to a standard and a pace that can reasonably be expected having completed 24-36 months of a full-time programme (or equivalent) and whether the written submission and response at the meeting of the Upgrade panel provides evidence that the student has the potential to complete a successful thesis within the normal maximum period of registration.
- (b) To provide constructive feedback on the student's work from academic experts;
- (c) To make suggestions in respect of the further development of the research project.

4.89 The work submitted must demonstrate the following:

- (a) Satisfactory progress in the work so far
- (b) Satisfactory technical and generic skills development
- (c) Formulation of a viable plan for completion of the work within the normal time-frame of the PhD programme
- (d) Consideration of the ethical dimensions of the project, and application for ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee
- (e) a familiarity with appropriate research methods and approaches to the topic.
- (f) that the approaches, methods and theoretical framework to be applied have been identified and explained;
- (g) that the student is thinking critically and analytically not merely descriptively;
- (h) that the student has developed a comprehensive intellectual and practical plan for completion of the thesis.

4.90 Furthermore, the assessors will expect to find evidence of the student's ability:

- (a) To identify, understand and engage critically with relevant research literature
- (b) To formulate clear and cogent lines of argument
- (c) To articulate a coherent research focus;

- (d) To adhere a coherent research focus;
- (e) To adhere to a high standard of presentation in written style and in accurate and consistent referencing;
- (f) To make a distinctive and original contribution to knowledge or understanding of the field in question.

4.91 In order to upgrade from MPhil to PhD, students are required to submit:

- (a) a substantial portion of the draft thesis (usually a chapter of at least 10,000 words) demonstrating capacity for PhD level writing and research;
- (b) a thesis outline setting out the research question or questions to be addressed. Whilst the exact nature of the information provided will depend on discipline, it should typically cover at least the following elements (not necessarily as discrete items):
  - i. an introduction giving the context of the work;
  - ii. a literature review;
  - iii. a research question and hypothesis
  - iv. a section on methodology;
  - v. a chapter plan;
  - vi. a bibliography.

This written material will form the basis of discussion for the examination conducted by the upgrade panel.

4.92 The composition of the upgrade panel should be as follows:

- (a) an external assessor (drawn from outside the School; assessors from the University of London colleges are acceptable);
- (b) an assessor from the School (who may if necessary, be drawn from the same institute as the student, but who must not have had any previous association with the project; for instance as a secondary supervisor);
- (c) the student's supervisor(s).
- (d) Both of the appointed assessors should have a broad understanding of the topic, but it is only necessary that the external assessor be a subject specialist.
- (e) Additional examiners or, if it is felt necessary, an independent chair may be appointed by prior arrangement with the chair of the institute's RDC. If an independent chair is appointed their role is identical to that described below for the final viva.
- (f) Upgrade examiners are not permitted to serve as final examiners. If it intended that a particular scholar should serve as a final examiner of the thesis. That person should not be put forward as an examiner for upgrade.

4.93 The Upgrade Panel will meet to exchange and read written reports and to determine the order and line of questioning. The Candidate will participate in the meeting to discuss the work submitted and to respond to Panel questions.

4.94 Having considered the written work and performance at interview, the upgrade panel may recommend to an institute's RDC:

- (a) that the student be upgraded to PhD registration;
- (b) that the student should be advised to proceed towards a less substantial thesis for the degree of MPhil;
- (c) that the student should be allowed to reapply for upgrading, within a specified period (not more than nine months), to allow time to rectify problems identified by the panel. Reapplication for an upgrade decision may only take place once.

4.95 The upgrade panel's recommendation is then submitted to the RDC of the institute for consideration.

4.96 All recommendations are subject to the approval of the institute's RDC and the usual academic appeals processes of the University of London. The full report including the reports of individual assessors as an appendix will be submitted to registry for the student record.

4.97 Upgrade to PhD registration is conditional upon the RDC of the institute being satisfied that the work is of a

sufficiently high standard.

- 4.98 Deferral of the upgrade procedure may be made for six months in exceptional cases (for example, if students are away for long periods of fieldwork).
- 4.99 In exceptional cases, the upgrade process may allow the student to submit written work to an upgrade panel without the accompanying interview. In these cases, the panel recommendation, once it has been endorsed by the institute's RDC, must be considered by the AQSC, accompanied by (a) a statement from the supervisor(s) as to why an upgrade interview is not necessary and (b) approval from the RDC of this exemption.

#### **Progression of part-time students registered for the DPT**

- 4.100 Students registered for the DPT under the HC-RDC do not have to pass an upgrade review but will be expected to have an annual review to ensure progression.
- 4.101 The panel will normally consist of the supervisory team (with expertise co-opted as necessary) plus the assistance of the School's supervisor of record, as appropriate.
- 4.102 As agreed with the supervisor(s) the student will be expected to submit a piece of original research as determined by the primary supervisor, a research plan, and a personal account of progress.
- 4.103 In accord with practice for MPhil and PhD students outlined above, the panel may recommend:
- (a) that the student progress;
  - (b) that the student's registration be terminated;
  - (c) deferral of a decision for an agreed period, up to a maximum of six months, to allow the student time to rectify problems identified by supervisor(s). Deferral of a decision may only take place once per candidate.

### **Examinations**

- 4.104 Assessment shall be by submission of a thesis and an oral examination, which shall be conducted in English (except as provided for under a joint supervision arrangement; see 7.11). The scope of the thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after (for MPhil) two or at most three years, or (for PhD) three or at most four years of full-time study.
- 4.105 The thesis shall:
- (a) consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree;
  - (b) for PhD: form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power;
  - (c) for MPhil: be either a record of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly;
  - (d) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument [a series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the candidate alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of the thesis, but may be adapted to form an integral part of it and thereby make a relevant contribution to its main theme. Publications derived from the work in the thesis may be bound into the back of it as supplementary material]. The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor (s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the candidate and certified by the supervisor;
  - (e) give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, include a discussion on those findings (and, for PhD, indicate in what respects they appear to the candidate to advance the study of the subject; in so doing, demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study – the candidate being able to place the thesis in a wider context, showing objectivity and the capacity for judgement in complex situations and autonomous work in that field);
  - (f) be written in English and of satisfactory literary presentation; in the case of a thesis in the field of modern foreign languages and literatures, on the application of the RDC of the institute at which the candidate is or will be registered, the AQSC, if it sees fit, may submit an application for the thesis to be written in the language of study; such request will be considered on an exceptional basis by the AQSC; if permission is granted, the thesis shall include additionally a submission of between 10,000 and 20,000



words in English which shall summarise the main arguments of the thesis;

- (g) Foreign language sources may be provided in the original without translations when people to whom the thesis will be of interest (including the examiners) may be reasonably expected to be familiar with the language in question. However, in other cases, it may be necessary to provide translations and, depending on the author's preference and intended readership, it is a widespread academic practice to provide both the original and the translated text. While it is possible to include either translations or the original text in an appendix (depending on intended audiences) without being subject to the word count, this is not always appropriate where the author would prefer the reader to have the option to engage with both the original and translated text within the main body of the thesis.
- (h) As a result, where a large amount of original and translated texts is included in the main text of the thesis or footnotes (more than 200 words of translated text in total), it will be possible to seek permission to increase the word count by up to 5000 words.
- (i) include a full bibliography and references;
- (j) not exceed 60,000 words (for MPhil) or 100,000 words (for PhD); the bibliography is excluded from the word count; footnotes are included within the word count; appendices are excluded from the word count and should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish. Only in exceptional circumstances may a student apply to the Head of Registry Services for permission to exceed the word limit (normally up to a maximum of 10% over the word limit). This must be in advance of submission of the thesis (at the time of the PhD entry form submission), must be fully supported by the supervisor, who shall provide a rationale for exceeding the word limit, and the request will be forwarded to the Chair of AQSC for consideration. The student will be notified of the outcome by the Doctoral Centre Manager;
- (k) for PhD: demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented;
- (l) for PhD: be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals).

- 4.106 The greater proportion of the work submitted in a thesis must have been done after the initial registration for a research degree, except that in the case of a student accepted with exemption from part of the course of study under paragraph 1.4 of the University Regulations there shall be allowance for the fact that the student commenced their registration at another institution.
- 4.107 A candidate will not be permitted to submit as their thesis one which has been submitted for a degree or comparable award of this or any other university or institution, but a candidate shall not be precluded from incorporating in a thesis covering a wider field work which they already submitted for a degree or comparable award of this or any other university or institution provided that they shall indicate on their entry form and also on their thesis any work which has been so incorporated.
- 4.108 A candidate must include in each copy of his/her thesis a signed declaration that the work presented in the thesis is their own (see also 4.105) and that the thesis presented is the one upon which the candidate expects to be examined.
- 4.109 A thesis must be presented for examination in electronic format in accordance with the instructions issued by the School.
- 4.110 A request for the thesis to be submitted in A3 format and/or printed on both sides of the page shall be considered in accordance with procedures made by the School and may be approved when there is a demonstrable need.
- 4.111 A candidate may submit the results of work done in conjunction with their supervisor and/or with fellow research workers provided that the candidate states clearly their own personal share in the investigation and that the statement is certified by supervisor(s).
- 4.112 A candidate must have the title of their thesis approved via the examination entry process.
- 4.113 A candidate should be subject to a formal administrative requirement to submit the REC ethical approval number at the stage of submission of the final thesis. The submission form should require submission (as attachment) of the ESAF, along with any correspondence with the REC and the approval number. Registry must not confirm submission of the PhD thesis without clear evidence of ethical approval such that students cannot complete their PhD without ethical approval.

4.114 The decision to submit a thesis in any particular form rests with the candidate alone and the outcome of the examination is determined by two or more examiners acting jointly.

**Practice-based degrees (currently offered in digital humanities)**

4.115 A practice-based research degree is characterised by the sustained, rigorous and critical investigation of a defined subject, by the openness of the research methods and results to evaluation by others, and by the contribution to public knowledge and understanding of its outcome. When creative work forms a significant part of the research programme, references to the 'thesis' are understood to mean the totality of the submission for the degree, which will include the creative work and/or documentation of the creative work, and the written text

4.116 The relationship between the creative and critical work is critical and will involve:

- writing a critical reflection on the creative work and the process of generating it;
- critically engaging with the work of related technicians or other practitioners;
- forwarding practical and/or theoretical lines of inquiry initiated by the creative practice.

4.117 The creative work must be undertaken as part of the registered research programme, not before

4.118 The relationship of the reflective commentary to other forms of material submitted needs to be clearly articulated so that the work forms a single coherent body of work.

4.119 The written component will contribute one third of the credit and be 30,000 words. The creative component – in this case the digital output, will be worth 2/3 of the whole award.

4.120 Each creative output submission must be accompanied by a written annotation by the practitioner to contextualise the work as a creative research output. The student must:

- (a) clearly articulate the role and purpose of the practice within the overall research project;
- (b) identify how the creative/practical work is likely to be included in the final submission and how this will be presented eg event, exhibition, and documented for final examination;;
- (c) identify which research methods have informed their work and present the contexts (both historical and/or theoretical) in which they are working;
- (d) offer reflection on the development of their practice, with an emphasis on what can be communicated to others (i.e. as a contribution to new knowledge in the field).

4.121 The creative output must demonstrate:

- (a) scholarly rigour and complexity of the process.
- (b) new research insight, creative originality and competent academic contribution that is contextually situated within the field.

