Quality Assurance Framework
for
Postgraduate Teaching

with effect from October 2018
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.
CONTENTS

STUDENT CHARTER ................................................................................................................................................. 4

SECTION

1. Academic Standards and Quality Assurance ................................................................................................. 6

2. Exercise of responsibility in the School ............................................................................................................... 7
   The Board
   Academic Quality and Standards Committee
   Higher Degrees Committee
   Research Degrees Committee
   The Dean

3. Provision of information and admission of Students ......................................................................................... 9

4. Quality Assurance Procedures: Postgraduate Taught Degrees ........................................................................... 11
   Institute Higher Degrees Committees
   Boards of Examiners
   Board of Examiners for Distance Learning programmes
   External and Intercollegiate Examiners
   Approval of a New Programme of Study
   Approval of a New Erasmus Programme of Study
   Distance Learning Programmes
   Periodic review of programmes of study
   Annual Programme Planning and Review

5. Quality Assurance Procedures: Postgraduate Research Degrees ....................................................................... 19
   Responsibilities of research students and supervisors
   Institute Research Degrees Committees
   Admission process for research students
   Appointment of supervisors
   Monitoring and review of research students' progress
   Progression and Upgrading of Research Students

6. Academic Discipline: Complaints, Appeals, Harassment and Discrimination ................................................. 26
   Academic Discipline
   University of London Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedures
   University of London Admissions Appeals Procedure
   Harassment and Discrimination

7. General Regulations for Students of the School .............................................................................................. 32
   General
   Amendments to Programmes
   Entrance Requirements
   Registration as a student of the School
   Duration of Study
   Examination marks and notification of results
   Fees
   Student indebtedness
   Further Registration for the same degree
   Applications for exemption
   Revocation of degree and other awards
   Suspension of regulations
   University of London Assessment Offence Regulations
   Illustrative Examples of Academic Misconduct
8. Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Degrees ................................................................. 40
   Programmes of study
   Entrance requirements
   Duration of programmes
   Duration of study
   Interruptions of study
   Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave
   Off Campus study
   Examinations
   Special examination arrangements
   Deferral and withdrawal from examination
   Mitigating circumstances procedures
   Condoned fails
   Re-entry
   Examination Offences
   Representations from candidates concerning examination results
   PGT degrees by distance learning
   PG Diplomas

9. Regulations for MPhil and PhD Degrees ........................................................................ 47
   General
   Arrangements for Joint degrees
   The nature of the thesis; submission of the thesis
   Examination
   Entrance Requirements
   Transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD or PhD to MPhil
   Appointment of Supervisors
   Attendance and duration of study
   Interruption of study
   Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave
   Continuation 'Writing up' Fee
   Thesis submission
   Availability of theses
   Submission of thesis in a foreign language
   Viva voce examination
   Appointment of examiners
   Appointment of Independent Chair for PhD Vivas
   Result of examination
   Appeals
   Examination offences
   Debt
   Research Degrees by distance learning

10. Regulations for Occasional Students ........................................................................... 56

11. Regulations for Collaborative Degrees ......................................................................... 57

12. Registry Contact Details .................................................................................................. 60
ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

The Quality Assurance Framework should be read in conjunction with the School's

- Admission Policy
- Research Ethics Policy
- Tuition Fee Policy
- Disability Policy
- Research Code of Good Practice

And with the University of London's

- Ordinance 15: Termination of Registration on Academic Grounds (Other Than Failure In A Prescribed Examination)
- Ordinance 16: Fitness to Study
- Ordinance 17: Code of Student Discipline
- Ordinance 18: Suspension and Termination of Registration of Students in Debt
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 5.

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

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
• 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 Institute Director (or other senior staff member)
• submit assessed work by stated deadlines, actively participate in feedback
• familiarise themselves with guidelines on ethical research, data protection matters, and be aware of health and safety and intellectual property implications
• 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
SECTION 1
ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

See also the Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations of the University of London

1.1 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.

1.2 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).

1.3 Definitions for the purposes of this Quality Assurance Framework are as follows:

‘School’ denotes the School of Advanced Study;
‘Board’ denotes Board of the School of Advanced Study;
‘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. There are nine 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 Latin American Studies (ILAS)
Institute of Modern Language Research (IMLR)
Institute of Philosophy (IP)
Warburg Institute (WBG)

‘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.

1.4 Common acronyms are as follows:
AQSC Academic Quality and Standards Committee
HC Heythrop College
HC-RDC Heythrop College – Research Degrees Committee
HDC Higher Degrees Committee
MCP Mitigating Circumstances Panel
QASL Quality Assurance and Student Lifecycle Sub-Committee
RDC Research Degrees Committee
SECTION 2
EXERCISE OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SCHOOL

THE BOARD

2.1 The Board:
(1) shall approve and keep under review this Quality Assurance Framework
(2) may delegate to the School's Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) responsibility for agreeing the procedures, regulations and requirements contained or referred to herein
(3) shall determine procedures for approval of new programmes of study
(4) shall approve new programmes of study and significant changes to programmes of study
(5) shall review programmes of study normally at intervals not longer than five years
(6) shall report to the Collegiate Council as required
(7) shall provide information to government and other official agencies as necessary, either through the University or direct, as appropriate

ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2.2 The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) will be chaired by the Deputy Dean and shall consist of representatives of teaching institutes of the School; two external members and at least one student representative. The Deputy Chief Executive (SAS) and Director, Quality, Standards and Governance (UoLIA) shall also be members.

2.3 The AQSC shall exercise its responsibilities under 2.1(2) above so as to establish and maintain:
• clear principles and procedures to enable the School to carry out its responsibilities in regard to quality assurance
• mechanisms to ensure that such principles are respected and to enable it to respond with authority on the School's behalf
• mechanisms to ensure full and proper response to the relevant demands of the University and of government and other official agencies, including the QAA

2.4 AQSC will consider and recommend to the Board of the School of Advanced Study (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:
Consider, approve and recommend to the Board:
• the introduction of new programmes of study leading to qualifications of the University of London;
• proposals for the termination of specific programmes of study;
• suspension of programme regulations and where necessary to review the policy implications of such requests

2.5 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.

2.6 Where the Chair of AQSC considers it appropriate, minor changes (such as described in 2.5) may be referred to the Board for its approval.

2.7 Consider and approve External Examiner nominations.

2.8 Consider and approve Boards of Examiners (‘Exam Boards’)

2.9 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) 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 system
(viii) issues arising from the University of London concerning the quality of academic standards
2.10 AQSC shall bring to the attention of the Board such other matters as may be appropriate.

2.11 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 programmes of study for taught Master's degrees, diplomas, or the degrees of MPhil and PhD. These committees – the Higher Degrees Committee (HDC) in relation to taught Master's degrees and diplomas and the Research Degrees Committee (RDC) in relation to MPhil and PhD – may in some institutes be combined, and their names may vary from institute to institute. The HDC and RDC responsibilities are set out below in Section 4.

2.12 Where it appears to AQSC from any report by an HDC or 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 2.16 below).

2.13 AQSC shall report to the Board not less than twice per year on the discharge of these functions.

HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEES (HDC)

2.14 An institute's HDC shall be responsible for implementation of the School's regulations and the programme regulations in relation to the programme or programmes of study offered by the institute for taught Master's degrees, certificates and diplomas (Section 8).

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEES (RDC)

2.15 An institute's 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 (Section 9).

THE DEAN

2.16 On receipt of a reference under 2.12 above, and in other cases (see 4.14) where it appears to the Dean that there is a failure or departure 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 Deputy Chief Executive, 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 his or her own decision for any which the relevant HDC or 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.
SECTION 3
PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

See also Admissions Policy and the Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning Policy

3.1 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.

3.2 Information may be provided in different formats at different times, as appropriate. It should include the following:

3.2.1 General
- the conditions for admission to a programme of study leading to a degree or other award
- application and admissions procedures (including a commitment to respond to enquiries and applications within a stated period)
- information and guidance for disabled students
- 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
- bursaries and scholarships, including eligibility conditions, mode of application
- information for MPhil/PhD study should include the conditions under which ‘continuation’ (writing-up) fees may be payable by MPhil and PhD students
- accommodation, careers and other student services
- academic and non-academic support services

3.2.2 For postgraduate taught programmes
- programme regulations, relevant guidelines and procedures; teaching methods; information about the modules which may run, and clear details on restrictions or availability conditions
- external examiner reports
- programme specifications making explicit the intended 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 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
- 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

3.2.3 For MPhil/PhD programmes
- 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
- the code of conduct for supervisors and students
- information about skills and research training

3.3 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).

3.4 Information should be given to applicants offered a place on the arrangements for enrolment, registration, induction and so on.

3.5 The School and the institutes should carry out inductions for students to provide information and guidance on academic organisation, the facilities available and the academic context, including, where appropriate:
- the location of the institutes within the School and the University
- information on libraries, including entitlement and conditions of use of the Senate House Libraries (SHLs), institute libraries, and other relevant libraries
- computer facilities
- research and skills training
- provision for disabled students, social, welfare, careers and advisory provision and so on
3.6 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.

3.7 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.

3.8 The School should make appropriate provision for appeals in regard to admissions.
SECTION 4
QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES:
POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT DEGREES

4.1 INSTITUTE HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEES (HDC)

4.1.1 Membership and Constitution
The HDC shall, other than in special circumstances, be appointed by AQSC (see 2.6 above) and include:
- all the members of staff of the institute who are teachers on the taught Master's Degree programme(s) offered by the institute
- at least two persons of academic standing, who are not members of staff of the School, but who may be teachers on a programme(s) of the institute
- a student representative, elected annually by the students from among their own number, who will be present for items of non-confidential business and to provide feedback from the student body
- co-opted expertise as appropriate

4.1.2 The administrative manager of the institute, or his/her alternate, shall be in attendance for meetings of the HDC and the Director of the institute, where not a member of the HDC under 4.1.1, above, shall have the right to attend the HDC and shall receive all the papers.

4.1.3 The Deputy Chief Executive may also attend any/all meetings of the Committee or nominate a representative to attend.

Frequency of Meetings

4.1.4 The HDC shall normally meet once per term, and at least twice per academic year.

Responsibilities of the HDC

4.1.5 The HDC shall:
(i) consider and make recommendations to the School's Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) on the following:
- proposals for new programmes of study
- significant changes to existing programmes of study
- proposals for credit for courses undertaken at another institution
- 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.)

(ii) approve enhancements to existing programmes not requiring the approval of the AQSC

(iii) determine the arrangements for the provision for 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

(iv) monitor routinely the effectiveness of programmes of study and courses, through:
- the monitoring of the allocation of students to tutors or advisers
- the availability of teachers, module coordinators and programme directors for consultation by students
- feedback from students through appropriate student representation including student surveys, staff-student liaison committees and student satisfaction questionnaires (see below)
- 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 4.8 below]

(v) from time to time, receive reports from meetings between teachers, students and other staff, and to take action or make recommendations for action as appropriate

(vi) appoint
- internal examiners for each programme
- the chair of the Board of Examiners

(vii) make recommendations to AQSC for the appointment of external and intercollegiate examiners

(viii) receive reports from the Board(s) of Examiners

(ix) receive reports from external and intercollegiate examiners, and to take action or make recommendations for action as appropriate

(x) keep under review programme specifications, guidelines and procedures for programme(s) of study, including methods for review and suspension of such guidelines and procedures and the information provided to applicants and students
(xi) administer and assist in the preparation for the conduct of formal periodic programme reviews, at least quinquennially, and as and when required by AQSC
(xii) report to AQSC on the implementation of recommendations of formal periodic reviews

Parent committee reporting

4.2 The parent committee of the HDC is the AQSC. The HDC shall transmit the minutes of its meetings to the AQSC and shall, through its minutes or otherwise, report to AQSC on the following:
• compliance with the requirement as to Boards of Examiners
• names and other relevant details of internal examiners appointed
• minutes of the relevant Examination Board(s)
• examination results and statistics in the form required
• any action taken in implementation of special procedures and grievance procedures
• any other information that AQSC may from time to time request

4.3 Boards of Examiners (‘Exam Boards’)

4.3.1 The Board(s) of Examiners shall act as (a) sub-Committee(s) to the HDC.

4.3.2 The Membership of the Board of Examiners shall be: all the teachers on the relevant programme(s), the external examiner and the intercollegiate examiner;

4.3.3 The Terms of Reference of the Board(s) of Examiners shall be received at the outset of each meeting, and are as follows:
• 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
• 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
• 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
• to allow, within its powers of discretion, candidates to re-sit all, or parts, of an examination
• to consider special cases to report in the required form to the University of London International Academy 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
• to keep an accurate record of discussions and decisions made, for transmission to the HDC and for onward transmission to the AQSC

Boards of Examiners for distance learning programmes

4.3.4 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.