**Progression criteria**

4.122 In order to progress to a second year of study students will be required by the end of the first year to submit a portfolio of work as follows:

- (a) An initial commentary of up to 2,000 words setting out the following:
- (b) An overview of the output- A brief introduction to the creation and the research context behind it.
- (c) A clear definition of the Key Research Questions.
- (d) The primary objective or aim of the study and/or creation.
- (e) An explanation of the creative research methodology, including the conceptual and scholarly framework in which it should be heard and/or viewed.
- (f) A brief outline of the whole thesis, a preliminary bibliography, evidence of research or technical skills development or research methods training course undertaken, any ethical considerations.

**Proposals for upgrade**

4.123 The student is required to submit:

- 1) Thesis abstract (300 words)
- 2) Case for upgrade (maximum 5000 words excluding the bibliography), with:
  - a) An introduction to the research including:
    - (i) The context for the wider field
    - (ii) Approaches of complementary disciplines (as appropriate)
    - (iii) Potential for impact
  - b) A high-quality critical review of the literature
    - (i) Exhibiting good coverage of the research field
    - (ii) Identifying research gaps/opportunities
  - c) Clear research aims, objectives and research questions
    - (i) Their relation to the literature and identified gaps should be clear and well defined to set the scope of the work as appropriate for PhD study
  - d) Initial results
    - (i) Display significant progress
    - (ii) Employ appropriate self-critique
    - (iii) Address errors and uncertainty
    - (iv) Interpretation and appropriate conclusions drawn
    - (iv) Locate the output within the discipline and demonstrate the contribution to new knowledge
  - e) A bibliography
- 3) Thesis Outline: a chapter-by-chapter outline of the thesis, with a paragraph of explanation on each chapter.
- 4) Work plan for timely completion of the PhD.
- 5) A demonstration or presentation of the creative output in development.

### Examination

- 4.124 As well as the regulations outlined in para 4.105 the viva will include a demonstration/presentation element as well as viva voce of written element as per UoL guidelines.
- 4.125 Examiners will need to have had advanced access to the creative output submitted/viewable in some form in advance of the viva.
- 4.126 The thesis will reflect a coherent research process; demonstrate a critical appreciation of the context of the research, its relationship to existing literature/practices and received opinion and show that the research has produced an original contribution to knowledge. The relationship of the reflective commentary to the other forms of material submitted needs to be clearly articulated so that the work forms a single coherent body of work.
- 4.127 The final submission must be accompanied, where appropriate, by an archival record (such as film, photographic record, diagrammatic representation or digital storage medium etc) of the candidate's practice. Such a record must be in a standard retrievable form that has been agreed with the Chair to AQSC.
- 4.128 Outputs from the project should also be made publicly available where possible, for example code may be published via the School's GitHub repository and data via an open repository such as Zenodo. Alternatively/ additionally, students might share non-textual outputs of the their project via a personal website.

### Heythrop

- 4.129 For the Research Thesis for the DPT (phase C of the Heythrop College programme) the thesis should demonstrate 'a capacity to present, analyse and assess critically ideas and data relevant to the field of Pastoral Theology through an independent and original study that brings the literature appropriate to a particular chosen theme within the discipline of theology into creative dialogue with the experience and personally appropriated wisdom of the pastoral practitioner.'
- 4.130 In addition to the intellectual and academic demands made by the specific topic of the thesis, the thesis is expected to include some measure of reflection on the four underpinning theological themes noted in the programme specification (see Heythrop DPT Handbook 2016-17):

- (a) an intellectual and spiritual vision of God at the heart of the world and human culture;
- (b) an attitude of generous service for the promotion of justice and the sake of the wider common good;
- (c) a willingness to learn from and with other communities;
- (d) a commitment to theology as a critical public discourse.

4.131 The thesis should represent a personally integrated account of the student's development as a reflective pastoral worker which demonstrates:

- (a) a thorough-going and consistent attention to the variety of contexts that affect the study in question and the theological ideas that are relevant to its understanding;
- (b) the ability to make a critical commentary on how pastoral practice can respond to and interact with a variety of pressures and forces of change within wider society and culture;
- (c) a capacity to relate the results of research to the life of the Christian Church in its many manifestations today.

#### Thesis deposit

4.132 After the examination has been completed and before the degree is awarded, successful candidates are required to upload the final copy of their thesis to the institutional repository – SAS space. A hard copy of the thesis may additionally be deposited in the libraries.

4.133 Every candidate is required to present a short abstract of their thesis of not more than 300 words to be uploaded with the digital copy to the repository. The abstract should be bound into any hard copies deposited in libraries. Availability of theses

4.134 Where, in the opinion of the supervisor/author, the thesis contains any material (not just that of significance for national security) that may be problematic for copyright reasons, this may be removed/redacted (with an appropriate note inserted explaining the removal and stating where the full version may be found), as long as a full version is submitted to be kept offline by the institutional library/repository.

4.135 In the event that the volume of copyright material is so great that it would damage the integrity of the work, a full and unedited version of the thesis should be deposited but a request may be made that a permanent embargo be imposed: the thesis will not appear in a publicly-accessible online form but will be available only onsite in the library/repository. Such a request requires the backing of the supervisor and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances where the impossibility of redacted submission can be demonstrated.

4.136 Candidates for the MPhil, PhD and DPT degrees will at the time of entry to the examination be required to sign a declaration in the following terms:

- (a) I authorise that the thesis presented by me in [year] for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the University of London shall, if a degree is awarded, be deposited in the electronic institutional repository of the School and optionally in University of London Libraries and that, subject to the condition set out in (d) below, my thesis be made available for public reference, inter-library loan and copying;
- (b) I authorise the School or University authorities as appropriate to supply a copy of the abstract of my thesis for inclusion in any published list of theses offered for higher degrees in British universities or in any supplement thereto, or for consultation in any central file of abstracts of such theses;
- (c) I authorise the School and the University of London Libraries or their designated agents to make a microform or digital copy of my thesis for the purposes of electronic access, inter-library loan and the supply of copies, and to make a copy available to the British Library for storage in the EThoS repository;
- (d) I understand that before my thesis is made available for public reference, inter-library loan and copying, the following statement will have been included at the beginning of my thesis or clearly associated with any electronic version: 'The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author';
- (e) I authorise the School and/or the University of London to make a microform or digital copy of my thesis in due course as the archival copy for permanent retention in substitution for the original copy;
- (f) I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party;
- (g) I understand that in the event of my thesis not being approved by the examiners, this declaration will become void.

4.137 A candidate may apply to the School for restriction of access, for a period not exceeding two years, to their thesis and/or the abstract of the thesis on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting or in very exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the procedure adopted by the School for consideration of such applications.

#### **Submission of thesis in a foreign language**

4.138 See 4.105(g)

#### **Viva voce examinations**

##### **Timescales between submission and examination**

4.139 The normal length of time between submission of the thesis and its examination by viva voce is no longer than four months.

##### **Deferred entry to examination**

4.140 The RDC shall refer to AQSC a request from a student wishing to defer entry to the examination to a date later than one calendar year after completion of the programme of study and submission of the thesis, with a statement indicating whether or not the RDC supports the request.

##### **Appointment of examiners**

4.141 Examiners are discussed by the RDC, to whom nominations are made by the student's supervisor. The decision is approved by the AQSC.

##### **Appointment of Independent Chair for PhD Vivas**

4.142 An independent Chair is appointed for all MPhil, PhD and DPT vivas. It is the supervisor's responsibility, in collaboration with the RDC, to find an appropriate Chair and this must be done at the same time as the appointment of examiners.

##### **Appointing the Chair**

4.143 The Independent Chair should be a member of academic staff or a Senior Academic Fellow, who is neither an examiner nor a supervisor of the student being examined.

4.144 The Independent Chair should be selected by Research Degrees Committee.

4.145 The Independent Chair must be familiar with the Quality Assurance Framework and MPhil/PhD Regulations of the University of London.

4.146 The Independent Chair would normally be expected to have experience of conducting at least one research degree viva as an examiner.

4.147 The Independent Chair should have experience of supervising research degree students through to completion.

4.148 No member of staff should normally be expected to chair more than one viva per term (3 per year).

##### **Role of the Chair**

4.149 The role of the Chair is to be an observer and to ensure that procedures are followed properly and the candidate is treated fairly, including that the full range of outcome options is considered. The Chair does not need to be a subject specialist, does not need to have read the thesis in detail and is not directly involved in examining it. Apart from making any introductory comments, the Chair will not normally play a role during the viva itself (i.e. whilst the student is being questioned by the examiners) other than to oversee the proceedings as an impartial observer. The Chair would normally only intervene if there were concerns about the nature of the questioning or the state of the student and could adjourn the viva for a short break to discuss any concerns with the examiners. The ultimate arbiter is the Chair. The Chair should remain present for the duration of the viva, including the post-viva decision making and relaying the outcome to the student. During the decision making, the Chair may provide advice on regulatory matters but not be involved in the decision on the outcome of the viva.

4.150 Responsibilities of the Chair are to ensure that:

- (a) the examiners are aware of, and adhere to, the University of London regulations and procedures;
- (b) the examiners' pre- and post-viva reports are completed in line with regulations;

- (c) the assessment is rigorous, fair, reliable and consistent;
- (d) the examiners' questioning is appropriate;
- (e) the candidate has an opportunity to defend the thesis.
- (f) the full range of outcome options is considered.

4.151 Each examiner is to prepare an independent preliminary report on the thesis prior to the oral examination.

#### **Conduct of examination**

4.152 No more than two attempts at the oral examination shall be given.

4.153 See the [University of London's Regulations for the degrees of MPhil and PhD](#), Regulation 1, Section E, 79–99.

#### **Regulations for the use of video/teleconferencing for the viva voce examination / upgrade**

4.154 The viva voce can take place online or on campus. If the viva does take place via video/teleconferencing there are important principles listed below (4.155–4.168)

#### **Procedures for using video/teleconferencing in viva voce examinations / upgrade**

4.155 Advice should be sought, in the first instance, from the Doctoral Centre.

4.156 Video/teleconferencing may be used with the agreement of the candidate, all proposed members of the panel, and the Independent Chair.

4.157 The AQSC should be informed at the time of the appointment of the panel of examiners of the intention to use video/teleconferencing facilities in the viva voce examination.

4.158 In exceptional circumstances, e.g. an emergency situation where the viva was intended to be conducted conventionally but an instance occurs which prevents this, the Dean or Chair of AQSC can make the decision to proceed with a video or telephone link. The same principles of operation will apply. Where it is deemed necessary to conduct an upgrade/ viva using videoconference facilities, the time and date should remain the same as already arranged. The only change is that the upgrade/ viva will now take place online, rather than in person.

4.159 The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that timely arrangements are made for the upgrade/ viva examination and that all parties are kept informed of any changes to arrangements.

4.160 Any time differences between the two locations must be taken into account to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged by an examination taking place at an inappropriate time.

4.161 When arranging video/teleconferencing the quality of the equipment and technological infrastructure used should be taken into account. Equipment must be tested prior to the event taking place.

Given that the internal and external examiners will usually be at separate locations, they must take account of their need to consult privately with each other on the conduct of the examination; how the pre-viva discussion will be conducted; the form and sequence of questions; who should take the lead at various stages of the viva; etc.

4.162 Contingency plans are essential in the event of technology failure. The candidate may be given the opportunity to practise speaking to another party using the facilities in advance of the viva voce examination.

#### **During the viva/upgrade**

4.163 The videoconference facility must be arranged such that each end of the links should be able to see the other party/parties present at all times.

4.164 The Chair should ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged in any way compared to the standard face-to-face oral examination.

- 4.165 The upgrade/ viva will not be recorded.
- 4.166 If the candidate is accessing the viva from another location, the University will not normally permit any person to be present with the candidate other than technical staff involved in the use of videoconferencing facilities.
- 4.167 The Chair must satisfy themselves that the person presenting for the upgrade/ viva is indeed the candidate (this can be done through personal knowledge or by checking ID documents).
- 4.168 In the event of any failure with the technology before or during the upgrade/ viva, or other concerns regarding the conduct of the upgrade/ viva by videoconference, it is the responsibility of the Chair to suspend the examination and to decide whether it is possible for the examination to continue or whether the upgrade/ viva should be rescheduled.

#### **After the viva/upgrade**

- 4.169 (for vivas only) A post-viva report should be made by the Chair at the end of the examination, and should comment on the technical performance of the facilities used.
- 4.170 Having agreed to an upgrade/ viva voce examination involving videoconferencing the candidate will not be permitted to use this as grounds for appeal, unless the circumstances of technical failure or other unforeseen eventualities beyond the control of the examiners were deemed to have adversely affected the candidate's performance

#### **Result of examination**

- 4.171 Copies of examiners' reports for MPhil and PhD degrees are transmitted to the candidate via the Doctoral Centre.

#### **Debt**

- 4.172 If a candidate has entered the examination for the MPhil, PhD and DPT degree, with fee debt outstanding and with no acceptable arrangements having been made to settle it, no report will be made on the result of the examination until fees have been paid in full.

#### **Referral**

- 4.173 Should a thesis be referred for major revisions:
- (a) the student's supervisor will be asked to (i) comment to the external examiners and the RDC on any circumstances which may have led to the outcome and (ii) describe how the student will be supported in revising the thesis;
  - (b) a meeting should be arranged with the student's supervisor to organise a work plan for revision;
  - (c) monitoring of progress on the revision should take place by the institute's RDC.

#### **Appeals**

- 4.174 A candidate's decision to submit their thesis for examination is entirely their own and this procedure, therefore, applies only to the conduct of the examination itself. Internal candidates are reminded that problems arising during their courses of study are not grounds for appeal against the result of the examination.
- 4.175 The procedure applies to candidates for the degrees of MPhil, PhD and DPT for whom the result of the examination was that the degree was not awarded.
- 4.176 Candidates may appeal on one or more of the following grounds:
- (a) that a candidate's performance at the oral examination was affected by circumstances such as illness of which the examiners were not aware when their decision was taken and that this had produced an unfair result;
  - (b) that there is evidence of prejudice or of bias or of inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners such that the result of the examination should not be allowed to stand;
  - (c) that there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination (including any instance of administrative error) of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result of the examination would have been the same if they had not occurred.

- 4.177 A submission under this procedure shall be made in writing by the appellant with supporting evidence (including medical certificate for paragraph 4.176(a)) to the Doctoral Centre Manager and must be received within two months of the date of notification to the candidate of the result of the examination.
- 4.178 The Vice-Chancellor or their nominee shall dismiss an appeal on the basis of the candidate's submission alone, without a hearing being held and without seeking further information, but shall do so only when the application does not, in the opinion of the Vice-Chancellor or their nominee, fall within the remit of this procedure or does not disclose arguable grounds.
- 4.179 Where inadequate grounds for an appeal are provided or the documentation is deemed to be defective, the Doctoral Centre Manager will advise the appellant before paragraph 4.174 is invoked.
- 4.180 The Appellate Committee shall comprise three persons, two drawn from the members of the academic staff of the School of Advanced Study, one of whom shall be appointed as chair, and one from a College of the University. No person shall be appointed as a member of an Appellate Committee who has any prior knowledge of the thesis.
- 4.181 The appellant has the right to appear before the Appellate Committee. The appellant may be accompanied to the hearing and/or represented by a person of their choice. A person who will be accompanied and/or represented must submit to the Doctoral Centre Manager not fewer than seven days before the date appointed for the meeting of the Committee the name, address and a description of the person accompanying/representing them and must state whether that person is a member of the University.
- 4.182 The examiners shall be invited to attend the meeting of the Appellate Committee.
- 4.183 The Committee shall normally conduct the proceedings in the presence of both the appellant and the examiners. The appellant and/or their representative have the right to be present throughout the meeting of the Appellate Committee, as have the examiners, until such time as the Committee retires to consider its findings.
- 4.184 The documentation with which the Committee is provided shall include:
- (a) the written submissions of the appellant and of the examiners (should they wish to make a written submission);
  - (b) the final report(s) and the preliminary independent reports of the examiners;
  - (c) any other documentation either the appellant or the examiners wish to submit. In addition, the Committee may request to see any other document it considers relevant to the appeal.
- 4.185 The procedure is for the appellant to address the Committee first and, during this part of the proceedings, they may call witnesses, if this has been agreed in advance. The examiners shall be invited to make any observations. Any questions by the appellant or the examiners shall be put through the chair.
- 4.186 The appellant may make any concluding remarks. The members of the Appellate Committee may put questions to any of those present at any time during the proceedings. The chair has the discretion to vary the procedure in any case where it is considered just to do so.
- 4.187 The Appellate Committee shall take one of the following decisions:
- (a) to reject the appeal, in which case the result of the original examination stands;
  - (b) to request the examiners to reconsider their decision. The examiners shall normally be expected to hold another oral examination before reaching a decision as to whether the result should be changed;
  - (c) to determine that the original examination be cancelled and that a new examination be conducted. The new examination shall be conducted by examiners who did not take part in the original examination and were not involved in the appeal.
- 4.188 The decision of the Appellate Committee shall be final and shall be transmitted to the appellant in writing. The Committee shall provide reasons for its decision.
- 4.189 When a new examination is held in accordance with 4.187(c) above, new examiners shall be appointed in accordance with the School's normal procedure. Two examiners should normally be appointed, or three if it is deemed appropriate, to act jointly.



- 4.190 The examiners should be external to the School of Advanced Study and at least one should be external to the University. Otherwise the new examination shall be conducted in accordance with the Regulations and Instructions to Examiners for the appropriate degree in force at the time the appellant originally entered the examination. The examiners may make any of the decisions open to the original examiners. The examiners will not be given any information about the previous examination except the single fact that they are conducting a new examination following appeal.
- 4.191 The result of the original examination having been cancelled, the result of the new examination shall be accepted.
- 4.192 The procedure detailed above completes the University's consideration of the matter. Attention is, however, drawn to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE). The OIAHE provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints about a final decision of a University's disciplinary or appeal body. Full details of the OIAHE and how to make a complaint are available from the [OIAHE website](#).

#### Examination offences

- 4.193 The University's Regulations for Proceedings in Respect of Examination Offences by Candidates for University Awards should be referred to.
- 4.194 All work submitted as part of the requirements for any examination of the University of London must be expressed in the candidate's own words and incorporate their own ideas and judgements. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as though they were the candidate's own and is an examination offence. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished work of another must always be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and a full reference to their source must be provided in the proper form. A series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Equally, if another person's ideas or judgements are summarised, the candidate must refer to that person in their text, and include the work to which reference is made in the bibliography.
- 4.195 Allegations of plagiarism will be considered under the appropriate procedure of the School of Advanced Study, unless the procedure specifically excludes MPhil, PhD and DPT degrees, in which case the allegation will be considered under the Regulations for Proceedings in Respect of Examination Offences by Candidates for University Awards, as will any other allegations of examination misconduct, including but not limited to:
- (a) deliberate attempts to represent falsely or unfairly the ideas or work of others;
  - (b) the invention or fabrication of data;
  - (c) the submission of work commissioned by another person.

#### Equality and Diversity

- 4.196 The School shall ensure that no applicant, student, or supervisor shall be discriminated against on the grounds of his or her sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, marital or civil partnership status, race (including colour, nationality or ethnic origins), religion or belief, disability or socio-economic background in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.197 In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the School shall ensure that reasonable steps are taken to ensure that disabled students can fully participate in the education and services provided for student by making reasonable adjustments. These reasonable adjustments are to avoid as far as possible by reasonable means the disadvantage disabled students experience because of their disability.

## 5. Complaints, Appeals and Academic Conduct

This policy is currently under review

### University of London Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedure

- 5.1 The University of London is dedicated to providing a high quality student experience. However, we recognize that students may sometimes become dissatisfied. Where concerns are brought to our attention we commit to investigating the matters raised, clarifying regulatory or procedural issues and, where appropriate, taking the necessary steps to provide remedy and redress.

- 5.2 If a student wishes to make a complaint or submit an academic appeal, they should follow the guidance below.
- 5.3 It is understood that making a complaint or submitting an academic appeal is a serious matter and it is treated as such by the University. All submissions under this Procedure are treated confidentially and students should be assured that raising a grievance of any kind will not negatively impact their academic progress or standing with the University.
- 5.4 It is our principal aim to resolve any complaint or problem quickly, fairly and simply at the informal stage (see Stage One, below).

#### Explanation of Key Terms Student Complaint

- 5.5 We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf. Appeals against applications of the regulations, or decisions made by us (including responses to progression and refund requests) are also considered as complaints.

#### Academic Judgement

- 5.6 Academic judgement refers to the determination of a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential. You may not complain about, or appeal against, a matter of academic judgement. For example, disagreement with an assessment mark or classification decision is not grounds for appeal.

#### Academic Appeal

- 5.7 We can only consider an academic appeal when it relates to:
- (a) serious circumstances which the Board of Examiners was not aware of when confirming the final mark, and which you were, for valid reasons, unable or unwilling to disclose earlier;
  - (b) procedural irregularities in the conduct of assessment;
  - (c) evidence of prejudice or bias.
- 5.8 An academic appeal made on the above grounds will be considered in line with the [University of London Regulation 1 Annex 3](#) (Procedure for Consideration of Representations Concerning Decisions of Boards of Examiners) and should be submitted to [A&C@london.ac.uk](mailto:A&C@london.ac.uk) line with Stage Two of the Procedure.
- 5.9 Throughout the Procedure for Student Complaints and Academic Appeals (the Procedure), ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ mean the University of London; ‘you’ and ‘your’ mean the complainant or appellant.
- 5.10 ‘Working day’ is defined as a day when the University is open for business and excludes public holidays and seasonal closures, such as Christmas and Easter.

#### Guidance for using the Procedure

- 5.11 Who can use the Procedure?
- (a) any current student;
  - (b) groups of current students;
  - (c) recent alumni, within the timeframes indicated below.

#### Timeframe for making a submission

- 5.12 A complaint or academic appeal should be raised as soon as possible and within 28 calendar days (4 weeks) of an incident taking place, or of you becoming aware of the issue. For an academic appeal this would usually be 4 weeks after your release of results. After that period, the basis of any complaint or appeal shall normally be deemed to have lapsed.
- 5.13 The Procedure does cover complaints about service provision (for example, processes relating to registration, examination, enquiry management);
- (a) complaints about the quality of the student learning experience (for example, study materials, VLE provision);
  - (b) appeals against the application of the regulations (for example, progression or transfer decisions);
  - (c) appeals against administrative decisions made by us (for example, refund requests);
  - (d) academic appeals;
  - (e) allegations of harassment.
- 5.14 The Procedure does not cover appeals against exam results. You cannot appeal against academic judgement;
- (a) appeals against the outcome of disciplinary processes (including assessment offence penalties). Please

refer to the appeals process within the appropriate procedure;

- (b) complaints from anonymous individuals or from an un-attributable source;
- (c) appeals against admissions decisions. Please see the Admissions Appeals Procedure at [london.ac.uk/applications/how-apply/what-happens-next/admissions-appeals-procedure](https://london.ac.uk/applications/how-apply/what-happens-next/admissions-appeals-procedure).