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

4.4 EXTERNAL AND INTERCOLLEGiate EXAMINERS

4.4.1 Nomination and appointment
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 as 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.

4.4.2 Persons invited to act as external/intercollegiate examiners will be invited to advise the institute 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.
4.4.3 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.

4.4.4 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.

4.4.5 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

4.4.6 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 examiner(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.

4.4.7 External and intercollegiate examiners’ reports should assess at least the following:

- the aims and objectives of the programme of study and the appropriateness of these to the level of the award to which they lead
- the suitability of methods of teaching and the adequacy of teaching as indicated by students’ performance in examination (including coursework or continuous assessment)
- the suitability of examination methods to the aims and objectives of the programme of study
- 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
- the fairness and impartiality of assessment procedures
- the standard of internal marking in the various modes of study included in the overall examination of the programme of study
- compliance with the regulations (e.g. on double marking, blind marking, approval of question papers and dissertation titles)
- 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

External and intercollegiate examiners are additionally invited to highlight areas of good practice with a view to enhancing the School’s programmes generally.

4.4.8 External and intercollegiate examiners are required by the University to send their reports to the University within 15 days of the final examiners’ meeting.

4.4.9 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 HDCs 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 2.12 or, if the urgency and importance of the matter warrants it, may proceed under 2.16.

4.4.10 External examiners' reports should be placed online where possible.

4.5 APPROVAL OF A NEW PROGRAMME OF STUDY

4.5.1 The approval of new programmes of study shall follow the procedure determined by the Board (see section 2 above). 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. The approval and review processes shall take due account of external reference points, national qualifications frameworks and any relevant national/European Union legislation. See below for specific provisions regarding approval of distance learning programmes.
4.5.2 A proposal for a new programme of study for a Master’s degree must be submitted by the institute concerned to the AQSC for consideration. AQSC will forward proposals with recommendations to the Directorate for formal acceptance, if appropriate, by the School.

4.5.3 The proposal should include the following:

1. justification in terms of:
   - 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
   - the local context: compatibility with and enhancement of existing programmes and anticipated demand for the programme
   - the national context: comparable existing provision
   - relevance (where appropriate) to areas of professional work

2. statement of staffing and other resources required and available (including staff outside the institute)

3. statement of consultation carried out, including consultation within the School and with external advisers (e.g. external examiners, external assessors), and with students

4.5.4 The details of the proposed programme should include:

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

Approval of a New Erasmus Programme of Study

4.5.5 The approval of Erasmus Schemes shall follow the procedure determined by the Board. All forms of working with other organisations to provide higher education fall within the scope of the Quality Code, Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others and this Chapter must therefore be referenced throughout the proposal. In addition, the proposal must take account of the QAA Characteristics Statement: Qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body (October 2015). The HDC will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Erasmus Scheme and copies of reports made will be made available to the AQSC.

4.6 Distance learning programmes

4.6.1 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.

4.6.2 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.

4.6.3 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.

4.6.4 The HDC will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the distance learning programme. Copies of reports made will be made available to the AQSC.

4.6.5 In addition to the HDC’s responsibilities outlined in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 above, the HDC shall have particular regard to the following:

- 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 the failure
- 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
4.6.6 The institute will ensure that:

- clear statements are made on the expected communication between parties in the system
- access to tutors is provided for students on a regular, sufficient and published basis
- 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
- students will have an identified academic contact through email, telephone and fax who can offer constructive feedback in academic performance and authoritative guidance on their academic progression for each element of the programme
- students will have an identified administrative contact for general enquiries and assistance
- all enquiries from students are handled promptly and sympathetically
- students' progress is monitored regularly
- the delivery of materials should be secure and reliable, and there should be a means available for confirming safe receipt
- there are adequate safeguards against potential malpractice in regard to remote assessment

4.7 PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES

4.7.1 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

4.7.2 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.

The periodic review of programmes will ensure that:

(i) 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
(ii) programmes remain up-to-date in respect of current research and developing knowledge in the appropriate disciplines
(iii) 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
(iv) the extent to which students are achieving the intended learning outcomes is evaluated
(v) 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
(vi) the resources available, including staffing, continue to support the programme and any required enhancement to it

The School’s Periodic Programme Review process

4.7.3 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, University of London International Academy.

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:

- 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
- at least one academic adviser external to the institute, who may be from within the School
- if appropriate, a graduate from the programme

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.

Representatives of the current or just-graduated student cohort will be invited to have input to the review. They may be interviewed by the panel, or even invited to sit on the panel itself.

Staff may be interviewed by panel members.

The panel will be asked to report using a prescribed template.

Once the review panel has concluded its deliberations, the institute will submit a report to AQSC including the following:

- a statement on how the review was conducted and the composition of the review panel
- the institute’s Self-Evaluation report
- the panel review report as submitted by the panel chair
- any response or comments the institute considers may be necessary or useful to the AQSC in its consideration of the report
• the institute’s recommendations in the light of the report (namely, continuation of the programme in its current form, continuation with modifications or deletion)

From start (that is, preparation of documentation and appointment of panel) to finish (report to AQSC), the review process should not be expected to take longer than nine months.

**Documentation for the review panel**

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

- Self-Evaluation report (see below)
- programme specification and programme regulations
- prospectus, student handbook and other guidelines
- details of, and reports by, Intercollegiate and External Examiners over the previous five years
- statistical data for the current academic year and the previous two academic years, including:
  - programme monitoring templates
  - numbers of applications
  - total enrolments, showing, academic qualifications (or other qualifications if appropriate); the home/EU and overseas split; age, gender, ethnicity and disability
  - results obtained, including number of awards of Distinction and Merit and number of failures and non-completions
  - student, alumni and employer and/or doctoral supervisor feedback, including:
    - student feedback (over three years): a synopsis of feedback, how it was collected and sampled, and how the institute has responded to it (e.g. through a course review process)
    - feedback from employers and/or doctoral supervisors: the institute should seek views from a sample of employers and/or doctoral supervisors of graduates, as appropriate, on their perceptions of the value of the programme
  - reports by QAA (if appropriate)
  - an account of staff development undertaken by the course team in the preceding period
  - an explanation of changes in the programme made in the previous five years (e.g. new modules, significant module changes; significant changes in assessment and marking schemes; changes in programme regulations)

**Self-Evaluation report**

4.7.5 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 4.7.3, 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:

(i) Rationale for the programme, including overall aims and market demand
(ii) Assessment of the effectiveness of:
  - teaching, learning and assessment and how they support achievement of the programme and aims and learning outcomes
  - student support mechanisms, including pastoral support and the monitoring of academic progress
  - student input and the use made of student feedback
  - external input, including responsiveness to comments from external and intercollegiate examiners
  - learning resources including library and information services, staff and accommodation
  - 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
(iii) consideration of results (including non-completions) and of the achievements of students in relation to the intended learning outcomes of the programme
(iv) discussion of any future developments, concentrating on enhancement
(v) if applicable, the monitoring of any collaborative teaching activity

4.8 **ANNUAL PROGRAMME PLANNING AND REVIEW (ANNUAL MONITORING): GUIDELINES**

4.8.1 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. Ideally, 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, if that is feasible.
4.8.2 The information used for annual programme monitoring should include:

(i) Programme Director's annual commentary;
(ii) feedback from students, specifically:
   • student surveys/questionnaires. These should, as far as possible, be anonymous and should relate
to each module on the programme; be returned to the teacher(s) as feedback; and be reviewed
by the Director of the institute or such person or persons as may be delegated by the Director
(who should be responsible for reporting to the institute's HDC).
   • staff-student liaison committees
   • student representative committees
   • informal feedback from students
(iii) reports from the external examiners
(iv) results of any external and internal reviews
(v) opinions expressed by teaching staff (including external teaching staff), degree convenors and other staff
(vi) statistical data on the year under review, including total enrolments: the home/EU and overseas
split; age, gender, ethnicity and disability; and the results obtained, including number of awards of Distinction and Merit and number of failures and non-completions

4.8.3 As far as possible, the annual monitoring 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.)

4.8.4 The monitoring exercise will usually take the form of a meeting, serviced by colleagues from the Quality,
Standards and Governance Directorate, UoLIA. The aim of these meetings is two-fold, first to assure
the quality of the academic standards and learning opportunities of the programme, and therefore
of the qualifications and credit that the University awards, and secondly to identify opportunities for
enhancing the programme's delivery and learning opportunities. Colleagues from across the School and
International Academy attend the meeting and all contribute to discussions.

4.8.5 Following the meeting a report (Annual Programme Report (APR)) and action plan will be drafted based
on the output from the meeting and other activity conducted throughout the preceding year. The APR
will be formally reported, via the HDC, to the School's AQSC and to the Quality Assurance and Student
Lifestyle Sub-Committee (QASL) within UoLIA. The report will normally include:

External examiners’ reports: How will the institute address the comments made by the external
examiners? (Or how have they already been addressed?)
Feedback from students: What are the substantive issues, if any, raised by the students in their
feedback? What action, if any, will be taken to address these?
Feedback from tutors and course convenors: Does consideration need to be given to the programme
(or more broadly) in order to:
   • improve the quality of resources available to students?
   • reflect developments in the discipline?
   • maximise the academic expertise existing in the current teaching staff?
   • reflect developments and changes in teaching and learning practices?
   • reflect changing employer needs?
   • improve students' ability to perform to their full potential by ensuring that they are sufficiently
     challenged and empowered to take responsibility?
   • respond to student demand?
   • ensure that good practice is disseminated more widely across the School?

4.9 MARKING

4.9.1 Grade descriptors (see Annex 1) should be included in programme handbooks. They should be
supplemented, where necessary, with discipline-specific guidance.

4.9.2 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.

4.9.3 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, all assessed work must be double
marked and should be blind double marked where feasible and appropriate. 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).
4.9.4 External examiners 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.

4.10 FEEDBACK

For the purpose of guidance, feedback must be given to students on their performance in assessed 
coursework, using the approved feedback coversheet. 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 21 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.
SECTION 5
QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES:
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

5.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCH STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The below supplements the School’s Student Charter, and outlines the particular responsibilities of the School’s research students, their supervisors, and the School.

The research student is expected to:
• agree with the supervisor (or the subject supervisor where more than one supervisor is appointed) the topic for research, and work on that topic
• discuss with supervisor(s) the type of guidance and form of comment found most helpful
• agree on a schedule of meetings
• take appropriate initiative in raising problems or difficulties in research
• discuss training needs and opportunities, and undertake any research training or taught course or seminar required by supervisor(s)
• produce work in accordance with the plan and schedule agreed with supervisor(s), and, in particular, submit written material in sufficient time to allow for proper comment and discussion
• keep formal records of meetings with supervisor(s) provide formal progress reports as required (normally twice a year) discuss with supervisor(s) the preparation of the thesis and decide when to submit

The supervisory team is expected to:
• give guidance on the nature of the research and the standard expected
• advise on the planning of the research programme and appropriate training, and on the relevant literature and sources
• encourage familiarity with developments in the subject
• give advice about techniques and methods
• ensure that the student is fully aware of the progress of the work in relation to the expected standard and the agreed programme
• promote awareness of ethical and legal matters relevant to research, including plagiarism
• maintain contact through regular personal supervision in arrangements agreed with the student (which may include videoconferencing, at intervals of not less than two weeks during term times in the first year of study, and provide reasonable access for consultation at other times
• direct the student to undertake research training, attend taught courses, seminars, workshops and so on as necessary
• request written work as appropriate and return it with constructive criticism and in good time
• 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
• arrange for the student to present work to staff/graduate seminars
• keep formal records of meetings with students write reports on the progress of the work normally at least twice a year – such reports to be considered by the RDC within the prescribed progress review procedures and to be kept in the student’s record
• record milestones achieved, such as transfer from MPhil to PhD, such reports to be kept in the student’s record arrange for the necessary administrative steps to be taken and ensure the student receives any help necessary

The student’s institute is responsible through its RDC and by other appropriate 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.

5.2 INSTITUTE RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEES

5.2.1 An institute registering students for MPhil or PhD must have an RDC, or should designate its HDC or a sub-group of its HDC to exercise the responsibilities appropriate to an RDC. (See above, section 4, for an outline of the constitution and terms of reference for HDCs.) In the following, ‘RDC’ means such a committee or sub-group.
5.2.2 Membership and constitution

The HDC shall, other than in special circumstances, be appointed by AQSC (see 2.11 above) and include:

- except as in (3) above, no fewer than three members of the academic staff of the institute who are involved in supervision for MPhil or PhD degrees
- except as in (3) above, two persons of academic standing who are not members of staff of the School
- in the case of an institute with few academic staff or where it is otherwise impossible to meet (1) or (2) to ensure a membership of three is achieved, one of which shall be from outside the School
- a student representative shall be present for items of non-confidential business and to provide feedback from the student body
- such other persons as may be appropriate
- 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.

5.2.3 Where the institute has one committee combining the functions of RDC and HDC, or where the institute designates a sub-group of its HDC to exercise the responsibilities appropriate to an RDC, the composition of the committee shall be as specified in section 4 above. The HC-RDC shall normally consist of all the primary supervisors, the supervisor of record of the School and a student representative for non-confidential business, as specified above; where necessary, to ensure a quorum of three, the HC-RDC shall co-opt membership from the School.

5.2.4 The RDC shall meet once a term or at least twice a year. For the HC-RDC this will usually be January and June of each year.

5.2.5 The RDC shall be responsible for:

- 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)
- keeping under review the areas of research available in the institute for the degrees of MPhil, PhD and DPT
- admission of students in accordance with the procedures determined by the School (see below)
- appointment of supervisors in accordance with the procedures determined by the School (see below)
- implementation of the School's practices in regard to the responsibilities of students and supervisors, administrative procedures, and grievance and complaints procedures (see Section 7, below)
- monitoring research students' progress
- approval of transfer of a student's registration from MPhil to PhD or from PhD to MPhil in accordance with the requirements set out below (5.6)
- monitoring progression, supervision and examination of students registered for the DPT in accordance with principles and norms set out below (5.6.6)
- approval of transfer of a student's registration to writing-up status
- arrangements for supervision, and monitoring and review of such arrangements
- proposal of examiners for research degrees

5.2.6 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.

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

- compliance with the requirement as to provision of information
- any action taken in implementation of special procedures and grievance procedures
- permission to a student to undertake off-campus study and the conditions attached (see 9.15 – 9.17 below)
- fulfilment of its obligations under 5.2.5 above
- any other information that AQSC may from time to time request

5.2.8 Research Ethics Policy

The School of Advanced Study expects students undertaking a taught or research degree involving any research to comply with the research ethics policy. This can be found in Annex 2 and is also available here.
5.3 **ADMISSION OF STUDENTS** (see also Admissions Policy)

5.3.1 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).

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

5.4 **APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS**

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

5.4.2 Only in exceptional circumstances will a student be assigned to a single supervisor. A team of at least two supervisors will be appointed; the main (or 'subject') 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.

5.4.3 The School will encourage its new and less experienced supervisors 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 sole supervisors. They should instead co-supervise with more experienced supervisors. School staff who have not supervised a thesis to completion are required to complete supervisor training in order to be eligible to supervise.

5.4.4 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.

5.4.5 Persons to be appointed as supervisors will normally have a PhD qualification. This requirement may be waived where the supervisor has appropriate research experience. In these circumstances, this arrangement should be agreed by both the institute RDC and ratified by the AQSC.

5.4.6 There must be robust arrangements in place to ensure continuity of supervision, taking into account the duration of employment contracts or contracts for service. Where a supervisor is appointed from outside the institute, 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, a Supervisor of Record from within the institute should be appointed.

5.4.7 **Definitions and responsibilities**

(a) **Supervisor of Record**

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.

The Supervisor of Record may be the subject supervisor or co-supervisor of particular students in the institute. Where a student's subject (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.

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

The Supervisor of Record will normally chair the institute's RDC.

The HC-RDC will normally be chaired by the supervisor designated by SAS who will also oversee all support arrangements.
(b) **Main Supervisor ('Subject' Supervisor)**

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 one of the named supervisors and will be the normal point of contact for the student. In the case of interdisciplinary studies, two co-supervisors may have equal responsibility. However, one must always be assigned as main point of contact for the student.

In order to be eligible for appointment as a main supervisor, staff must be:

- 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.
- 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) **Co-supervisor**

A co-supervisor is appointed to provide particular expertise, or to support the subject supervisor in other defined ways. Co-supervision allows the formal involvement of academics from Colleges and from outside the University. The proportional responsibilities of main supervisor and co-supervisor will vary according to the requirements of each case.

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
- academic staff and research fellows in Colleges of the University or other HEI, subject to satisfactory contractual agreement
- 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)
- academic staff and research fellows in the institute who have insufficient experience to be appointed as main supervisors

5.4.8 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, 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 his/her fixed term contract expires, the same provisions should apply – except that option (c) may not be available.

5.4.9 Supervision meetings. The expectation is that, in their first year, students should meet one of their supervisory team at least once a fortnight during term time, and at least every four to six weeks thereafter. It is recognised that face-to-face meetings are not always possible, and other methods of personal contacts (such as telephone, email, skype, facetime and other videoconferencing) is sufficient.

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

5.5 **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF RESEARCH STUDENT PROGRESS**

5.5.1 The monitoring framework should include:

- 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 the supervisor(s), and a formal log of the training undertaken. It is recommended that, where possible, institutes should consider also including in their RDC a review (preferably face-to-face) interview with each student at least annually
- the results of progress reviews, including an agreed action plan/target/specific task, plus deadlines, should be recorded in the minutes of the RDC and in the student's file
- 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.

5.5.2 Subject to the above framework, the institute 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.
5.6 PROGRESSION AND UPGRADING OF RESEARCH STUDENTS

The below timetables assume a normal rate of progress and a September registration.

5.6.1 Full-time students: year 1

- all students are registered initially as MPhil students
- 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

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

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

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

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

- commitment to pursuing research at SAS leading to the PhD degree;
- satisfactory participation in relevant research or technical skills development or research methods training courses;
- ability to engage critically with a range of primary sources and to provide an independent interpretation of them;
- ability to synthesise information and demonstrate that it provides context for the study;
- ability to organise arguments and ideas in a logical fashion.

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

- that the student progress to year 2
- that the student's registration be terminated
- 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

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.

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

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, in order to upgrade from MPhil to PhD, students should be required to:

- submit written work - a substantial portion of the draft thesis (usually a chapter of at least 10,000 words) demonstrating capacity for PhD level writing and research, to an upgrade panel for consideration;
- The submission will include a thesis outline setting out the research question or questions to be addressed, indicative chapter headings with a brief synopsis of the content of each chapter, and an indication of the research methodology to be employed.
- A timetable for completion of the thesis (which may be done by annotating the chapter outline with indicative dates for completion of the first draft) attend an interview with an upgrade panel

The composition of the upgrade panel should be as follows:

- an external assessor
- an assessor with knowledge of the topic
- the student's supervisor(s)

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.

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

- that the student be upgraded to PhD registration
- that the student should be advised to proceed towards a less substantial thesis for the degree of MPhil
- 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
The upgrade panel’s 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. The full report including the reports of individual assessors as an appendix will be submitted to registry for the student record.

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

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).

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.

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

In order to progress to a third year of study, students will be required, by the end of June in year 2, to submit to their supervisor(s) a portfolio of work including:

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

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

- commitment to pursuing research at SAS leading to the PhD degree;
- satisfactory participation in relevant research or technical skills development or research methods training courses;
- ability to engage critically with a range of primary sources and to provide an independent interpretation of them;
- ability to synthesise information and demonstrate that it provides context for the study;
- ability to organise arguments and ideas in a logical fashion. Having considered the written work the supervisor(s) may recommend:
  - that the student progress to year 3
  - that the student's registration be terminated
  - 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

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.

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

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, in order to upgrade from MPhil to PhD, students should be required to:

- submit written work - a substantial portion of the draft thesis (usually a chapter of at least 10,000 words) demonstrating capacity for PhD level writing and research, to an upgrade panel for consideration;
- The submission will include a thesis outline setting out the research question or questions to be addressed, indicative chapter headings with a brief synopsis of the content of each chapter, and an indication of the research methodology to be employed.
- A timetable for completion of the thesis (which may be done by annotating the chapter outline with indicative dates for completion of the first draft) attend an interview with an upgrade panel

The composition of the upgrade panel should be as follows:

- an external assessor
- an assessor with knowledge of the topic
- the student's supervisor(s)
- 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.
Having considered the written work and performance at interview, the upgrade panel may recommend to an institute's RDC:

- that the student be upgraded to PhD registration
- that the student should be advised to proceed towards a less substantial thesis for the degree of MPhil
- 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

The upgrade panel's 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. The full report including the reports of individual assessors as an appendix will be submitted to registry for the student record.

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

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).

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.

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

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. 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.

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.

In accord with practice for MPhil and PhD students outlined above, the panel may recommend:

- that the student progress
- that the student's registration be terminated
- 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.
SECTION 6

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE; COMPLAINTS, APPEALS, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

6.1 ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE
The following regulations form part of the agreement made by the student in accepting the offer of a place to study for a degree or diploma in the School.

6.2 Attendance and academic performance
6.2.1 Students are expected to attend regularly the scheduled classes and seminars on their programmes and to be available for consultation with tutors with reasonable notice. A student who is unable to attend a class or other arranged meeting should inform the tutor or supervisor (via the appropriate administrative officer or directly). Prolonged absence caused by sickness must be reported to the institute, and medical evidence must be provided.

6.2.2 Attendance Policy for Tier 4 students
In addition to the above, if a student on a Tier 4 visa does not attend ten expected consecutive contacts, we are required to inform the Home Office and this might lead to withdrawing our sponsorship. Expected contacts include:

(1) Attending formal academic or pastoral care activities including:
   • A lesson, lecture, tutorial or seminar;
   • A test, examination or assessment board;
   • A meeting with a supervisor or personal tutor;
   • A research-method or research-panel meeting, writing up seminars or doctoral workshops;
   • An appointment with a welfare advisor or international student advisor;

(2) Submitting:
   • Assessed or unassessed coursework; or
   • An interim dissertation, coursework or report; and

(3) 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. If they have not sought permission, the following procedures will apply:
   • After three missed contacts, the student will be contacted by their Student Officer or Supervisor to ascertain the reason for absence;
   • 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;
   • 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;
   • 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.

6.3 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 his or her academic performance, progress, attendance or attainment falls below the required standard in a way that 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.

6.4 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.

6.5 The Board of Examiners will receive a report on mark deductions or other penalties for late submission of work.
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**

A student whose academic performance gives cause for concern will:
- 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
- be offered counselling by his or her personal tutor or by a senior officer of the School.

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.

Registration may be terminated as set out in paragraphs 6.12–6.28 below in serious cases where:
- a warning would not be appropriate; or
- a warning cannot be issued (e.g. because the student cannot be contacted); or
- the warning is ignored; or
- academic performance remains unsatisfactory after due warning has been given.

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

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.

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 if 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**

Registration in respect of institutes of the School may be terminated on academic grounds by the Dean.

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 6.7 above, 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 6.7 have been satisfied.

The Director may (a) summarily dismiss the recommendation, at the Director’s discretion, or (b) arrange for an interview with the student.

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. 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.

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.

The Director may reach a decision without interviewing if the student cannot be contacted or fails to attend after due notice.

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:
- that termination of registration is not justified; or
- 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
- that termination of registration is justified and a recommendation will be made to the Dean for the termination forthwith of the student's registration.
6.19 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 6.18(2) above.

6.20 Where a decision under 6.18(3) 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 6.12 above. The Director shall inform the student of the right to make such a submission at the same time as the decision under 6.18 is communicated.

6.21 In accordance with 6.12 above, 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.

6.22 The Dean shall inform the Director and the student of the decision, and of the right of appeal.

6.23 A request for a review of determination by the Dean under 6.21 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.

6.24 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.

6.25 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.

6.26 The Vice-Chancellor shall either:
   • rescind the decision to terminate registration, with or without conditions; or
   • confirm the termination of registration.

6.27 The Vice-Chancellor's decision after the review shall be final.

6.28 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.

6.29 UNIVERSITY OF LONDON STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE

6.29.1 The University of London is committed to providing the highest quality service to all students. However, the University recognises that students may sometimes be dissatisfied and to improve the student experience we welcome feedback. If a student wishes to make a complaint they should follow the three step procedure outlined below.

It is recognised that making a complaint is a serious matter and it is treated as such by the University. The University seeks to reassure any student making a complaint that it treats all complaints confidentially and that making a complaint will not influence the progress of a student's study.

The University of London Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedure (hereafter referred to as ‘the Procedure’) complies with the University of London Ordinance 19.

6.29.2 Student Complaint

The University of London regards 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.

6.29.3 Academic Appeal

The University of London will only consider academic appeals relating to:
   • Serious circumstances affecting the student of which the Board of Examiners was not made aware when confirming the final mark
   • Procedural irregularities in the conduct of assessment
   • Evidence of prejudice or bias against the student on the part of one or more of the examiners

Students may not challenge the academic judgements of the examiners; in other words, work submitted for assessment purposes will not be re-marked.
I. Objective of this Procedure
i. The University of London, through this Procedure, aims to resolve any complaints or problems quickly, fairly and simply. Therefore the University encourages resolution at the informal stage (Stage One) with the members of staff directly involved.