At all stages of the Procedure you are invited to communicate clearly and concisely, identifying the core issue(s) and stating what your desired outcome is. This will help us when responding to your submission. It is also important that you provide any evidence you have to support your case as early as possible in the process.

### Stage One: Informal Stage

#### Local resolution within the appropriate department of the University

- 5.15 In most instances your initial contact with us should be through the Registry.
- 5.16 Complaints should first be raised, wherever possible, with the member of staff you have been dealing with on the issue in question.
- 5.17 If you are not yet in correspondence with a member of staff, please open a new query.
- 5.18 Consideration of a complaint at this stage may involve referral to other members of staff in order to seek resolution. It is normally expected that if a complaint cannot be resolved at the early stages, it will be escalated to the line manager to ensure that complaints relating to their department are resolved in a fair and expeditious manner.
- 5.19 A record of all correspondence and telephone calls will be maintained.

### Stage Two: Formal Stage

#### Investigation by the Associate Director: Student Affairs, acting on behalf of the Director of Operations and Deputy Chief Executive

- 5.20 The following matters can be referred to Stage Two:
  - (a) complaints not resolved at Stage One;
  - (b) academic appeals – in line with [Regulation 1 Annex 3](#);
  - (c) allegations of harassment – in line with [Guidance for Students on Preventing and Responding to Harassment](#).
- 5.21 To be considered at Stage Two you must submit a fully completed copy of the Stage Two submission form available from [A&C@london.ac.uk](mailto:A&C@london.ac.uk).
- 5.22 Where you are requesting escalation of a complaint not resolved at Stage One of the Procedure your submission must be made within 28 calendar days (4 weeks) of your Stage One outcome and include details of efforts already made to resolve the issue and explain why you remain dissatisfied.
- 5.23 In exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Associate Director: Student Affairs, a case that has not completed Stage One may be considered at Stage Two if there is a clear reason for doing so. If you believe this applies to you, you should explain why in your submission.
- 5.24 You will normally receive an acknowledgement by email within three working days and, following a review of your submission, confirmation of whether it has been accepted at Stage Two.
- 5.25 If your submission is not accepted, or further information is required from you in order for a decision to be made, you will be informed of the next steps.
- 5.26 An investigation will be conducted by the Associate Director: Student Affairs, or a case-handler acting on their behalf. This may include the gathering and verification of evidence, further consultation with involved parties, requests for additional information from the student, and escalation (for example, to the Programme Director, Chair of the Board of Examiners or Director of Operations) to obtain the necessary authority for a pending outcome, where appropriate.
- 5.27 You will receive a letter from the Associate Director: Student Affairs informing you of the outcome, normally within 20 working days of receipt of your case.
- 5.28 If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will notify you of the revised time limits and keep you updated on progress.

### Stage Three: Review Stage

Complaints Resolution Panel on behalf of the Dean of the School of Advanced Study, with the delegated authority of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London

- 5.29 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint at Stage Two, you can escalate the matter to Stage Three on one or more of the following grounds:
- (a) that the procedures outlined above were not followed;
  - (b) that the outcome at Stage Two was not reasonable;
  - (c) that evidence which could not reasonably have been made available during Stage One or Stage Two has come to light.
- 5.30 To be considered at Stage Three you must submit a fully completed copy of the Stage Three submission form available from [ac-stage3@london.ac.uk](mailto:ac-stage3@london.ac.uk) within 14 calendar days (2 weeks) of the outcome of Stage Two of the Procedure.
- 5.31 Your case will be referred to the Chair of the Complaints Resolution Panel who will determine whether the criteria (noted at 5.30 and 5.31) are satisfied.
- 5.32 If the criteria are not satisfied, you will receive an outcome letter, normally within 10 working days, and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued from the Office of the Vice Chancellor.
- 5.33 If the criteria are satisfied, the full Complaints Resolution Panel will be convened.
- 5.34 The Complaints Resolution Panel, appointed by the Dean of the School of Advanced Study, as appropriate, will consist of a Chair and secretary, a member of staff from within an appropriate department of the University, and a student member.
- 5.35 No member of the Complaints Resolution Panel will have a personal or other significant interest in the case to be considered.
- 5.36 The Complaints Resolution Panel will be presented with all documentary evidence relating to your case, including records of consideration at Stages One and Two and your Stage Three submission, in order to make a decision.
- 5.37 You will not be requested, nor have any right, to appear before or address the Complaints Resolution Panel, nor to appoint a representative to do so on your behalf.
- 5.38 The Complaints Resolution Panel will meet within 20 working days of receipt of the case at Stage Three and you will be informed in writing of the outcome within 10 working days of the meeting. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued from the Office of the Vice Chancellor.
- 5.39 If the panel will take longer than the agreed timescales, we will tell you. We will notify you of revised time limits and keep you updated on progress.

### Office of the Independent Adjudicator

- 5.40 Following completion of all stages of the Procedure, if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you can submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OAI).
- 5.41 Please note that the OAI require a Completion of Procedures letter, issued from the office of the Vice Chancellor, before a complaint is considered eligible under the rules of their scheme.
- 5.42 For details of the OAI, the rules of their scheme and how to make a submission, please refer to their website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

## Procedures for the Consideration of Allegations of Assessment Offence

### Jurisdiction

- 5.43 These Procedures describe the University's response to allegations of offence in any form of assessment that contributes to the award for which a student is registered.
- 5.44 Definitions of what constitutes an assessment offence can be found in the Quality Assurance Framework for students of the School of Advanced Study.
- 5.45 The authority under these Procedures resides with the Associate Director: Student Affairs.
- 5.46 The Associate Director: Student Affairs may delegate any of the duties assigned to them under these Regulations to another member of staff of the University.

## Glossary

5.47 Use of the following terms throughout the Procedures for the Consideration of Allegations of an Assessment Offence (the Procedures) are defined below:

### **Assessment Offence**

A breach of assessment regulations, as defined in the Quality Assurance Framework. Assessment Offence, Examination Offence and Academic Misconduct may be used interchangeably across various University literature, but mean the same thing.

### **Academic judgement**

A decision that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential, such as the relevance of unauthorised materials in a written examination; or whether unreferenced material can be considered 'common knowledge' within that area of academic research.

### **Case**

The allegation against you and all information relating to it.

### **Outcome**

The final decision(s) reached following consideration of a case under a stage of these Procedures. This may include the application of penalties.

### **Penalty**

A sanction imposed as a consequence of a student having been found, through these Procedures, to be in breach of the assessment regulations. A penalty can be non-academic, such as a warning; or academic, such as 'no report'. A list of penalties available under these Procedures can be seen on page 7 of this document.

### **No Report**

An academic penalty. It is the equivalent to a fail mark, but also means that the assessment attempt will not be recognised as valid for the purposes of progression or completion of an award. A zero will appear on the student's transcript, and it will reduce the number of permitted attempts at the assessment or module by one.

### **Precedent**

An established outcome, based on the previous handling of equivalent cases under these Procedures. Precedent may reflect the severity of the offence and whether a student has a previous offence on their record.

## **Presumption of Innocence**

5.48 Any student will be presumed to be innocent of an alleged offence until the opposite is established beyond reasonable doubt.

## **Procedure**

### **Referral – Allegations of coursework offence**

5.49 An academic judgement is taken at programme-level that an offence has been committed, as defined under the, and that the nature of the offence is beyond the appropriate scope of the mark scheme.

5.50 A referral is made for investigation under the Procedures.

5.51 Allegations of coursework offence will normally be reported in the first instance to the Registry of the School of Advanced Study (by institutes of the School of Advanced Study).

5.52 The student is informed by the Programme Team that a referral has been made.

### **Referral – Allegations of written examination offence**

5.53 Examination allegations are most often made by an Invigilator during an examination. However, occasionally they may be reported through other channels, such as by an examiner or marker, or by another student.

5.54 When an allegation is made during an examination, the student will usually be informed by the Invigilator and asked to complete and sign the relevant sections of an Incident Report Form. A student declining to complete and sign the Incident Report Form, or the examination centre failing to offer this opportunity to the student, will not prevent an investigation taking place under these Procedures.

5.55 When an allegation is made after the examination has finished, the student will be informed in writing by the Student Affairs office that a referral has been made for consideration under these Procedures.

## **Investigation**

5.56 Following a referral, the release of any pending assessment results will automatically be withheld for a

student who is under investigation for an allegation, or allegations, of assessment offence, until the an outcome of an assessment offence is determined.

- 5.57 The case will be assigned to a case handler who will oversee investigations. This may include verifying existing evidence, obtaining further evidence or statements from the student and/or relevant third parties, or referring for further academic judgement.
- 5.58 If, following investigation and having sought appropriate academic judgement, a case handler determines that there is insufficient evidence of an assessment offence to be pursued under these Procedures, the referral will progress straight to consideration by the internal panel (see paragraph 5.61).
- 5.59 If, following investigation, it is determined that there is sufficient evidence to pursue the allegation under these Procedures, the student will be presented with details of the allegation and supporting evidence relevant to their case. The student will be asked to provide an explanatory statement within 2 weeks. If a statement is not provided within 2 weeks, the case will be considered without this additional evidence.
- 5.60 All evidence, including any explanatory statement submitted by the student, is reviewed by an internal panel. The panel will consist of no fewer than 2 members and will include the Associate Director: Student Affairs and/or Senior Manager: Academic Integrity and Student Conduct, and the relevant investigator.
- 5.61 The internal panel will determine whether the evidence, including any statement submitted by the student, supports the allegation or not. The internal panel may decide that further investigation is required before a determination can be made.

#### **Outcome**

- 5.62 A decision is taken by the Associate Director: Student Affairs, confirming first whether an offence is proven. In reaching this decision, reference will be made to the panel's determinations.
- 5.63 Following the decision as to whether an offence is proven, the Associate Director: Student Affairs will determine whether precedent exists for the case. Consideration will be given to the student's assessments to date, any prior proven assessment offences on the student's record and any mitigating circumstances that apply to the assessment offence in question. If precedent exists, the outcome will be determined accordingly.
- 5.64 Where precedent does not exist, or the Associate Director: Student Affairs is otherwise unable to reach a decision, they will refer the matter for consideration by the Assessment Offences Committee in line with paragraph 5.75.
- 5.65 The student will be informed in writing of the decision of the Associate Director: Student Affairs and any penalties applied, with reference to the panel's determinations.
- 5.66 The student will be informed of their right to submit an appeal.
- 5.67 The hold placed on the student's results will be removed following determination of an outcome. Results will be released in the normal way, either following a subsequent scheduled release, or as soon as possible should results already have been released. These are the student's confirmed results.

#### **Appeals Procedure**

- 5.68 Students are permitted to appeal within two weeks of the date on the outcome letter, on one or more of the following grounds:
- (a) that the procedures were not followed properly;
  - (b) that the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision (e.g. case is outside of precedent);
  - (c) that the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process;
  - (d) that there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure;
  - (e) that the penalty imposed was disproportionate, or not permitted under the procedures.
- 5.69 Appeals must be made using an appeal form, available from [assessment.offences@london.ac.uk](mailto:assessment.offences@london.ac.uk), stating clearly the grounds on which they are being made and providing relevant supporting evidence.
- 5.70 Appeals made after two weeks or without relevant supporting evidence will not normally be considered.
- 5.71 The Chair of the Assessment Offences Committee determines whether an appeal has been made on valid grounds and can be accepted for consideration.

5.72 If an appeal is not accepted, the student will be informed in writing, including the reasons for this decision. A Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued from the Office of the Vice Chancellor. This enables a student to pursue an independent review with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Full details of the OIA and how to make a complaint are available from [oiahe.org.uk](http://oiahe.org.uk)

5.73 If an appeal is accepted, it will be scheduled for consideration at the next meeting of the Assessment Offences Committee.

#### **Assessment Offences Committee –membership and procedure for hearings**

5.74 The Assessment Offences Committee will meet to consider outcomes of cases where either;

- (a) an appeal made on valid grounds has been accepted for further consideration; or
- (b) the Associate Director: Student Affairs was unable to determine an outcome (for example, due to the absence of established precedent, the severity or complexity of the offence).

5.75 The Assessment Offences Committee will normally consist of no fewer than three members, including the Chair of the Assessment Offences Committee, who is appointed annually for a fixed term. Further members will normally be academic staff drawn from Member Institutions of the University of London or Institutes of the School of Advanced Study and include an academic lawyer, appropriate subject specialist(s) and a student member. The membership of each Assessment Offences Committee meeting will reflect the nature of the case(s) under consideration.

5.76 When an Assessment Offence Committee meets to consider an appeal against an outcome determined by a previous Assessment Offences Committee, in accordance with paragraphs 5.94-98, it will be chaired by one of the panel members, as the Chair of the Assessment Offences Committee will have had prior involvement in the case.

5.77 In exceptional circumstances the Committee is permitted to conduct its business with two members.

5.78 No member of the Committee will have had any prior knowledge of the student or personal involvement in the case.

5.79 The Committee will normally conduct its business in person. Deliberations are permitted to take place by correspondence, or electronic means, if there is a clear reason for doing so and the method has been agreed by the Chair in consultation with the Associate Director: Student Affairs.

5.80 The Committee will be provided with full details of the cases under consideration including: all relevant documentation and evidence considered at earlier stages of the Procedures, written statements made by the student and, in the case of appeals, the appeal submission form.

5.81 Students with cases under consideration will be provided with a copy of each document which will be presented to the Committee. The student will then have the opportunity to submit a further statement for consideration by the Committee, if they so wish.

5.82 The cases, based on the documents held by the student and the Committee, will be presented by the Associate Director: Student Affairs and/or the Senior Manager: Academic Integrity and Student Conduct, who will also answer any questions the Committee may have regarding procedural or regulatory matters. 5.84. Should the Committee not feel able to reach a judgement, it is permitted to adjourn its business to seek further evidence. Any further evidence will be provided to the student, who will be given the opportunity to submit a further statement, before proceedings resume.

#### **Committee outcomes for appeal cases**

5.83 The Committee will determine whether the appeal submitted by the student should be upheld. Appeals can be upheld resulting in a change to the outcome, upheld with no change to the outcome, or not upheld.

5.84 If the Committee determines that the appeal is upheld resulting in a change to the outcome, the Committee can decide that:

- (a) the penalty previously imposed should be revoked;
- (b) that a lesser penalty should be imposed;
- (c) that a harsher penalty should be imposed.

- 5.85 If the Committee determines that an appeal is upheld but there is no change to the outcome, or that an appeal is not upheld, the previously determined outcome will stand.
- 5.86 The student will be informed of the appeal outcome in writing by the Chair. Whether an appeal is upheld or not, the Chair will provide clear reasoning for the decisions.
- 5.87 The decision of the Committee at this point is final and concludes the University's consideration of the matter. A Closure of Procedure Letter will be issued. This enables a student to pursue an independent review with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Full details of the OIAHE and how to make a complaint are available on the website of the OIAHE: [oiahe.org.uk](https://oiahe.org.uk).

#### **Committee outcomes for cases referred by the Associate Director: Student Affairs**

- 5.88 Following consideration of the evidence, the Committee will determine whether the allegation is proven. The Chair will give clear reasons for the decision.
- 5.89 If the Committee determines an offence is proven, they will be provided with details of the student's assessments to date, any prior proven assessment offences on the student's record and any mitigating circumstances that apply to the assessment offence in question.
- 5.90 The Committee, giving due consideration to the impact on the student's progression or eligibility for the award for which they are studying, will determine whether a penalty is to be applied, with reference to 5.99 – 100.
- 5.91 The outcome determined by the Committee, and full details of any penalties, will be communicated to the student in writing by the Chair. The outcome will also be communicated to the referring body if appropriate.

#### **Appeals against a decision of the Assessment Offences Committee**

- 5.92 Appeals against a decision of the Assessment Offences Committee should be made in line with paragraphs 5.69 – 71.
- 5.93 The Pro-Vice Chancellor (International), or, the Dean of the School of Advanced Study, as appropriate, determines whether an appeal has been made on valid grounds, has supporting evidence and can be accepted for consideration.
- 5.94 If an appeal is not accepted, the student will be informed in writing, including the reasons for this decision. The decision at this point is final and concludes the University's consideration of the matter. A Completion of Procedure Letter will be issued. This enables a student to pursue an independent review with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Full details of the OIA and how to make a complaint are available from [oiahe.org.uk](https://oiahe.org.uk)
- 5.95 If an appeal is accepted, a new Assessment Offences Committee, with members with no previous involvement in the case will be convened. The Committee will meet and conduct its business in accordance with paragraphs 5.76 – 89.
- 5.96 The Chair of previous the Assessment Offences Committee will present the case in place of the Associate Director: Student Affairs and/or Senior Manager: Academic Integrity and Student Conduct, as stated in paragraph 5.83.

#### **List of available penalties**

- 5.97 Available penalties are:
- (a) no further action to be taken; or
  - (b) that the student be formally reprimanded and reminded of the need to strictly follow the Regulations; and/or
  - (c) that no report be made on the performance of the student for the assessment in question; or
  - (d) that no report be made on the performance of the student for any or all the papers/assessments the student sat in the year the offence occurred; or
  - (e) that the student cannot re-enter for any or all of those assessments before the expiry of a stated period of time; or
  - (f) that no award of the University be granted before the expiry of a stated period of time, not exceeding three terms following satisfactory completion of the programme; or



- (g) that the student be excluded from future assessments for awards of the University.

Note: No report is the equivalent to a fail mark, but also means that the assessment attempt will not be recognised as valid for the purposes of progression or completion of an award. A zero will appear on the student's transcript, and it will reduce the number of permitted attempts at that assessment by one.

#### Table of precedent

5.98 The table below lists established outcomes for first, second and third proven assessment offences, and allegations that are not upheld, based on the consideration of previous cases under these Procedures. These standard outcomes do not preclude alternative action being taken where the nature of an offence justifies it. The Assessment Offences Committee will make reference to this table when setting new precedent.

Allegation not upheld or unproven	No Further Action
First offence(s)	Student will be formally reprimanded
	No report will be made for the assignment in question
Second offence(s) in a subsequent session	Student will be formally reprimanded
	No report will be made for the whole unit
Third offence(s) in a further session	No report for all modules taken within the academic year

Note: The definition of 'subsequent session' will be determined by the Associate Director: Student Affairs or the Assessment Offence Committee, but will normally be taken to mean that a sufficient amount of time has passed between receiving a penalty letter and submitting further assignments for assessment.

#### Illustrative Examples of Academic Misconduct

5.99 Any attempt by a student to gain unfair advantage in assessment will be considered as 'Academic Misconduct.' This includes all forms of cheating, plagiarism and collusion. The following list is not exhaustive but serves to indicate the range of activities which may constitute academic misconduct.

General:

- (a) engaging in any dishonest practice or irregularity in order to gain unfair advantage for the student themselves in assessment;
- (b) aiding and abetting a fellow student in any form of dishonest practice;
- (c) bribing, inducing or persuading another person to obtain and provide advance copy of any unseen examination or test paper or any coursework assignment;

With regard to examinations or tests:

- (d) removing any script, paper or other official stationery from the examination room, unless so authorised by an invigilator or examiner;
- (e) introduction or use of any devices of any kind other than those specifically permitted by the rubric of the examination paper (e.g. a dictionary or calculator where not so permitted or an unauthorised computer disk containing pre-coded data);
- (f) possession of any revision notes, crib sheets or other written aide memoire during the examination/ test;
- (g) communicating with another student or any person other than the invigilator/examiner during the examination/test;
- (h) copying or attempting to copy the work of another student during the examination/test;
- (i) being party to an arrangement whereby a person other than the candidate represents, or plans to represent, the candidate in an examination/test;
- (j) duplicating substantially the same material in an examination answer which has already been submitted in another examination answer or in a coursework assignment;

With regard to coursework assessment:

- (k) making available work to another student so that it can be presented as the work of that student;
- (l) representation of work produced in collaboration with another person or persons as the work of the single candidate (except where specifically permitted by the arrangements for the assessment of groupwork);

- (m) commissioning another person or persons, including the use of ‘ghost-writing’ agencies, to produce or complete an assessment which is submitted as the student’s own;
- (n) presentation of data purporting to be based on work of the student but which has been invented, altered or falsified;
- (o) submitting another student’s work as the candidate’s own work;
- (p) use of one or more sections of verbatim quotation or close paraphrasing without appropriate referencing, such as the use of quotation marks.
- (q) use of extensive verbatim quotation or close paraphrasing without appropriate referencing, such as the use of quotation marks;
- (r) it should be noted that material can be deemed to be plagiarised from:
- (s) printed published material, e.g. books and journal articles;
  - (i) material published on internet sites;
  - (ii) unpublished but publicly available material, e.g. theses and dissertations in university libraries/departmental holdings;
  - (iii) handouts and other materials provided by course/module tutors;
  - (iv) charts, graphs or visual images;
  - (v) work of other students (in the same or previous cohorts);
  - (vi) work of the candidate herself/himself where this has previously been submitted for assessment (though this may be considered ‘duplication’ – see 5.101(j) and 5.101(s) – depending upon the extent of verbatim repetition);
- (t) duplicating substantially the same material in a coursework assignment that has already been submitted in an assignment for another module/course;
- (u) presenting text created by a generative AI or Large Language Model such as Chat GPT as the student’s own;
- (v) plagiarising the work of another person whether published in any medium (e.g. print or internet) or unpublished and submitting it as the candidate’s own work. Plagiarism can have a range of gradation. See therefore the Special Note below.

### Special Note on Plagiarism

5.100 Plagiarism is the most common of assessment offences. It has a range of gradations of severity. At the lower levels or in the first instance, it may be committed unwittingly, as a consequence of ignorance of the conventions of academic practice and of the submission of academic essays/papers. This is still not a justification, since it is the responsibility of students to familiarise themselves with the academic conventions and practices required by their course. At the graver levels of the conscious misrepresentation of another person’s work as the student’s own, it is both theft of the intellectual property of the other person and an intentional act of deception in order to gain an unfair and unjustified advantage in assessment.