II. Who can make a complaint?
i. Any current student.
ii. Alumni of the School of Advanced Study within one year of graduation.
iii. Groups of students

III. Scope of this procedure
This procedure covers but is not limited to:

i. Student administrative support services and lifecycle issues, such as registration, examination entry, examination arrangements, and dispatch of study materials

ii. Issues affecting the quality of the student learning experience, for example, programme materials

iii. Appeals against the application of the regulations (see also point iv. below)

This procedure does not cover:

iv. Examination results – the University will not consider an appeal against the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners

v. Disciplinary processes

vi. Academic offences

vii. Complaints from anonymous individuals or from an un-attributable source

viii. Appeals against admissions decisions. There is a formal University of London admissions appeals procedure for admissions decisions. Please refer to the SAS admissions website for further information or contact the SAS Registry.

IV. Timescales for making a complaint
i. There is a context to each complaint and appeal and therefore timescales may vary.
i. After a period of 12 weeks (96 calendar days), the basis of any complaint shall normally be deemed to have lapsed

V. Support and Guidance
For SAS students, advice and guidance is available from the Registry.

6.29.4 The Procedure

1. Stage One: Informal Stage
Resolution within the department where the complaint arose.

1.1 Complaints or feedback on any aspect of the student experience should be raised initially with the member of staff of the University with whom the student has been dealing.

1.2 Dealing with a complaint at this stage may involve escalation to the line manager of that functional area. It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that complaints relating to their department are resolved in a fair and expeditious manner.

1.3 A record of all correspondence and telephone calls will be maintained.

1.4 Where the complaint relates to the application of regulations it should normally be made to the Programme Director in the first instance in accordance with Stage One of this procedure.

2. Stage Two: Formal Complaint

The Director of Quality, Standards and Governance acting on behalf of the Dean of SAS.

2.1 If a complaint (or appeal against the application of regulations) is not resolved at Stage One, the complainant may refer the matter in writing to the Director of Quality, Standards and Governance at ac-cpq@london.ac.uk
2.2 The complainant should provide details of the complaint in a clear and succinct statement together with any available and relevant evidence.

2.3 It is at the discretion of the Director how the complaint is investigated and determined.

2.4 The Director may nominate a member of staff to carry out the investigation.

2.5 Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will normally occur by email to the complainant within three working days.

2.6 Following investigation the complainant will receive a written response upholding or dismissing their complaint. This will be sent via email, normally within twenty working days of receipt of the complaint.

If our investigation will take longer than twenty working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

6.29.5 Stage Three: Review Stage

The Deputy Chief Executive with the delegated authority of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London

3.1 Stage Three is used when the following criteria are satisfied:

i) That the policies and procedures outlined above were not followed by University of London staff;

ii) That evidence which could not reasonably have been made available during Stage One or Stage Two has come to light;

iii) That the complainant has escalated the matter within a reasonable timeframe following the conclusion of Stage Two (normally within 12 weeks)

3.2 If a complaint (or appeal against the application of the regulations) is not resolved at Stage Two, the complainant may refer the matter in writing to the representative of the Deputy Chief Executive (for SAS or International Programmes, as appropriate) at ac-stage3@london.ac.uk

3.3 If the criteria (noted at 3.1) are not satisfied the complainant will receive this decision in writing.

3.4 If the criteria (noted at 3.1) are satisfied the Complaints Resolution Panel will be convened.

3.5 The Complaints Resolution Panel, appointed by the Deputy Chief Executive, will consist of a Chair, a member of staff from within SAS (where relevant) and a student member.

3.6 The Chair of the Complaints Resolution Panel will be independent of SAS.

3.7 No member of the Panel will have a personal or other significant interest in the case to be considered, e.g. the student's personal tutor, in order to maintain objectivity.

3.8 The Panel will be presented with all documents relating to the case including any statement from the complainant in order to make a decision.

3.9 The complainant will not be requested nor have any right to appear before the Panel.

3.10 The University does not permit lobbying of the Panel by the complainant or his/her representative nor will the Panel consider any such lobbying.

3.11 Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will normally occur by email to the complainant within three working days.

3.12 The Complaints Resolution Panel will meet within twenty working days (excluding University vacation periods) of receipt of the complaint at Stage Three if the case is determined to have met the criteria outlined in 3.1.

3.13 The complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome within ten working days of the meeting of the Complaints Resolution Panel.

If the panel will take longer than the agreed timescales, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

4.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

4.2 On completion of all stages of the Procedure, the issue may be referred in writing to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
4.3 Please note that the OIA require a Completion of Procedures letter, which can be requested from the office of the Vice-Chancellor via Vice-Chancellor@london.ac.uk

4.4 For details of the OIA please see the website: http://www.oiahe.org.uk/

6.30 UNIVERSITY OF LONDON ADMISSIONS APPEALS PROCEDURE

Stage 1: An appeal against an admissions decision is (re)considered by the relevant Course/Programme Director.

Stage 2: If there is no resolution at Stage 1, the appeal is then considered under Stage 2 of the University of London Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedure.


HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

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

6.32 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.

6.33 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.

6.34 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.

6.35 Institutes will keep lists of organisations and individuals which will provide additional help and advice, especially in more serious cases.

6.36 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.
SECTION 7

GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL

7.1 General
The General Regulations in this Section apply to all programmes of study for degrees and diplomas of the University offered within the School of Advanced Study. Particular regulations for taught postgraduate degrees, and for MPhil and PhD degrees are set out above.

7.2 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)

7.3 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 (Section 10).

7.4 Amendments to programmes
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.

7.5 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.

7.6 Entrance requirements
In order to be registered for a degree or diploma programme in the School, a candidate will normally satisfy the entrance requirements and the conditions of admission set out in sections below, 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.

7.7 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.

7.8 An applicant for admission to a degree or diploma programme who fails to pass a prescribed qualifying examination, other than tests falling into the categories in 7.7 above, may only re-enter for the qualifying examination by special permission of AQSC.

7.9 Registration as a student of the School
Students register at an institute in the School, except that, where a Master’s programme involves collaboration with a College of the University it may be agreed between the institute and the College that a student should register at the College. Such a student shall, nevertheless, be treated in all relevant respects as if he or she were registered at the institute.

7.10 Application for admission must be made in a form approved by the School and must follow the procedures of the School and the institute.

7.11 Except with the special permission of AQSC, a student
- may not register concurrently for more than one degree or diploma 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
- if they have entered an examination for a degree or diploma of the University, may not register in the School for another degree or diploma until the examination requirements for the first qualification are completed
- may not be registered as a student while registered as a student for an equivalent qualification of another university or other institution
- may not enter an examination leading to an award of the University who has been admitted as a candidate for examination leading to a comparable award of another university or other institution unless he/she has pursued a different and separate curriculum
- 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. 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.

7.12 Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 7.11 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
- 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 11.2 below

7.13 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.

7.14 Application for registration as a Master’s student must normally be made prior to 31 August in the year for which registration is intended, and in any case not later than 1 November in the year for which registration is intended.

7.15 Duration of study
A programme of study must extend over the period of time prescribed in the regulations (see below).

7.16 Examination marks and notification of results
Feedback (see also section 4.10 above)
For the purpose of guidance, feedback will normally be given to students on their performance in assessed coursework. 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.

7.17 Institutes 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 1) should be included in programme handbooks and will be consistently implemented.

7.18 Every candidate will be notified by the University of the result of his/her examination.

7.19 A diploma under the seal of the University will subsequently be delivered by the University to successful candidates.

7.20 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
Tuition fees are normally paid to the institute where the student is registered, except as noted in 7.9 above, where fees may be paid to the institute or to the collaborating College, according to arrangements for the particular programme.

7.21 The procedures for payment of fees, including provision for payment by instalment, will be determined by the School. Each institute will be responsible for implementation of the procedures, which may be subject to discretionary variation in particular circumstances.

7.22 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.

7.23 Student indebtedness
In addition to the provisions of 7.22, 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.

7.24 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.

7.25 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.

7.26 Further registration for the same degree
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 he/she were entering for the first time.

7.27 **Applications for exemption**
Application by a student for exemption from any of the regulations normally applying must be made to the Director of the institute to which the student is attached, who will refer the matter to AQSC with a statement stating whether the Director supports the application.

7.28 **Revocation of degree and other awards**
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, if it shall be discovered at any time and proved to the satisfaction of the School that:

- there was an administrative error in the award made under the appropriate regulations and procedures; or
- 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

7.29 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.

7.30 **Suspension of regulations**
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.

7.31 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.

7.32 All requests for suspension of regulations and the decisions by or on behalf of the AQSC shall be recorded.

7.33 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.

7.34 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.

7.35 **University of London Assessment Offence Regulations**
Procedures for the Consideration of Allegations of Assessment Offence

7.35.1 **Jurisdiction**
These Regulations apply to all students registered with the University of London for an award offered under the portfolios of the University of London International Programmes and the School of Advanced Study. They describe the University's response to allegations of offence in any form of assessment that contributes to the award for which those students are registered.

7.35.2 Allegations of plagiarism relating to coursework assignments submitted for the programmes listed in Appendix 1 will normally follow the procedures set out in that appendix.

7.35.3 The University of London considers and resolves all allegations of assessment offence through these Regulations.

7.35.4 Definitions of what constitutes an assessment offence can be found under the General Regulations for International Programmes students and the Quality Assurance Framework for the School of Advanced Study.

7.35.5 The authority under these regulations resides with the named Senior Officer of the University (refer to 7.35.6). Any disagreement concerning the interpretation of these Regulations will be referred to the Senior Officer of the University whose decision in the matter will be final.

7.35.6 In the context of these regulations, the Senior Officer of the University is determined by the Central Academic Body that the student is registered with, as follows;

- University of London International Programmes – Pro-Vice Chancellor (International)
- School of Advanced Study – Dean of the School of Advanced Study
7.35.7 The Senior Officer of the University delegates responsibility to the Director of Quality Standards and Governance to carry out the provisions of these Regulations, unless otherwise stated.

7.35.8 The Senior Officer of the University, the Director of Quality, Standards and Governance (QSG) and the University Secretary, may delegate any of the duties assigned to them under these Regulations to another member of staff of the University.

7.35.9 **Presumption of Innocence**

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

7.35.10 **Procedure**

Allegations of assessment offence will normally be reported to the University of London in the first instance through the Student Services Directorate (by an examination centre or an examiner), QSG (by a programme or Member Institution), or the Registry of the School of Advanced Study (by Institutes of the School of Advanced Study).

7.35.11 All such reports will then be referred to the Director of QSG who will follow the requirements of these Regulations for each case.

7.35.12 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 point at which the case or cases are fully resolved through these Regulations.

7.35.13 Investigations will take place to establish whether there is a case to answer. This may include verifying existing evidence, obtaining further evidence or testimonials from relevant third parties, or entering into correspondence with the student.

7.35.14 If it is determined that no further action will be taken at this stage, the Director of QSG will normally write to the student and, where appropriate, to the referring body with the outcome. The student will be informed of the allegation investigated, the rules or regulations that apply and the reason that no further action has been taken.

7.35.15 **Case to Answer**

If it is determined that there is a case for the student to answer, the Director of QSG will write to the student. The student will be informed of the allegation and provided with the evidence and an explanation of why there is a case to answer.

7.35.16 The student will be sent a form that contains the formal allegation, which they must complete and return within 28 days. The student will indicate on the form whether they admit or deny the allegation.

- If the student admits the allegation, their case will be considered by the Senior Officer of the University, or their nominee.
- If the student denies the allegation, the case will be referred for a hearing by the Assessment Offences Committee (see 7.35.22).
- If no response has been received by the University within 28 days of the despatch of the form, the University may determine that the student has agreed to the case being considered by the Senior Officer of the University or their nominee (see paragraph 18).

7.35.17 In addition to returning their completed form, students may also submit a statement or any further documentary evidence they deem relevant. Any such submission will be taken into consideration before the outcome of a case is determined.

7.35.18 **Decision**

The Senior Officer of the University, or their nominee, will determine the outcome of all cases where the student has admitted the allegation.

7.35.19 In determining the outcome of each case, account will be taken of the available evidence and, if appropriate, further consultation with relevant parties. A decision by the Senior Officer of the University or their nominee will be based on evidence available to both the student and the University.

7.35.20 Decisions will not be more severe than those which could be made by the Assessment Offences Committee.

7.35.21 The student will be informed of the decision in writing, including full details of any penalties, as soon as possible.
7.35.22 **Assessment Offences Committee**

The Assessment Offences Committee will determine the outcome of cases when:

- the student denies the allegation, or
- the student admits only part of the allegation, or
- the Senior Officer of the University, or their nominee, cannot reach a decision (for instance, when there is no established precedent).