### Revocation of degree and other awards

5.101 The School may recommend to the Vice-Chancellor the revocation of any degree, diploma, certificate or other award granted in accordance with University Regulation 1, except in the following instances when reference to the procedure is not required, if it shall be discovered at any time and proved to the satisfaction of the School that:

- (a) there was an administrative error in the award made under the appropriate regulations and procedures;
- or
- (b) subsequent to award a School Board of Examiners, having taken into account information which was unavailable at the time its decision was made, determines that a candidate’s classification should be altered;
- (c) allegations of examination misconduct made after the award of any degree, diploma or certificate will be considered in accordance with Annex 2 of University Regulation 1.

## 6. Quality Assurance Responsibilities and Governance

### The Academic Board

- 6.1 The Academic Board has specific responsibilities for upholding the standards of the University of London award as follows:
- (a) to consider, approve and keep under review the University's academic strategy, aligned with the University's Strategic Plan, and monitor progress against academic strategic objectives.
  - (b) to hold strategic oversight of academic and student related policy and procedures (including portfolio reviews).
  - (c) to oversee the University's responses to external regulatory bodies, quality assurance and professional bodies.
  - (d) to approve, regulate and periodically review the scope and content of taught and research degree programmes, all diploma and certificate programmes and component courses, and to guide future curriculum development.
  - (e) to authorise the award of degrees (apart from honorary degrees and fellowships, and emeritus positions), diplomas, certificates and other awards to persons who have fulfilled the conditions of award.
  - (f) to determine the regulations relating to the definition of the University of London awards and the implementation thereof.
  - (g) to determine policies to regulate the admission of persons to programmes of study, and to prescribe the circumstances in which a student may be required or permitted to withdraw temporarily or permanently and either conditionally or unconditionally from all or any part of his or her programme of study.
  - (h) to monitor appointment, removal and suspension of all University of London examiners and to maintain an overview of the quality of University of London programmes.
  - (i) to assure, maintain and enhance the quality of the University's academic provision in teaching and research.
  - (j) to monitor and promote research (including monitoring research grants and activities of the University's Centres of Excellence), and to require reports on research from time to time.
  - (k) to monitor the University's approach to securing and promoting freedom of speech and academic freedom, and to regularly review the University's Code of Practice setting out the University's values relating to freedom of speech.
  - (l) to establish and delegate responsibilities to standing committees of the Academic Board where appropriate, to receive reports from the Academic Board's standing committees; and to determine the constitution, terms of reference and standing orders of the standing committees.
  - (m) to endorse for onward transmission to Collegiate Council as appropriate matters affecting academic governance, organisation of academic units, and academic strategy.
  - (n) to report to the Collegiate Council on matters concerning academic collaborations, joint degrees and research partnerships.

### Academic Quality Advisory Committee (AQAC)

- 6.2 The AQAC is a Standing Committee of the University of London's Academic Board and shall be responsible for advising the Academic Board on academic matters including the maintenance of standards of awards, quality assurance policies and procedures and academic regulations.

Its terms of reference are:

- (a) to advise on the University's responses to requirements of external quality assurance bodies and professional bodies.
- (b) to maintain operational oversight of academic and student-related policy.
- (c) to maintain operational oversight of key student procedures.

- (d) to monitor academic performance, including student outcomes, and to ensure that appropriate action is taken in response to identified quality matters at the relevant level.
- (e) to receive summary reports from monitoring activities, including academic programme and portfolio reviews, to assure the quality and enhancement of the student experience.
- (f) to confirm approval of new programmes leading to a University award, and to provide assurance to the Academic Board that due process has been followed
- (g) to review summary reports on External Examiners' reports on taught programmes.
- (h) to oversee procedures for the monitoring and measurement of student satisfaction, including review of student feedback to ensure that appropriate action is taken.
- (i) to oversee the University's approach to assuring the completeness, accuracy, reliability and fitness for purpose of information provided for applicants, students and stakeholders.
- (j) to establish sub-committees tasked with overseeing specific academic activities, and assisting the AQAC in advising the Academic Board on the maintenance of the University's awards standards, and alignment with agreed quality assurance policies and procedures.

### Academic Quality and Standards Committee

6.3 The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) is a working committee of the School of Advanced Study and not a formal part of the governance structure. Its terms of reference are as follows:

- (a) To determine the arrangements for the provision of credit for study and assessment undertaken at another institution or in non-degree courses within the University, where flexibility is allowed in a programme of study, and to monitor such arrangements;
- (b) To monitor routinely the effectiveness of programmes of study and courses, through:
  - i) the monitoring of the allocation of students to tutors or advisers;
  - ii) the availability of teachers, module coordinators and programme directors for consultation by students;
  - iii) feedback from students through appropriate student representation including student surveys, staff- student liaison committees and student satisfaction questionnaires (see below);
  - iv) reports from external examiners, external and internal reviews; opinions expressed by teaching staff, degree convenors and other staff; and reviews by the QAA or similar or successor regulatory organisations [For further guidance see Section 6];

6.4 AQSC will be chaired by a senior academic of the School appointed by the Dean and shall consist of representatives of teaching institutes of the School; two external members and at least one student representative. The Director of Operations(SAS) and Director, Quality, Standards and Governance (UoLW) shall also be members.

6.5 At the first meeting of the academic year a deputy for the chair will be elected to act in his absence.

6.6 The AQSC shall exercise its responsibilities to establish and maintain:

- (a) clear principles and procedures to enable the School to carry out its responsibilities in regard to quality assurance;
- (b) mechanisms to ensure that such principles are respected and to enable it to respond with authority on the School's behalf;
- (c) mechanisms to ensure full and proper response to the relevant demands of the University and of government and other official agencies, including the OFS (Office for Students) and the QAA.

6.7 AQSC will consider and recommend to the Academic Board (SAS) policies and procedures necessary to maintain and enhance the academic standards and quality of all programmes of study, wherever they are delivered, taking account of local, national and international developments. Thus it will:

- (a) consider, approve and recommend to the Board:
- (b) the introduction of new programmes of study leading to qualifications of the University of London;

- (c) proposals for the termination of specific programmes of study;
- (d) suspension of programme regulations and where necessary to review the policy implications of such requests
- (e) proposals for credit for courses undertaken at another institution;
- (f) proposals for non-credit-bearing courses students may take within the University while registered for a Master's programme in the School (New programmes and significant changes in programmes of study are subject to approval by the AQSC and subsequent approval by the Board and Collegiate Council);
- (g) determine the arrangements for the provision of credit for study and assessment undertaken at another institution or in non-degree courses within the University, where flexibility is allowed in a programme of study, and to monitor such arrangements;
- (h) monitor routinely the effectiveness of programmes of study and courses, through:
  - (i) the monitoring of the allocation of students to tutors or advisers;
  - (j) the availability of teachers, module coordinators and programme directors for consultation by students;
  - (k) feedback from students through appropriate student representation including student surveys, staff-student liaison committees and student satisfaction questionnaires (see below);
  - (l) reports from external examiners, external and internal reviews; opinions expressed by teaching staff, degree convenors and other staff; and reviews by the QAA or similar or successor regulatory organisations [For further guidance see Section 6];
- (m) consider, approve and report to the Board minor changes to existing programmes of study, such as the introduction of new modules, and where necessary on any implications for School policy of such changes;
- (n) where the Chair of AQSC considers it appropriate, minor changes (such as described in 6.7(m)) may be referred to the Board for its approval;
- (o) consider and approve External Examiner nominations;
- (p) consider and approve Boards of Examiners ('Exam Boards');
- (q) consider the implications arising from the following matters, and make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Board:
  - (i) reports from external agencies or professional bodies on the quality of the School's provision along with the School's response to them;
  - (ii) annual and periodic programme reviews;
  - (iii) student evaluations and responses;
  - (iv) internal audits;
  - (v) summaries from External Examiners' reports;
  - (vi) the operation of the University of London Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedure;
  - (vii) issues arising from the Staff/Student Liaison committees system;
  - (viii) issues arising from the University of London concerning the quality of academic standards.

6.8 AQSC shall bring to the attention of the Board such other matters as may be appropriate.

6.9 AQSC shall annually appoint, on the proposal of the Director of the institute concerned, a committee or committees of each institute offering a programme or to oversee programmes of study for taught Master's degrees, diplomas, certificates, or the degrees of MPhil and PhD. The Research Degrees Committee (RDC) in relation to MPhil and PhD – responsibilities are set out in Sections 4.7-4 13.

6.10 Where it appears to AQSC from any report by RDC, from an external or intercollegiate examiner's report or from other information, that an institute is failing to comply with any of the requirements contained or referred to herein, or is otherwise departing significantly from good academic practice, AQSC shall request the institute to report by a prescribed date on the action taken to correct the default. In the absence of such a report, or if AQSC considers that the report received is unsatisfactory, AQSC shall refer the matter to the Dean (see 6.16).

## Suspension of regulations

- 6.11 Suspension of regulations will only be considered in extraordinary cases, where extraordinary is taken as meaning very unusual or remarkable and these cases cannot be dealt with by any other means. For example, where there has been unusual hardship or students have been overtaken by exceptional events and circumstances beyond their control.
- 6.12 Requests for the AQSC suspension of regulations must be submitted in writing to the Head of Registry Services. Any such written submission must state the reason for the request and the case in support of suspension of regulations.
- 6.13 All requests for suspension of regulations and the decisions by or on behalf of the AQSC shall be recorded.
- 6.14 Wherever practicable the opinions of the relevant Committee and any of its relevant sub-committees or the advice of their chairs shall be sought by the Head of Registry Services in preparing a case for consideration.
- 6.15 Suspension of regulations may be determined by the chair of the AQSC on behalf of the Committee, particularly those where an urgent decision is necessary in the interests of admission or examination of a student or group of students and where amendment of regulation is inappropriate.

## The Dean

- 6.16 On receipt of a reference under 6.10, where it appears to the Dean that there is a failure or departure from regulation or procedure such as is there referred to which could significantly harm the interests of the School or of any student or class of students, the Dean, after consulting the Director of the relevant institute, and the Chief Operating Officer, may take such action compatible with University regulations and requirements as appears to the Dean best calculated to avert or minimise the harm, including, but not limited to, the substitution of their own decision for any which the relevant RDC has made or was competent to make. Any such action shall be reported by the Dean to the next meeting of the Directorate, which may confirm, vary or terminate it.

# 7. Programme Approval and Review

## Approval of a New Programme of Study

- 7.1 In approving new programmes of study and carrying out reviews of existing programmes the general guidance in the QAA Codes of Practice and Academic Infrastructure shall be taken into account as well as other external reference points, national qualifications frameworks and any relevant national/European Union legislation (for as long as this remains in place). Specific provisions are in place for the approval of distance learning programmes.
- 7.2 The University of London's approval processes have been designed to fully discharge its responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.
- 7.3 Proposals for new programmes of study and/or major modifications to existing programmes must be submitted by the institute concerned to the AQSC. AQSC will forward proposals with recommendations to the Academic Board via the Academic Quality and Assurances Committee (AQAC) for formal acceptance.
- 7.4 A sub-panel will be convened on behalf of the AQSC to scrutinize the proposal. The panel will consist of a Chair, a School of Advanced Study representative (who is from an institute other than where the proposal originates), an External Subject specialist and a student member. The panel will be provided with Terms of

### Reference and role descriptors to facilitate the approval.

- 7.5 The sub panel will report to the AQSC with its recommendations which may include conditions to be met prior to the launch of the programme, recommendations for further improvements and commendations.
- 7.6 The Committee will forward its recommendations to AQAC and the Academic Board for formal approval.
- 7.7 The proposal should include the following:
  - (a) justification in terms of:

- (i) academic rationale, including the relevance of the programme in the light of developing knowledge and practice in the discipline, and the relationship of the programme with the mission and strengths of the institute;
- (ii) the local context: compatibility with and enhancement of existing programmes and anticipated demand for the programme;
- (iii) the national context: comparable existing provision with particular attention paid to the UoL federation;
- (iv) relevance (where appropriate) to areas of professional work;
- (b) statement of staffing and other resources required and available (including staff outside the institute);
- (c) statement of consultation carried out, including consultation within the School and with external advisers (e.g. external examiners, external assessors), and with students;
- (d) subject benchmark statement (where available).

7.8 The details of the proposed programme should include:

- (a) programme structure, including alternative pathways as appropriate, with short bibliographies for each module;
- (b) programme specification, including intended learning outcomes;
- (c) scheme of assessment;
- (d) programme regulations (including number of contact hours);
- (e) a statement of intended fee levels;
- (f) target enrolment numbers and costings and a marketing plan;
- (g) mechanisms for student and staff feedback;
- (h) planning and intended timetable for review of programme.

## Amendments to Programmes

7.9 Six months' advance notice will normally be given of the commencement of a programme of study not previously offered, or a combined programme in a combination of subjects not previously offered.

7.10 Save in exceptional circumstances, no amendment to the regulations for a programme will be authorised later than the commencement of classes or other formal tuition in the programme for the year in which the amendment is to take place.

## Arrangements for Joint Degrees

7.11 The University regulations allow for the award of doctoral degrees jointly with institutions outside the University, including the award of degrees under arrangements for joint supervision ('co-tutelle,' 'co-tutela') with other institutions. A special memorandum of agreement is required for each joint supervision arrangement, signed on behalf of the School by the Dean and by the Director of the relevant institute. The regulations set out below will be applied or amended in accordance with the memorandum of agreement.

7.12 These regulations are a code of good practice for the academic management of collaborative arrangements entered into by institutes of the School. They are based on the QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education, and seek to protect the standard of the University of London degree.

7.13 When entering into any collaboration with a partner external to the University of London, institutes should ensure that the principles enshrined in the QAA Code are addressed in the collaborative agreement.

7.14 Collaborative provision is educational provision leading to an award, or to specific credit towards an award, delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an arrangement with a partner organisation.

7.15 All collaborative programmes should be approved through the AQSC, the Academic Board and Collegiate Council.

## Standards

- 7.16 The School has a responsibility for the academic standards of the awards granted in the name of the University of London. Where a joint degree is being awarded, the School must be assured of the standing of the collaborating partner, and the quality and standards of its awards. The AQSC will expect to see copies of audit documents of the collaborating institution attesting to the quality of the awards made.
- 7.17 The academic standard of all awards made under a collaborative arrangement should meet the expectations of the UK academic infrastructure as embodied in the School's Quality Assurance Framework.
- 7.18 The institute and the collaborating partner should each complete a programme/module specification(s) detailing the aims, learning outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment methods of a collaborative programme of study. If modules are being modified for contribution to a joint degree/collaboration, the revised module needs to be re-approved through AQSC.
- 7.19 Collaborative arrangements should be negotiated, agreed and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the awarding institution. In the case of a joint degree, agreement should be negotiated in such a way that all partners maintain the integrity and standards of their degree.
- 7.20 The awarding institution(s) should inform any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB), which has approved or recognised a programme that is the subject of a possible or actual collaborative arrangement, of its proposals and of any final agreements which involve the programme. No distinction should be made between provision offered directly by the awarding institution itself, on its own premises, and that offered through collaborative arrangements.

## Finance and risk management

- 7.21 It is incumbent on the institute involved in the collaboration to ensure both that its financial management arrangements are strong enough to manage the risks effectively, and that the financial arrangements themselves do not jeopardise the integrity of the academic standards, quality of the provision or the interests of students.
- 7.22 Financial considerations may also have a bearing on standards and quality in matters of recruitment and progression, and in policy and practice in resourcing. The introduction of safeguards against threats to these standards should be part of the collaborative arrangement.
- 7.23 Collaborative arrangements should therefore be fully costed and accounted for accurately and fully.

## The collaborating partner(s)

- 7.24 A relationship where educational objectives are well matched can enable both the partner organisation and the awarding institution to develop and achieve benefits that neither could gain alone. Incompatibility of values, outlook, objectives and methods between partners can lead to an unsatisfactory relationship with serious adverse consequences for students, programmes and awards. Institutes are required to address this principle in the narrative paper accompanying the programme specifications and costing information.
- 7.25 The School should satisfy itself of the good standing of prospective partners and of their capacity to fulfil their designated role in the arrangement. This will include:
- (a) the public and legal standing of a prospective partner organisation in their own country;
  - (b) Note that the University of London expects all international partners to be checked against the Home office sanctions list
  - (c) the standing of a prospective partner organisation in the UK determined in the light of experience of other UK institutions and from public documents such as QAA reports on collaborative arrangements with UK institutions;
  - (d) the financial stability of a prospective partner organisation;
  - (e) the ability of the prospective partner organisation to provide human and material resources to operate the programme successfully;
  - (f) the ability of the prospective partner organisation to provide an appropriate and safe working environment for students on the programme.

All the above principles should be addressed in the narrative paper.



- 7.26 The awarding institution is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities offered through a collaborative arrangement is adequate to enable a student to achieve the academic standard required for its award.
- 7.27 An awarding institution which engages with another authorised awarding body jointly to provide a programme of study leading to a dual or joint academic award should be able to satisfy itself that it has the legal capacity to do so, and that the standards and quality of its awards are not jeopardised by the arrangements it has entered into with partners.
- 7.28 There should be a written and legally binding agreement or contract setting out the rights and obligations of the parties and signed by the authorised representatives of the awarding institution(s) and the partner organisation.
- 7.29 The agreement should include the following:
- (a) the need to agree on the source and location of any published quality-related information that may be required (e.g. by a funding council);
  - (b) the need to be secure in respect of matters relating to copyright and intellectual property rights;
  - (c) specification of the role of external examiners in ensuring that the awarding institution can fulfil its responsibility for the standards of academic awards;
  - (d) termination and mediation provisions and financial arrangements to be followed if the arrangement ceases;
  - (e) specification of the legal jurisdiction under which any disputes would be resolved;
  - (f) inclusion of provisions to enable either institution to suspend or withdraw from the agreement if the other party fails to fulfil its obligations;
  - (g) specification and adequacy of the residual obligations of both parties to students on termination of the collaborative arrangement, including the obligations of the awarding institution to enable students to complete their studies leading to the award.

### Credit and awards

- 7.30 Institutions offering dual awards through a credit-based structure will need to be alert to the consequences of each participating institution offering credit for the same piece of work, thereby potentially doubling the credit value.
- 7.31 Students, potential students, employers and other stakeholders need to be able to satisfy themselves that awards obtained through collaboration are fully equivalent to other awards offered at a similar level by the same awarding body. The scope, coverage and assessment strategy of a collaborative programme should be described in a programme specification that refers to relevant subject benchmark statements and the level of award. This should be readily available and comprehensible to students, academic staff, examiners and all other stakeholders.

### Monitoring and review

- 7.32 In the case of a collaborative arrangement with a partner organisation, the institution should be able to satisfy itself that the terms and conditions that were originally approved have been, and continue to be met.
- 7.33 Regular monitoring and review, at institutional or programme levels should take place at various levels, i.e. at the AQSC through regular reporting, and through annual and periodic review.

### Staffing

- 7.34 The quality of both teaching and other aspects of learning support is critically important for all students, irrespective of the mode of programme delivery. It is essential that students can rely on the quality of those who teach them and that their continued development is supported. The use of properly qualified staff and the effective monitoring of their proficiency are important aspects of an awarding institution's responsibility for assuring the standards and quality of its collaborative provision.
- 7.35 The School should satisfy itself that staff engaged in delivering or supporting a collaborative programme are appropriately qualified for their role. This will involve taking into consideration the existing workloads of staff prior to entering into a collaborative arrangement. The School should also assure itself that a partner

organisation has effective measures to monitor and assure the proficiency of staff contributing to the programme. AQSC will expect to see the CVs of all staff involved in teaching/supervising.

#### Admissions

- 7.36 The School should ensure that arrangements for admission to the collaborative programme take into account the School's Admissions Policy and English language requirements.
- 7.37 In the School, the language of study and assessment will be English. Students admitted to a dual or joint degree should be admitted at or above the language requirements set.

#### External examining

- 7.38 The external examiner system allows an awarding institution to be sure that its academic standards are both appropriate and being safeguarded. The School should ensure that similarly robust arrangements exist in the partner organisation.
- 7.39 The School retains ultimate responsibility for the appointment and functions of its own external examiners. It must ensure that external examiners are appointed in a responsible, reliable and consistent manner. Regardless of the system in existence in the collaborating partner's country, the School expects external examiners to be appointed for all programmes. Institutes are required to detail the arrangement for external examining for all collaborative awards.

#### Certificates and transcripts

- 7.40 The School should ensure that the certificate and/or transcript should record the name of any partner organisation engaged in the delivery of the programme of study.

#### Information for students

- 7.41 The information made available to prospective students and those registered on a collaborative programme should include information to students about the appropriate channels for particular concerns, complaints and appeals, making clear the channels through which they can contact the awarding institution(s) directly. AQSC will expect to be assured of this in the covering narrative paper.
- 7.42 The School/institute should monitor regularly the information given by the partner organisation or agent to prospective students and those registered on a collaborative programme.

#### Other collaborative agreements

- 7.43 Occasionally Institutes will offer University of London degrees in collaboration with other partners but not as joint degrees and not for academic credit. Whilst the regulations concerning co-tutelle will not apply, any agreement should nevertheless pass through the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. This is to ensure that the nature of the collaboration is sound, that there is no risk to the University of London and that the principles regarding collaborative provision outlined in paras. 7.11 – 7.42 above are taken account of.
- 7.44 All forms of working with other organisations to provide higher education fall within the scope of the Quality Code's Advice and Guidance Theme on Partnerships: [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/partnerships](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/partnerships). The Guiding Principles within this theme should be taken into consideration when drafting the proposal. In addition, the proposal must take account of the QAA Characteristics Statement: Qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body (October 2015) here <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/24584/1/Joint-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf>

#### Distance learning programmes

- 7.45 Final approval of such courses will only be given after taking account of the results of field testing of distance learning resources and learning materials and external peer review. Programmes will be delivered in a manner which provides a learning opportunity which gives students a fair and reasonable chance of achieving the academic standards required for successful completion.
- 7.46 Programmes of study offered as distance learning are designed so that the academic standard of the award is demonstrably comparable to those of awards delivered in other ways.
- 7.47 The School will ensure that study materials delivered through web-based channels meet specified expectations of the University of London in respect of the quality of learning support material leading to one of its awards.
- 7.48 The AQSC will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of distance learning programmes.

7.49 AQSC shall have particular regard to the following:

- (a) that the system delivering the programme shall be tested regularly and shall include the establishment of an adequate back-up plan in the event of failure;
- (b) that the educational aims and intended learning outcomes of the programme delivered online are reviewed periodically for their continuing validity and relevance and for ensuring quality and academic standards.