7.35.23 The Assessment Offences Committee will meet in private and the student will not normally be entitled to be present. The Committee will meet when required, but not normally more often than once a term.

7.35.24 The Assessment Offences Committee will normally consist of no fewer than three members, including the Chair of the Assessment Offences Committee. Further members will normally be academic staff drawn from Member Institutions of the University of London International Academy or Institutes of the School of Advanced Study and should 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 and will be agreed by the Chair.

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

7.35.26 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 Director of QSG.

7.35.27 The Committee will be provided with full details of the allegation, all relevant documentation and testimonials, written statements made by the student and all correspondence to date between the student and the Director of QSG.

7.35.28 The student 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.

7.35.29 **Assessment Offences Committee Meeting**

The case, based on the documents held by the student and the Committee, will be presented by the Director of QSG. Any questions the Committee may have regarding procedural or regulatory matters will also be addressed.

7.35.30 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.

7.35.31 Following consideration of the evidence, the Committee will determine whether the allegation is proven. The Chair will give clear reasons for the decision.

7.35.32 If the Committee finds that an offence has been committed, they will be provided with the following information:

   a. full details of any prior, proven case(s) of assessment offence on the student's record, and
   b. a record of assessments taken by the student to date, including withheld results, and
   c. the relation of the assessment(s) in question to the structure of the programme/award for which the student is registered, and
   d. the effect that the cancellation of a paper/assessment would have on the candidate (for example, could they re-enter for that paper/assessment alone, or are they required to pass all parts of the examination on the same occasion?), and
   e. arrangement for re-entry to the assessment(s) in question, if applicable, and
   f. any other relevant information requested by the Committee.

7.35.33 The Committee will take one or more of the following decisions in the event that an offence is found to have been committed:

   a. that no further action 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 the full module/unit/course in question, or
e. 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
f. that the student cannot re-enter for any or all of those assessments before the expiry of a stated period of time, or
g. 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
h. that the student be excluded from future assessments for awards of the University.

7.35.34 The findings of the Committee, and full details of any penalties, will be sent to the student by the Director of QSG. The outcome will also be communicated to the referring body if appropriate.

7.35.35 Where a penalty results in failure of the individual element or the full module/unit/course, the standard re-sit or re-submission arrangements will apply.

7.35.36 **Appeal Procedure**

An appeal can be made on grounds of procedural irregularity and/or against the penalty imposed. This applies to decisions made by the Senior Officer of the University or their nominee, or an Assessment Offences Committee.

7.35.37 An appeal should be made in writing to the Director of QSG within ten working days of the date on the decision letter. Appeals received after this time will not normally be considered.

7.35.38 The appeal submission must include the grounds for appeal, with a full explanation and any relevant supporting evidence.

7.35.39 The appeal will be acknowledged in writing and the University Secretary will appoint a Reviewer to consider the case. The Reviewer will be a member of academic staff drawn from a Member Institution of the University of London International Academy or an Institute of the School of Advanced Study, but not one responsible for the award for which the student is registered. The Reviewer will have had no personal involvement in the case.

7.35.40 The Reviewer will be supplied with a copy of the student’s appeal, full details of the case, all relevant documentation and testimonials, written statements made by the student and all correspondence between the student and the Director of QSG. The Reviewer can seek clarification regarding procedural or regulatory matters.

7.35.41 The Reviewer will submit a report containing their recommendation(s). Recommendations may include endorsement, modification or reversal of the University’s decision(s).

7.35.42 The University Secretary will take a decision based on the Reviewer’s recommendations and, if appropriate, further consultation with relevant parties. The student will be informed of the decision of the University Secretary in writing.

7.35.43 The decision of the University Secretary in relation to an appeal is final and completes the University’s consideration of the matter.

7.35.44 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints about a final decision of a University procedure. Full details of the OIAHE and how to make a complaint are available on the website of the OIAHE: oiahe.org.uk

7.36 **Illustrative Examples of Academic Misconduct.**

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.

7.36.1 **General:**

Engaging in any dishonest practice or irregularity in order to gain unfair advantage for the student themselves in assessment.

Aiding and abetting a fellow student in any form of dishonest practice.

Bribing, inducing or persuading another person to obtain and provide advance copy of any unseen examination or test paper or any coursework assignment.
7.36.2 **With regard to examinations or tests:**

Removing any script, paper or other official stationery from the examination room, unless so authorised by an invigilator or examiner.

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).

Possession of any revision notes, crib sheets or other written aide memoire during the examination/test.

Communicating with another student or any person other than the invigilator/examiner during the examination/test.

Copying or attempting to copy the work of another student during the examination/test.

Being party to an arrangement whereby a person other than the candidate represents, or plans to represent, the candidate in an examination/test.

Duplicating substantially the same material in an examination answer which has already been submitted in another examination answer or in a coursework assignment.

7.36.3 **With regard to coursework assessment**

Making available work to another student so that it can be presented as the work of that student.

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).

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.

Presentation of data purporting to be based on work of the student but which has been invented, altered or falsified.

Submitting another student's work as the candidate's own work.

Use of one or more sections of verbatim quotation or close paraphrasing without appropriate referencing, such as the use of quotation marks.

Use of extensive verbatim quotation or close paraphrasing without appropriate referencing, such as the use of quotation marks.

It should be noted that material can be deemed to be plagiarised from:

- printed published material, e.g. books and journal articles
- material published on internet sites
- unpublished but publicly available material, e.g. theses and dissertations in university libraries/departmental holdings
- handouts and other materials provided by course/module tutors
- charts, graphs or visual images
- work of other students (in the same or previous cohorts)
- work of the candidate herself/himself where this has previously been submitted for assessment (though this may be considered 'duplication' – see 2.2.7 and 2.3.7 above – depending upon the extent of verbatim repetition).

Duplicating substantially the same material in a coursework assignment that has already been submitted in an assignment for another module/course.

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.

7.36.4 **Special Note on Plagiarism.**

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. In increasing gravity the principal gradations of plagiarism are the following (again the list is indicative, not exhaustive):
SECTION 8
REGULATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT DEGREES

8.1 Programmes of study
The taught postgraduate degree is intended for award on the satisfactory completion, including formal examinations (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.

8.2 New programmes of study, and significant changes to programmes of study, are subject to approval (see Section 2).

8.3 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 to 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.

8.4 A list of the programmes of study for taught Master’s degrees offered in the School and the programme regulations for these is given at Annex 3.

8.5 Entrance requirements (see also Admissions Policy)
The normal minimum entrance qualification for registration for a Master’s degree in the School is:

• 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

• a professional or other qualification obtained by written examination and approved by AQSC as an appropriate entrance qualification for the degree in question

8.6 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.

8.7 Applicants must satisfy any additional entrance requirements specified in the relevant programme regulations, including language and other tests prescribed by the institute.

8.8 An applicant who fails to pass a prescribed qualifying examination, other than tests falling into the categories in 8.7 above, may only re-enter for the qualifying examination by special permission of AQSC.

8.9 Duration of programmes
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 period of full-time study which shall normally be 12 months, the examinations being completed by the end of that period

• a period of part-time study normally of two years, during which candidates will be examined in accordance with the programme regulations

8.10 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.

8.11 Duration of study
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.

8.12 Interruptions of study
Except for periods of maternity leave (see 8.12.1 below), 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.

8.12.1 General Provisions for Maternity and Paternity
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.
Students are advised to inform the School about antenatal appointments where they impact attendance. Pregnant students and their partners can use Special examination arrangements (8.24), Deferral and withdrawal from examination or part of an examination (8.25) and Mitigating circumstances procedures (8.27) with regard to issues such as pregnancy-related illness, absence due to attendance of antenatal appointments and special examination arrangements.

The maternity and paternity provisions in 8.12.2 and 8.12.3 are applicable to still birth and neonatal death.

8.12.2 Maternity Leave
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.

Students must inform the SAS in writing 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 and any necessary arrangements (such as communications during leave) for the duration of their leave.

8.12.3 Paternity and Shared Parental Leave
Students are entitled to a two weeks (10 days) paternity leave within three months following the birth of their child.

8.12.4 Adoption Leave
The provisions for maternity and paternity leave are valid for adoption leave.

8.13 Off-campus study
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.

8.14 Examination
Schemes of examination are prescribed in the programme regulations for each programme. 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.

8.15 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 8.24 and 8.25).

8.16 The schedule for submission of assessed coursework shall be as determined in the particular programme regulations.

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.

8.17 The dissertation or report designated in 8.14 above will be examined on one occasion only in each year and the date for submission will be specified in the programme regulations.

8.18 To be awarded a degree a candidate must have:
- completed to the satisfaction of the School the programme of study prescribed
- been examined in all parts of the examination prescribed for the programme and shown a competent knowledge in the examination as a whole

8.19 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.

8.20 Entry to examinations
Entries to the examination must be received by the University by the date it has specified.

8.21 Candidates are bound by the regulations in force at the time of their entry to the examination.

8.22 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.

8.23 Special examination arrangements
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.

8.24 Deferral and withdrawal from examination or part of examination
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 paragraph 8.27 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.

8.24.1 In exercising their discretion the Programme Director or the MCP must be satisfied that:
• the illness or other good cause would render the student unfit to enter the examination or to
  complete the assessment by the deadline
• that the illness or other good cause would either:
  • have a significant and adverse impact on the student's performance in the examination or other
    assessment; or
  • would prevent the student from sitting the examination or prevent the student from completing or
    submitting the assessment within the given time-frame

8.24.2 Where the Director of Studies/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.

8.24.3 Except as provided for in 8.25.5 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 8.25
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 Regulation 8.41 below).

8.24.4 Except as provided for in 8.25.5 below, a student who fails to submit material for assessment or submits
after the deadline and has not made a request for an extension under 8.25 above, will receive a mark
which has been adjusted according to the scale of for that assessment, penalties as agreed by the AQSC:
• coursework for assessment but not including the dissertation, will be subject to the deduction of
  marks as follows:
  • a penalty of 10% of the mark awarded for work up to one week late
  • A penalty of 20% of the mark awarded for work between one and two weeks late
  When work is more than two weeks late, the penalty to be applied is at the discretion of the institute. The
  institute reserves the right not to accept work submitted more than two weeks late; in such cases the
  mark recorded will be nil.
• 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.
  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 assessment again if the regulations for the programme permit such
  reassessment.

8.24.5 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 Regulation 8.25 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 form provided for this purpose.
8.25 Constitution of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP)
The MCP will comprise the Dean or his 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. The panel will sit at least one week before the date of the first Examination Board held by an institute, or at any other time deemed necessary by the MCP.

8.26 Mitigating circumstances procedures
In exercising its discretion the MCP must be satisfied that:
- 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 that the illness or other good cause would either:
  - have had a significant and adverse impact on the student's performance in the examination or assessed work; or
  - have prevented the student from sitting the examination

8.26.1 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 8.25 above.

8.26.2 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.

8.26.3 A student who presents him or herself 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).

8.26.4 In exercising its discretion the MCP must be satisfied that:
- 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
- the illness or other good cause had a significant and adverse impact on the student's performance in the examination/assessment

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

8.26.6 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.

8.26.7 Where a student is deferred in an examination according to the provision of Regulations above, 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.

8.26.8 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 under Regulations above, 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 8.40 below.

8.27 Candidates will be informed of the marks obtained in those elements in which they have been examined.
8.28 **Illness**

Special provision for illness or other good cause is given in the withdrawal regulations (Regulation 8.25 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.

8.29 **Examination procedures**

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.

8.30 Except as provided in 8.30 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.

8.31 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.

8.32 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.

8.33 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.

8.34 Failure to observe the provisions of 8.31 to 8.35 above will constitute an examination offence (see below).

8.35 Answers to examination questions must be in English unless other instructions are given in the programme regulations or in the examination question paper.

8.36 Examination scripts for University degrees and diplomas are the property of the University and will not be returned to the candidate.

8.37 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.

8.38 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 65% in the dissertation. Within these parameters, regulations particular to each programme will apply. See also Annex 1 (grade descriptors).

8.39 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.

8.40 **Condoned fails**

A student must achieve a pass in the dissertation to be awarded the degree. However

- 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
- 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:
  - the overall mark for the programme is at least 50%, and
• the student achieves a mark of 60% or above in at least one significant element of the programme
• the institute's HDC may determine that certain elements of a programme or of an assessed component are not eligible for condonation. This shall be noted in the programme regulations available to students and teachers
• the original mark shall be recorded, with condonation noted as approved by the Examination Board

8.41 Re-entry
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.

8.42 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:
• one or more of the written papers
• essay/report/dissertation
• assessment of coursework
• practical examinations
• oral examinations

8.43 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.