7.50 The institute will ensure that:

- (a) clear statements are made on the expected communication between parties in the system, and access to tutors is provided for students on a regular, sufficient and published basis;
- (b) regular opportunities for inter-learner discussion should take place to facilitate collaborative learning and to provide a basis for facilitating participation in the quality assurance of the programme;
- (c) students will have an identified academic contact through email, telephone and skype who can offer constructive feedback in academic performance and authoritative guidance on their academic progression for each element of the programme;
- (d) students will have an identified administrative contact for general enquiries and assistance;
- (e) all enquiries from students are handled promptly and sympathetically;
- (f) students' progress is monitored regularly;
- (g) the delivery of materials should be secure and reliable, and there should be a means available for safe receipt;
- (h) there are adequate safeguards against potential malpractice in regard to remote assessment.

### **Annual Programme Planning and Review (Annual Monitoring): Guidelines**

7.51 Annual Programme Planning and Review (APPR) is the process that has been agreed by the University of London to review and monitor the performance of each programme annually. Where feasible the previous year's programme should be reviewed as early as possible in the next academic year, in order to allow changes required as a result to be implemented in time for the current year's programme. The process is delegated to the School by the University of London and is designed to ensure that there is institutional oversight of academic standards and that appropriate action is being taken at all levels to enhance the quality of the student academic experience.

7.52 The process is overseen by the Chair of AQSC or the Dean's nominee through the submission of documents to a review panel.

7.53 Programme monitoring or programme review considers the continuing currency and validity of programmes in light of developments in research, professional and industry practice and pedagogy (including the use of technology in learning and teaching), changes in the external environment such as requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, and continued alignment with the School's strategy and mission. They also evaluate whether students are attaining the intended learning outcomes and whether the assessment regime enables this to be appropriately demonstrated.

7.54 The process draws together a range of evidence including:

- (a) action sheet progress report (from previous year's review);
- (b) Programme Director's annual commentary;
- (c) External Examiner reports;
- (d) VLE Review (and/or overview of how the course is taught and assessed);
- (e) library and resources report;
- (f) student information including profile, registrations, withdrawals, interruptions and performance statistics, data on assessment offences and an analysis of the attainment gap;
- (g) student experience survey results as well as module surveys;
- (h) student engagement and of student queries;
- (i) programme enhancements;

- (j) planned developments;
- (k) programme specifications;
- (l) module information and availability.

7.55 As far as possible, the annual monitoring exercise should benchmark its information, using nationally-available statistics where they are available and relevant. (For instance, the national PTES student survey will allow student satisfaction to be benchmarked effectively.)

7.56 Following the meeting a report and action plan will be drafted based on the output from the meeting and other activity conducted throughout the preceding year. This will be formally reported to the AQSC.

### **Periodic Review of Programmes**

7.57 Periodic programme review enables the University of London as the awarding body to review provision and monitor the standards of the award and assure the quality of the learning experience. The School has agreed that a minimum of one, and ideally two, Master's programmes should be reviewed each year, according to a schedule agreed by the Dean; and that each programme should be reviewed at intervals of no longer than five years.

### **Aims and objectives of periodic review**

7.58 The aim of periodic review is to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of high-quality academic provision by assessing the quality and standards of programmes and the achievement of students.

7.59 The periodic review of programmes will ensure that:

- (a) each programme meets its stated aims and objectives and is reviewed against appropriate points of reference including the University of London criteria for degrees and the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications;
- (b) programmes remain up-to-date in respect of current research and developing knowledge in the appropriate disciplines;
- (c) the academic standards of awards and the quality of the learning opportunities and the student academic experience are maintained and possibilities for enhancement are identified;
- (d) the extent to which students are achieving the intended learning outcomes is evaluated;
- (e) where external bodies are involved in the delivery of the teaching, that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to guarantee the maintenance of quality and standards;
- (f) the resources available, including staffing, continue to support the programme and any required enhancement to it.

### **The School's Periodic Programme Review process**

7.60 Periodic Programme Review (PPR) will be administered by the institute on behalf of the AQSC, and will be serviced by the Quality Team, Quality, Standards and Governance, UoLW operating with assistance from appropriate institute staff. The secretary is responsible for establishing contact with institute staff regarding the constitution and membership of the panel and to confirm the arrangements.

7.61 The review will take the form of an independent peer assessment by a panel of assessors appointed by the Dean on the proposal of the institute, and reporting to the Dean. Members will receive an honorarium paid by the School. The panel should comprise:

- (a) at least one academic adviser external to the School (who may not be, or have been, an external examiner on the programme), who will normally act as chair to the panel;
- (b) at least one academic adviser external to the institute, who may be from within the School;
- (c) a current student or an alumnus to provide a student experience perspective.

7.62 The panel will review the documentation prepared by the institute (see below for material to be supplied to the panel). The panel will be expected to meet, although it may be possible for some members to contribute remotely.

7.63 Representatives of the current or just-graduated student cohort may be invited to give evidence to the review panel as well as teaching and professional support staff.

7.64 Staff may be interviewed by panel members. Documentation for the review panel

7.65 The institute should provide the following material for the review panel:

- (a) Self-Evaluation report (see below);
- (b) programme specification and programme regulations;
- (c) prospectus, student handbook and other guidelines;
- (d) Intercollegiate and External Examiners for the previous five years;
- (e) VLE access where appropriate;
- (f) a selection of learning resources;
- (g) staff profiles;
- (h) annual monitoring reports for the previous five years;
- (i) student feedback.

### Self-Evaluation report

7.66 The Self-Evaluation is an internal assessment, carried out by the institute, of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and, where weaknesses are identified, an indication of how they are being addressed. It is not intended to be an exhaustive re-working of the material listed in section 7.65, and should be brief (eight pages maximum). The institute may set up a sub-committee to carry out and produce the Self-Evaluation report. The following points should be covered:

- (a) rationale for the programme, including overall aims and market demand;
- (b) assessment of the effectiveness of:
  - (i) teaching, learning and assessment and how they support achievement of the programme and aims and learning outcomes;
  - (ii) student support mechanisms, including pastoral support and the monitoring of academic progress;
  - (iii) student input and the use made of student feedback;
  - (iv) external input, including responsiveness to comments from external and intercollegiate examiners;
  - (v) learning resources including library and information services, staff and accommodation;
  - (vi) ways in which enhancement of the provision is achieved (for instance, through development of new modules, but also innovations in teaching and learning, such as revisions in types of assessment and teaching methods) and the dissemination of good practice;
- (c) consideration of results (including non-completions) and of the achievements of students in relation to the intended learning outcomes of the programme;
- (d) discussion of any future developments, concentrating on enhancement;
- (e) if applicable, the monitoring of any collaborative teaching activity.

### Report and Recommendations

7.67 The PPR report is normally written by the secretary to the panel and presented to the Chair of the panel in the first instance, and then the remaining members of the panel as a whole. The final report is considered by the AQSC along with a response from the Programme team.

7.68 Programme specific issues, actions or recommendations are taken forward, recorded and monitored as part of the Annual Monitoring and review (AMR) process.

## Programme Closure Policy

7.69 The School of Advanced Study will take all appropriate steps to deliver programmes and modules in accordance with the public information available on the website and associated prospectuses.

7.70 The School is required to have an agreed and planned procedure for managing the closure of a programme, which includes protecting the academic interests of all students already studying on the programme (including those who have taken an agreed break from their studies) and those who have applied to study on it.

- 7.71 Institutes are required to discuss the matter of closure at Directorate where the full implications including the financial and reputational impact of closure will be examined.
- 7.72 The decision to close a programme is not undertaken lightly and factors influencing such a decision may include poor recruitment, resource issues, strategic changes within the School or Institute or changes within the academic discipline. Whatever the underlying reason the School will inform enquirers, applicants, those holding offers and registered students as early as possible once the decision to close a programme has been made.
- 7.73 The School is required to give formal notice that a programme is to be closed. This is normally in the form of a confirmation email from either the course director or the Institute Director sent to the Head of Registry Services, copied to the Director of Operations & Deputy CEO. The notice should include:
- (a) reason for closure;
  - (b) date for last initial student registration;
  - (c) date for final examination;
  - (d) date for final awards and programme closure.
- 7.74 A report shall be made to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee outlining the information in 7.73, the communication plan, how students will be cared for, and any financial and reputational implications of the closure.
- 7.75 Stakeholders as outlined in 7.73 will be notified in line with the communication schedule and action plan.

#### **Closure period**

- 7.76 As much notice as possible of the closure of a programme should be given, but in any case no shorter than one calendar year ahead.

#### **Continued support**

- 7.77 The School has a contractual obligation to continue to fully support registered students and this includes providing teaching, access to library materials, keeping learning resources up-to-date and ensuring that suitable and appropriate assessment is undertaken leading to award.
- 7.78 In the unlikely event that the School is unable to meet its contractual obligations outlined in 7.77, it is obliged to find a suitable higher education establishment offering a University of London degree to do this on its behalf. In these circumstances a member of staff from the School of Advanced Study/University of London will have responsibility for managing the process until all students have completed the award.

## Annex

### School Grade Descriptors

Minimum mark %	Maximum mark %	Grade	Mark	Description
85	100	Distinction	A+	Outstanding performance above a distinction level. Work is of exceptional quality. The highest level of knowledge and understanding is demonstrated by independence and originality in conception, the highest level of critical skill, synthesis and analysis. The work contains analysis of sufficient originality and importance to change the conventional way of approaching the subject, and its presentation is of the highest standard. The work will be well- argued, well-organised and impeccably documented, and be of publishable or near-publishable quality.
75	84	Distinction	A to A+	Excellent work, demonstrating a consistently very high level of knowledge and understanding. It shows clear evidence of originality and/or independent critical evaluation, high levels of skill in synthesis and analysis.  Propositions are analysed with sufficient originality to challenge received ideas, and in a clear, sustained, relevant and focused manner. Presentation standards will be excellent.
70	74	Distinction	A- to A	Very good to excellent work, demonstrating a very good level of knowledge and understanding. Work shows strong evidence of originality and/or independent critical evaluation, high levels of skill in synthesis and analysis. Arguments are well-organised and lucid. Presentation standards together with accompanying documentation are very good.
60	69	Merit	B	Good to very good work, showing a good level of knowledge and understanding of relevant material, demonstrated by evidence of originality of thought with signs of independence, a good level of critical skill, synthesis and analysis. Work will be well-organised, clearly argued, coherent and appropriately referenced. Presentation will be of a good standard.
50	59	Pass	C	The work is of an acceptable standard, demonstrating an adequate level of knowledge and understanding, some evidence of competence in synthesis and analysis, and adequate levels of presentation.
47	49	Fail	D+	Unsatisfactory work, showing a basic but incomplete level of knowledge and understanding. Important elements may be lacking, and the argument may be persistently obscure and lacking in coherence and focus.
35	46	Fail	D	Poor or very poor work, below or well below the standard required at the current stage. Work that is very or seriously flawed, displaying a lack of research and a lack of engagement with the question; incoherence or a grave misunderstanding of the topic; no signs of independence and originality in conception, little or no critical skill or ability to synthesise and analyse; very poor standards of presentation including inadequate or extremely poor referencing; short work.

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For any queries relating to the above Quality Assurance Framework, or for clarification on any of the processes outlined, please contact [sas.registry@sas.ac.uk](mailto:sas.registry@sas.ac.uk).

This guide is available in alternative formats upon request.  
Please contact [\*\*sas.registry@sas.ac.uk\*\*](mailto:sas.registry@sas.ac.uk).