8.44 Examination offences
The University of London Assessment Offence Regulations, Procedures for the Consider of Allegations of Assessment Offence apply (see Section 7.35).

8.45 Representations from candidates concerning examination results
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.

8.46 Any representation regarding unseen written examinations should be addressed to the Director of the University of London International Academy (ULIA), or forwarded to the Director of ULIA by the institute concerned.

8.47 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.

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT DEGREES BY DISTANCE LEARNING

8.48 The taught degrees offered by the School via distance learning will conform to all the regulations and ordinances as set out above, with the exception of 8.14. In addition,
• the minimum entry criteria will be published in ways that are understandable in all parts of the world where the programme will be offered
• 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
• 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
• the institute will clearly specify the student entitlement to learning resources and support including any assumed and required to be in place at the location of the student, and be obtained by them
• students will be informed of the technical requirements for the programme and the anticipated response times from those responsible for technical support
• 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
• students will be provided with assessment criteria as the basis on which their achievement will be judged, and the relative weightings of each module
• 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
• students must be given appropriate opportunities to give formal feedback on their experiences; this could include online forms and web-conferencing

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMAS

The above general regulations apply. The below paragraphs indicate instances of variation from the above.

8.49 Entrance requirements
The normal minimum entrance requirement for registration for the Postgraduate Diploma is:
• 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
• appropriate previous education and experience deemed by the institute where the student is to be registered to be equivalent to graduate standing.

8.50 Period of study and methods of examination

8.50.1 The minimum period of study will be as prescribed in the programme regulations for the particular diploma.

8.50.2 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.

8.50.3 Normally candidates pursuing a programme of study for a diploma 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.

8.50.4 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.

8.50.5 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 above.

8.50.6 To be awarded a Diploma a candidate must:
• have completed to the satisfaction of the examiners the programme of study prescribed
• have been examined in all parts of the examination prescribed and shown a competent knowledge in the examination as a whole
• 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

8.50.7 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 his/her examination by the relevant institute.

8.50.8 A diploma under the seal of the University will subsequently be delivered by the University to each candidate who has been awarded the diploma.
SECTION 9
REGULATIONS FOR MPHIL AND PHD DEGREES

General

9.1 The criteria for award of MPhil and PhD are set out in Regulation 1; Section C, paragraphs 50–52.6 and 56–58.8 and 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 below, 9.5.9-10). The Regulations of the School are supplementary to the University’s Regulations. In case of doubt, the University Regulations shall take precedence. Research Degrees by Distance are subject to additional regulations at 9.43.1–9.43.10.

Arrangements for joint degrees

9.2 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’ and so on) with institutions in other European 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.

Examination

9.3 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 9.2 above). 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.

9.4 The thesis shall:
• consist of the candidate’s own account of his/her investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree
• 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
• 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
• be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument
• 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
• 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)
• 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
• include a full bibliography and references
• 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 Head of Registry Services or nominee.
for PhD: demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented
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)

9.5.1 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 his/her registration at another institution.

9.5.2 A candidate will not be permitted to submit as his/her 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 he/she has already submitted for a degree or comparable award of this or any other university or institution provided that he/she shall indicate on his/her entry form and also on his/her thesis any work which has been so incorporated.

9.5.3 A candidate must include in each copy of his/her thesis a signed declaration that the work presented in the thesis is his/her own (see also 9.5.6 below) and that the thesis presented is the one upon which the candidate expects to be examined.

9.5.4 A thesis must be presented for examination in a final form in typescript of print and be bound in accordance with the instructions issued by the University (see www.london.ac.uk/binding).

9.5.5 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.

9.5.6 A candidate may submit the results of work done in conjunction with his/her supervisor and/or with fellow research workers provided that the candidate states clearly his/her own personal share in the investigation and that the statement is certified by supervisor(s) (see also 9.5.3 above).

9.5.7 A candidate must have the title of his/her thesis approved in accordance with the procedures specified by the School.

9.5.8 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.

9.5.9 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.’

9.5.10 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):

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

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

- 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;
- 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;
- a capacity to relate the results of research to the life of the Christian Church in its many manifestations today.

Entrance requirements

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

- 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
- 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.
9.7 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.

9.8 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.

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

9.10 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.

Transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD or from PhD to MPhil

9.11 Transfer from MPhil to PhD or from PhD to MPhil will be decided in accordance with the procedures and criteria set out in section 5 (‘upgrade from MPhil to PhD’) above.

9.12 The School may permit a student to transfer from a postgraduate taught degree to the MPhil degree, or from the MPhil degree to the PhD degree, in accordance with the conditions specified by the School, provided that no transfer of registration is permitted after entry to the examination for any one of these degrees. Registration for the degree to which transfer has been made may date from initial registration for the degree from which the transfer has been made.

9.13 On transfer of registration, the registration for the original degree will lapse.

Appointment of a supervisor or supervisors

9.14 See Section 5.4 above.

Attendance and duration of study and provision for ‘off-campus’ study

9.15 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.

9.16 Subject to the above minimum requirement, the institute will determine the length of the course of study for MPhil or PhD. 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 the equivalent in part-time study. The maximum period of study for PhD, including interruptions, shall be six years for full time and eight 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. 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 nine years for part time students.

9.17 The student shall centre his or her academic activities on the institute, and is 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 his or her thesis and shall prescribe the conditions which shall apply, which shall include regular contact with his/her 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.

Interruption of study

9.18 Except for periods of maternity leave), an institute may, on the proposal of the RDC normally following the recommendation of supervisor(s), 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.

9.19.1 General Provisions for Maternity and Paternity

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.

Students are advised to inform the School about antenatal appointments where they impact attendance. Pregnant students and their partners can use Special examination arrangements (8.24), Deferral and withdrawal from examination or part of an examination (8.25) and Mitigating circumstances procedures
The maternity and paternity provisions in 9.12.2 and 9.12.3 are applicable to still birth and neonatal death.

9.12.2 Maternity Leave

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.

Students must inform the SAS in writing 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 and any necessary arrangements (such as communications during leave) for the duration of their leave.

9.12.3 Paternity and Shared Parental Leave

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

9.12.4 Adoption Leave

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

Continuation (‘writing-up’) fee

9.13 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 fourth 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’.

9.14 Continuation fee status will not be granted before the transfer from MPhil to PhD registration.

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 his/her thesis 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.

9.15 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.

9.16 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.

9.17 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 the continuation fee or such fee as the institute shall determine.

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

Thesis submission

9.19 After the examination has been completed and before the degree is awarded, successful candidates are required to submit to the Registry, for lodging in the institute/School and University libraries, two copies of their thesis, one hard-bound and one soft-bound, in accordance with the instructions in the University, if the copies of the thesis submitted for the examination did not conform with this specification.

9.20 Every candidate is required to present a short abstract of his/her thesis of not more than 300 words and bound with each copy of the thesis submitted. One additional loose copy of the abstract must also be provided.

Availability of theses

9.21 It is a requirement for the award of the degree that one copy of a successful thesis is placed in the School/institute library and one copy in Senate House Library. Where, in the opinion of the institute, the thesis includes material that is of significance for national security, arrangements may be made, with the
agreement of the graduate concerned, so that the copies of the thesis placed in the public domain may have certain parts excised from them; in such cases the copies of the thesis placed in the public domain shall include an accompanying statement indicating by whom and at what location the full thesis on which the award was made may be consulted.

9.22 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:

- 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 library or electronic institutional repository of the School and in Senate House Library and that, subject to the condition set out in (d) below, my thesis be made available for public reference, inter-library loan and copying.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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’.
- 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.
- I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.
- I understand that in the event of my thesis not being approved by the examiners, this declaration will become void.

9.23 A candidate may apply to the School for restriction of access, for a period not exceeding two years, to his/her 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 College for consideration of such applications.

Submission of thesis in a foreign language

9.24 See 9.4 (vii) above.

Viva voce examinations

9.25 Deferred entry to examination

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, with a statement indicating whether or not the RDC supports the request.

9.25.1 Appointment of examiners

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

9.25.2 Appointment of Independent Chair for PhD Vivas

An independent Chair is appointed for all MPhil, PhD and DPT vivas.

Appointing the Chair

1. The 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;
2. The independent Chair should be selected by Research Degrees Committee;
3. The Chair must be familiar with the Quality Assurance Framework and MPhil/PhD Regulations of the University of London;
4. The Chair would normally be expected to have experience of conducting at least 3 research degree vivas as an examiner;
5. The Chair should have experience of supervising research degree students through to completion;
6. No member of staff should normally be expected to chair more than one viva per term (3 per year), to share the workload.
Role of the Chair

The role of the Chair is to be an observer and to ensure that procedures are followed properly. 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.

Responsibilities of the Chair are to ensure that:

1. The examiners are aware of, and adhere to, the University of London regulations and procedures;
2. The examiners’ pre- and post-viva reports are completed in line with regulations;
3. The assessment is rigorous, fair, reliable and consistent;
4. The examiners’ questioning is appropriate;
5. The candidate has an opportunity to defend the thesis.

9.26 Conduct of examination

See the University of London’s Regulations for the degrees of MPhil and PhD, Regulation 1, Section E, 79–99.

9.27 Regulations for the use of video/teleconferencing for the viva voce examination

Video/teleconferencing facilities may be used in viva voce examinations only when an examiner is based at such a distance from London (normally outside the UK) that s/he is not able, for reasons of prohibitively high cost, difficulties of time or restricted mobility, to travel to the School in order to conduct or participate in a viva voce examination at an appropriate time.

9.27.1 The option of video/teleconferencing will not be available for candidates.

9.27.2 Procedures for using videoconferencing in viva voce examinations

- advice should be sought, in the first instance, from the Registry
- video/teleconferencing may be used only with the written agreement of the candidate and all proposed members of the panel. This agreement should be sought and confirmed prior to the proposal being considered by the AQSC
- 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. The AQSC has the right to request further information in relation to a proposal to use video/teleconferencing or to refuse a request where it feels a strong enough case has not been made. The decision of the AQSC is final. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. an emergency situation where the viva was intended to be conducted conventionally but an instant occurs which prevents this, the Dean can make the decision to proceed with a video or telephone link. The same principles will apply to this situation
- where permission is granted the supervisor should appoint an independent chair to oversee the proceedings. The chair will take no part in the actual examining process. A chair can be sourced from within SAS but must have had no contact with the candidate prior to the viva
- the lead supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all parties involved in the examination are informed of the details of the arrangements
- 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
- when arranging video conferencing the quality of the equipment and technological infrastructure used should be taken into account. Equipment must be tested prior to the event taking place. Contingency plans are essential in the event of technology failure. The candidate must be given the opportunity to practice speaking to another party using the facilities in advance of the viva voce examination. When concluding a viva voce examination which has involved video/teleconferencing, all participants should be asked to confirm that the holding of the examination by video/teleconference has had no substantive bearing on the examination process. Examiners will be invited to comment on the conduct of the viva voce examination using the standard examiner’s report form and should refer explicitly to the use of video/teleconferencing

9.28 Timescales between submission and examination

The normal length of time between submission of the thesis and its examination by viva voce is two to three months.
9.29 **Result of examination**
Copies of examiners’ reports for MPhil and PhD degrees are transmitted to the candidate via the School Registry.

9.30 **Referral**
Should a thesis be referred for major revisions:
- the student’s supervisor will be asked to (a) comment on any circumstances which may have led to the outcome and (b) describe how the student will be supported in revising the thesis
- a meeting should be arranged with an appropriate academic officer and the student’s supervisor to organise a work plan for revision
- monitoring of progress on the revision should take place by the institute’s RDC (or HDC)

9.31 **Appeals**
A candidate’s decision to submit his/her thesis for examination is entirely his/her 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.

9.31.1 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.

9.31.2 Candidates may appeal on one or more of the following grounds:
- 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
- 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
- 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

9.31.3 A submission under this procedure shall be made in writing by the appellant with supporting evidence (including medical certificate for paragraph 1 above) to the Head of Registry services and must be received within two months of the date of notification to the candidate of the result of the examination.

9.31.4 The Vice-Chancellor or his/her 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 his/her nominee, fall within the remit of this procedure or does not disclose arguable grounds.

9.31.5 Where inadequate grounds for an appeal are provided or the documentation is deemed to be defective, the Head of Registry Services will advise the appellant before paragraph 9.38.4 above is invoked.

9.31.6 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 or who has been involved in the examination concerned.

9.31.7 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 his/her choice. A person who will be accompanied and/or represented must submit to the Head of Registry Services 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 him/her and must state whether that person is a member of the University.

9.31.8 The examiners shall be invited to attend the meeting of the Appellate Committee.

9.31.9 The Committee shall normally conduct the proceedings in the presence of both the appellant and the examiners. The appellant and/or his/her 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.

9.31.10 The documentation with which the Committee is provided shall include:
- the written submissions of the appellant and of the examiners (should they wish to make a written submission)
- the final report(s) and the preliminary independent reports of the examiners
- 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.
9.31.11 The procedure is for the appellant to address the Committee first and, during this part of the proceedings, he/she 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. 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 he considers it just to do so.

9.31.12 The Appellate Committee shall take one of the following decisions:
• to reject the appeal, in which case the result of the original examination stands
• 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
• 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

9.31.13 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.

9.31.14 When a new examination is held in accordance with paragraph 9.3 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.

9.31.15 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.

9.31.16 The result of the original examination having been cancelled, the result of the new examination shall be accepted.

9.31.17 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 (http://oiahe.org.uk).

Examination offences

9.32 The University’s Regulations for Proceedings in Respect of Examination Offences by Candidates for University Awards should be referred to.

9.33 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 his/her 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 his/her text, and include the work to which reference is made in the bibliography.

9.34 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:
• deliberate attempts to represent falsely or unfairly the ideas or work of others
• the invention or fabrication of data
• the submission of work commissioned by another person
9.35 Debt

9.35.1 If a candidate has entered the examination for the MPhil, PhD and DPT degree, any account outstanding and with no acceptable arrangements having been made to settle it, no report will be made on the result of the examination until the same authority certifies that payment has been made in full.

Research Degrees by Distance Learning

9.35.2 All 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.

9.35.3 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.

9.35.4 Students are required to complete a range of compulsory generic research training conducted through face to face sessions at induction and through engagement with the online learning portal thereafter.

9.35.5 Students are required to compulsorily attend for registration and induction (year 1), upgrade and for their viva. This will take place at the University of London headquarters in London.

9.35.6 Students who register for on-campus degrees will not usually be eligible for transfer to distance learning.

9.35.7 Regulations outlined on section 3 provision of information and admission of students relate to distance learning research students.

9.35.8 Regulations outlined in section 5 postgraduate research degrees pertain to distance learning students.

9.35.9 Regulations pertaining to academic misconduct in section 6 (with the exception of those relating to attendance (6.2) Tier 4 students (6.2.2 – 6.6) pertain to distance learning students.

9.35.10 Regulations in section 9 relating to MPhil and PhD Degrees relate in their entirety to distance learning research students.

9.35.11 All the principles outlined in the Student Charter pertain to Distance learning research students.
SECTION 10

REGULATIONS FOR OCCASIONAL STUDENTS

10.1 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.

10.2 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.

10.3 The institute at which the occasional student is enrolled may, at its discretion, issue a certificate that he or she has completed a programme of study or a programme of research as an occasional student of the institute. 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.
SECTION 11
REGULATIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE DEGREES

Introduction

11.1 This document is a code of good practice for the academic management of collaborative arrangements entered into by institutes of the School. It is based on the QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education, and seeks to protect the standard of the University of London degree.

11.2 When entering into any collaboration with a partner external to the University of London, institutes should ensure that the principles in this paper are addressed in the collaborative agreement.

11.3 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.

11.4 All collaborative programmes should be approved through the AQSC, School Board and Collegiate Council.

Standards

11.5 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.

11.6 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.

11.7 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.

11.8 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.

11.9 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

11.10 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.

11.11 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.

11.12 Collaborative arrangements should therefore be fully costed and accounted for accurately and fully.

The collaborating partner(s)

11.13 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.

11.14 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:

• the public and legal standing of a prospective partner organisation in their own country
• 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
• the financial stability of a prospective partner organisation
• the ability of the prospective partner organisation to provide human and material resources to operate the programme successfully
• the ability of the prospective partner organisation to provide appropriate and safe working environment for students on the programme

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

11.15 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.

11.16 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 their awards are not jeopardised by the arrangements they have entered into with partners.

11.17 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. The agreement should include the following:
• 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)
• the need to be secure in respect of matters relating to copyright and intellectual property rights
• specification of the role of external examiners in ensuring that the awarding institution can fulfil its responsibility for the academic standards awards
• termination and mediation provisions and financial arrangements to be followed if the arrangement ceases specification of the legal jurisdiction under which any disputes would be resolved
• inclusion of provisions to enable either institution to suspend or withdraw from the agreement if the other party fails to fulfil its obligations
• 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

11.18 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.

11.19 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 student academic staff, examiners and all other stakeholders.

Monitoring and review

11.20 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.

11.21 Regular monitoring and review, at institutional or programme levels should take place at various levels, i.e. at institute level through HDCs and at the AQSC through regular reporting. All collaborative programmes will be subject to periodic review.

Staffing

11.22 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.

11.23 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

11.24 The School should ensure that arrangements for admission to the collaborative programme take into account the School's Admissions Policy and English language requirements.

11.25 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

11.26 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.

11.27 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

11.28 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

11.29 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.

11.30 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.
SECTION 12

Key Contacts for Students

Registry Office Location
School of Advanced Study, University of London
Ground Floor, Senate House, South Block,
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU
Opening Hours: 9.30 – 5.00pm

General enquiries ...................................... sas.registry@sas.ac.uk
Admissions enquiries.............................. admissions@sas.ac.uk
Tuition fee and payment enquiries .... sas.fees@sas.ac.uk
Research degrees examination
and thesis submission ......................... research.degrees@sas.ac.uk

Registry Staff

Kalinda Hughes, Head of Registry Services
E: kalinda.hughes@sas.ac.uk
T: +44 (0)20 7862 8873

Ivan Leonidov, SAS Programme Coordinator (IALS)
E: ivan.leonidov@sas.ac.uk
T: +44 (0)20 7862 8663

Currently Vacant, Admissions Officer
T: +44 (0)20 7862 8661

Christine Weir, SAS Programme Coordinator
E: christine.weir@sas.ac.uk
T: +44 (0)20 7862 8823

Sonal Thakker, Registry Fees Officer
E: sonal.thakker@sas.ac.uk
T: +44 (0)20 7862 8869

Elena Aliferi, SAS Programme Coordinator (The Warburg Institute and IHR)
E: elena.aliferi@sas.ac.uk
T: +44 (0)20 7862 8834

Solange La Rose, SAS Programme Coordinator (ICwS and IES)
E: solange.larose@sas.ac.uk
T: +44 (0)20 7862 8312
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum mark</th>
<th>Maximum mark</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Outstanding performance above a distinction level. Work is of exceptional quality. The highest level of knowledge and understanding is demonstrated by originality 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent work, demonstrating a consistently very high level of knowledge and understanding. It shows clear evidence of originality and independent critical analysis, high levels of skill in synthesis and analysis, and well-argued, well-organised and documented. Presentation standards will be excellent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>A- to A</td>
<td>Very good to excellent work, demonstrating a very good level of knowledge and understanding. Work shows strong evidence of originality and 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good to very good work, showing a good level of knowledge and understanding. Work will be well-organised, clearly argued, coherent and appropriately referenced. Presentation will be of a good standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>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; 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Extremely poor work, demonstrating all the flaws outlined above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unacceptable or not submitted.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
HESA Student Collection Notice

Applicable to 2018/19 academic year

The Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited (HESA) is the body responsible for collecting and disseminating information about higher education in the UK and the Designated Data Body for England (www.hesa.ac.uk/about). HESA is a Controller of your information. HESA’s wholly-owned subsidiary company HESA Services Limited acts as a Processor to do work on behalf of HESA and other organisations described in the notice below, but may also act as a Controller.

Reference to “your provider” refers to the higher education provider which you attend. This notice relates to information about you which will be collected by your provider and passed to HESA and to other organisations as described below.

This notice sets out information about HESA and other controllers of your data, how and why they process your data, the legal bases for this processing, and your rights under data protection legislation. This notice is regularly reviewed and sometimes updated, for example when organisations change their name, or to clarify how your information is used. Updates may be made at any time and you will always find the most up to date version at www.hesa.ac.uk/fpn.

Submission of your information to HESA

Data about you will be supplied to HESA for the purposes set out below. All information is used in compliance with data protection legislation.

Every year your provider will send some of the information it holds about you to HESA (“your HESA information”). HESA is the official source of data about UK universities, higher education colleges, alternative HE providers, and recognised higher education courses taught at further education institutions in Wales. HESA is a registered charity and operates on a not-for-profit basis.

Your HESA information is used for a variety of purposes by HESA and by third parties as described below. HESA may charge other organisations to whom it provides services and data. Uses of your HESA information may include linking parts of it to other information, as described below. Some information provided to HESA is retained indefinitely for statistical research purposes. Your HESA information will not be used to make automated decisions about you.

All uses of HESA information must comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

HESA is developing a new system for collecting student information called the HESA Data Platform that will go live from the 2019/20 academic year. More information about this programme of work can be found here: www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/data-futures. If personal data about you is sent to HESA as part of any pilot of the new HESA Data Platform, it will only be used by HESA, your provider, and higher education funding and regulatory bodies to evaluate system functionality and will be deleted at the end of the Data Platform development programme in 2020.

Categories of information submitted to HESA, including special categories of data

HESA collects data about the personal characteristics of students and information about their studies and qualifications. This might include sensitive details about students’ personal lives used for equality and diversity monitoring.

Data submitted to HESA by your provider includes details about the course you are studying and any qualifications awarded to you during the academic year. It also includes personal details about you such as your name and date of birth, your prior qualifications, and where you lived before starting your course.

Information about your disability status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or religion is classed as ‘Special categories of data’ under the GDPR. If your Provider provides this information to HESA it will be included in your HESA information. This information is necessary for monitoring equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This information will also be processed for statistics and statistical research where this is necessary and in the public interest. Your sensitive information will not be used to make decisions about you.
Some other information is used to enable research into the provision of fair access to higher education, for example information as to whether you are a care leaver. If your provider is in England your HESA information may include details of any financial support you may receive from your higher education provider.

A full list of data items that may be included in your HESA information for the 2018/19 academic year can be found here: www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c18051/. Please note that not all data items are collected for all students.

### Purpose 1 – Named data used for public functions

Your HESA information is used by public authorities for their statutory and/or public functions, including funding, regulation and policy-making purposes. Your information is provided by reference to your name, but your information will not be used to make decisions about you.

#### Education statistics and data

HESA shares your HESA information with public authorities who require it to carry out their statutory and/or public functions. This data sharing is carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in HESA and the public authorities. Your HESA information will be shared with these organisations as part of a large dataset which contains similar information about other people who have followed higher education courses in the UK.

These organisations are also controllers of your HESA information. This means that they make their own decisions about how to use it, and this may include publishing statistics and sharing the information with third parties, such as other government or public bodies or other organisations of the type listed elsewhere in this collection notice. However, all uses that they make of your HESA information will be within the purposes set out in this collection notice and covered by data sharing agreements with HESA. These organisations will not use the data for the purposes of identifying you as an individual or to take decisions about you, except as described in Purpose 2 below. These organisations may retain HESA information indefinitely for statistical and research purposes, or for fixed terms depending on the terms of their data sharing agreements with HESA.

Such organisations may include:

- Department for Education
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Welsh Government
- Scottish Government
- Department for the Economy
- Office for Students
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
- Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council
- UK Research and Innovation
- Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Teaching Regulation Agency
- National Health Service bodies and organisations working with them e.g., Health Education England
- General Medical Council
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- UCAS

and any successor bodies. Further controllers may be added to the list from time to time – please see the online version of this notice at www.hesa.ac.uk/fpn.

#### Other uses of named data

Your HESA information may also be used by some organisations who are also controllers who carry out statistical and research tasks in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority that are not connected with education. Such uses may include the following:

- Production of statistics in relation to the population of the UK and for statistical research, undertaken by the Office for National Statistics. Further information can be found on the ONS website.
- Production of statistics and statistical research undertaken by National Records of Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
- Monitoring of public expenditure by the National Audit Office

The above list of organisations who may receive your HESA information will be subject to change over time. For example, HESA is seeking to reduce the burden on higher education providers by encouraging other organisations who currently collect information about students direct from higher education providers to collect and receive information through HESA. The above list will be updated on the HESA website at www.hesa.ac.uk/fpn from time to time, and you will need to monitor this link yourself if you wish to be aware of changes.
## Legal basis for processing your information for Purpose 1

Processing of your HESA information for Purpose 1 is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Controller (See GDPR Article 6(1)(e)) and for statistical and research purposes (See GDPR Article 69).

Processing of Special Categories of data is necessary for statistical and research purposes in accordance with Article 89(1) based on the duties in the Equality Act 2010, Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, or the Digital Economy Act 2017 (See GDPR Article 9(2)(j)).

## Purpose 2 - Administrative uses

Your named data may be processed by public authorities for the detection or prosecution of fraud. These uses of your HESA information may result in decisions being made about you.

In the exercise of their official authority it may be necessary for the UK higher education funding and regulatory bodies listed in Purpose 1 to use your HESA information which is passed to them for Purpose 1 to identify you and take decisions about you as an individual for the following purposes only:

**Fraud detection and prevention** - Your HESA information may be used to audit claims to public funding and student finance, and to detect and prevent fraud. This may include sharing your information with other controllers (for example the Student Loans Company, Pearson Education).

**Previous study** - If your higher education provider is in England: The Office for Students may share your previous education records with this provider, including HESA information submitted by other higher education providers, to determine the nature of any prior higher education study, including your current qualifications. This may be used to make decisions about the fees you are required to pay, the support available to you or the availability of a place for you to study with a higher education provider.

For these purposes your HESA information may be held separately (in addition to being held within datasets for Purpose 1) and retained for as long as necessary for the purposes of detection or prosecution of fraud and any associated legal or audit purposes.

## Legal basis for processing your information for Purpose 2

Processing of your HESA information for Purpose 2 is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Controller (See GDPR Article 6(1)(e)).

## Purpose 3 - HESA publications

HESA publishes statistics about students in higher education.

Part of HESA’s role is to produce and publish information about higher education in the public interest. This includes some National Statistics publications (www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistic/types-of-official-statistics) and online business intelligence and research services.

When producing this material for publication, HESA applies its disclosure control, the HESA Standard Rounding Methodology, to ensure that no Personal Data is included and that individuals cannot be identified from published material.

Processing within this Purpose 3 may also be carried out by HESA Services Limited, HESA’s wholly-owned subsidiary company.

## Legal basis for processing your information for Purpose 3

Processing of your HESA information for Purpose 3 is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Controller (See GDPR Article 6(1)(e)) and for statistical and research purposes (See GDPR Article 69).

Processing of Special Categories of personal data is necessary for statistical and research purposes in accordance with Article 89(1) based on the Equality Act 2010 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (See GDPR Article 9(2)(j)))
Purpose 4 - Equal opportunity, research, journalism and other processing for statistical and research purposes

HESA information is used for research into higher education and the student population. This research can be academic, commercial, journalistic or for personal reasons. HESA prohibits the identification of individual students by those carrying out this research and information is not shared on a named basis.

HESA and the other controllers (see Purpose 1) may also supply information to third parties where there is a legitimate interest in doing so for statistical and research purposes. Examples of use for this purpose include:

- Provision of information to students and prospective students
- Equal opportunities monitoring
- Research - This may be academic research, commercial research or other statistical research where this is in the public interest
- Journalism - Where the relevant publication would be in the public interest e.g. league tables

Users to whom information may be supplied for Purpose 4 include:

- Higher education sector bodies
- Higher education providers
- Academic researchers and students
- Commercial organisations (e.g. recruitment firms, housing providers, graduate employers)
- Unions
- Non-governmental organisations and charities
- Local, regional and national government bodies
- Journalists

Information supplied by HESA to third parties within Purpose 4 is supplied under contracts which require that individuals shall not be identified from the supplied information and this means that they also cannot use it to take decisions about you. A copy of HESA’s current agreement for the supply of information is available at www.hesa.ac.uk/services/custom/data/timescales-costs. Each agreement specifies the duration for which data may be processed. This is usually one year but may be longer if necessary for the specific research purpose. Each request for HESA information under Purpose 4 is assessed for its compliance with data protection legislation and its compatibility with this Collection Notice. HESA ensures that only the minimum amount of HESA information necessary for the specified research purpose is supplied to users. If the supplied information is to be published HESA’s Rounding Methodology or an equivalent disclosure control must be applied to ensure that individuals cannot be identified from the published material and it does not constitute Personal Data.

HESA student information may be linked to school and/or further education college information and supplied to researchers. A copy of the Agreement for the supply of linked data about pupils from schools in England is available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-pupil-database.

Processing within this Purpose 4 is carried out by HESA, HESA Services Limited, HESA's wholly-owned subsidiary company. Other controllers (listed under Purpose 1 above) may also process data for this purpose where this is necessary to fulfil their public functions.

Legal basis for processing your information for Purpose 4

Processing of your HESA information for Purpose 4 is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Controller (See GDPR Article 6(1)(e)).

Processing may also be necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests of HESA in disseminating higher education information, or the legitimate interests of third parties in undertaking research in the field of higher education (See GDPR Article 6(1)(f)).

In either case processing of your HESA information is necessary for statistical and research purposes in accordance with GDPR Article 89(1).

Processing of Special Categories of personal data is necessary for statistical and research purposes in accordance with Article 89(1) based on the duties in the Equality Act 2010 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (See GDPR Article 9(2)(j))
Linking of your HESA information to other information

HESA information is sometimes linked to other data sources to enable more detailed research and analysis.

As indicated above, where HESA and organisations covered by Purpose 1 use HESA information this may include linking named or pseudonymised HESA information to other information for research purposes. Examples include linking to:

- National Student Survey data – to place the results of this survey in context
- School and Further Education data – to research progression to higher education
- Student Loans Company data – to research the use of student finance
- Qualification awarding bodies data – to research the value and outcomes of qualifications
- Employment, tax, and benefits data – to research the earnings of graduates and to better understand the outcomes of education (Guidance on the use of HESA records matched to tax, benefits and employment data is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/longitudinal-education-outcomes-study-how-we-use-and-share-data)
- UCAS data – to understand entry rates to higher education
- If you are a medical student your HESA information may be included in the UKMED research database (www.ukmed.ac.uk). The General Medical Council is the controller for this database used for researching doctors’ progression through their education and training.

Where HESA provides information from your HESA information to third parties under Purpose 4, the permitted uses of the information by a third party may include linking HESA information to other information held by the third party. Permission for such use is considered on a case by case basis. It is only given where the linking is for the purposes outlined in Purpose 4 and subject to the requirement not to carry out linking to identify individuals.

Destinations information for schools and colleges – If you attended a school or college in England or Wales linked data may be disclosed to the last school or college you attended (or its successor body) and to Ofsted or Estyn in the exercise of their official authority to enable them to assess the outcomes of secondary education.

The HESA Initial Teacher Training record (“ITT”)

Information about teacher training students in England is submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) and the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) via HESA.

If you are on an ITT course at a higher education provider in England, HESA will collect additional information about you and provide this to the DfE and TRA. ITT courses are those that lead to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS).

The TRA is an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE) and, for the purposes of the GDPR, DfE and HESA are separate controllers of the ITT record.

DfE will process your personal data in exercise of its official authority, namely the funding, administration and monitoring of ITT schemes in England. DfE will use your data to establish a record on the Initial Teacher Training Data Management System (ITTDMS) and register your course details and subsequent completion.

TRA will process your personal data in the exercise of its official authority, namely the award of QTS and EYTS and the maintenance of the list of teachers in England. TRA will use your data to establish a record on the database of teachers and allocate to you a teacher reference number (TRN). TRA will contact you to provide confirmation of your TRN and any subsequent award of QTS.

DfE and TRA may share personal data with your provider, and where the law allows it or there is a legal requirement for sharing to take place, its partners and contractors for this purpose and may link it to other sources of information about you. Partners include employers of teachers, teacher employment agencies, Ofsted, Capita Teachers’ Pensions and other executive agencies of the DfE.

Student and leaver surveys

You may be asked to provide information about your experience as a student and your activities after you graduate as part of national surveys.

Your contact details may be passed to survey contractors to carry out the National Student Survey (NSS), other surveys of students’ views about their study, and surveys of student finances, on behalf of some of the organisations listed under Purpose 1 above.
After you graduate you may be contacted and asked to complete one or more surveys into the outcomes of higher education and your activities after graduation. These surveys are used to create statistics to meet the public interest in the outcomes of higher education. Information from third parties (such as your parent, or your provider if you’re in further study) might be used to complete sections of the surveys if you can’t be contacted. The surveys may be undertaken by your provider or by an organisation contracted for that purpose.

Your provider will hold your contact details after you graduate in order for you to be contacted to complete the Graduate Outcomes survey. Your contact details will be passed to HESA and the organisation(s) contracted by HESA to assist it to undertake the Graduate Outcomes survey. HESA’s contractors will only use your contact details for the survey and will delete them when the survey is closed. HESA may hold your contact details for further graduate outcomes surveys where these are in the public interest. Your responses to the Graduate Outcomes survey will be made available to your provider, and your provider may choose to add additional questions to the survey for their own use.

Further privacy and data protection information will be provided if you are contacted for any of these surveys. You might also be contacted as part of an audit to check that the survey has been undertaken properly.

### Legal basis for processing your information to conduct national surveys

Processing of your information to conduct the student and graduate surveys is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Controller (See GDPR Article 6(1)(e)) and for statistical and research purposes (See GDPR Article 89).

### Your rights

Data protection legislation gives you rights over your personal data. These include rights to know what information is processed about you and how it is processed. These rights have to be met by HESA and any other organisation which takes decisions about how or why your information is processed.

You have the right to be informed about how your personal data is used. This Student Collection Notice is regularly reviewed to ensure that it accurately describes how your HESA information is used. This notice may be updated from time to time, for example when new legislation is enacted, or when new policies are implemented by the public authorities listed under Purpose 1. The most up to date version can always be found at [www.hesa.ac.uk/fpn](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/fpn).

For further information about data protection, including contact details for HESA and HESA Services’ Data Protection Officer please see [www.hesa.ac.uk/dataprot](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/dataprot). If you have questions about how your HESA information is used, please contact [data.protection@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@hesa.ac.uk).

Under the GDPR you have the right of access to your personal information and rights to rectify inaccurate information; restrict processing; and object to processing. These rights are limited in certain circumstances by the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 where data is only processed for research or statistical purposes. If you think there is a problem with the way HESA is handling your data, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office: [ico.org.uk/](http://ico.org.uk/).

### Data transfers to other countries

Your HESA information may be transferred to countries outside the European Union for the purposes described above.

Your HESA information will only be transferred to countries whose data protection laws have been assessed as adequate by the European Commission, or where adequate safeguards, such as the EU-US Privacy Shield, are in place to protect your HESA information. European Commission decisions on the adequacy of the protection of personal data in third countries are published here: [ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/international-transfers/adequacy/index_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/international-transfers/adequacy/index_en.htm)
Characteristics Statement

Master's Degree

September 2015
Contents

About this Statement ...................................................................................................................... 1
How can I use this document? .................................................................................................... 1

1 Context, purposes and graduate characteristics ....................................................................... 2
  1.1 Context .............................................................................................................................. 2
  1.2 Purposes of the master's degree ........................................................................................ 2
  1.3 Characteristics of master's graduates ................................................................................. 3

2 Forms of master's degrees ...................................................................................................... 4
  2.1 Forms of master's degrees ............................................................................................... 4
      Category 1: Research master's degrees .......................................................................... 4
      Category 2: Specialised or advanced study master's degrees ......................................... 4
      Category 3: Professional or practice master's degrees .................................................. 5
  2.2 Integrated master's degrees ............................................................................................ 6
  2.3 Other qualifications at master's level ............................................................................... 6
      Qualifications in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science ......................................... 6
      Postgraduate certificates and diplomas ............................................................................. 6

3 Content, structure and delivery of master's degrees ............................................................... 7
  3.1 Content .............................................................................................................................. 7
  3.2 Teaching and learning ...................................................................................................... 7
  3.3 Assessment ....................................................................................................................... 7
  3.4 Volume of learning and credit .......................................................................................... 8

Related guidance and further references ................................................................................... 9
Appendix 1: Summary of master's degree titles .......................................................................... 10
Appendix 2: Members of the advisory groups for the Master's Degree Characteristics .................. 14
About this Statement

This document is a Qualification Characteristics Statement about the characteristics of master's degrees. It describes the distinctive features of master's degrees in the UK. It becomes a reference point for the purposes of reviews coordinated by QAA from August 2016.

Qualification Characteristics Statements are a component of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards. Expectation A1 requires that:

In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:
 [...] b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics [...] .

Characteristics Statements are closely linked to The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (the Qualifications Frameworks)¹ (also included in Expectation A1 of the Quality Code). They complement and contextualise the information provided within the Qualifications Frameworks, providing more detail about the distinctive features of qualifications at particular levels of the frameworks and/or of qualifications at any level, which are awarded in a particular way.

As this Statement is concerned with master's degrees, it relates particularly to the 'Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 on the FHEQ and SCQF level 11 on the FQHEIS: master's degree', which is in section 4 of the Qualifications Frameworks.

This version of the Statement forms its second edition, following initial publication in 2010.

How can I use this document?

You may want to read this document if you are:
• involved in the design, delivery and review of master's programmes
• a prospective student thinking about undertaking a master's
• an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of master's graduates.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Statement can be found in QAA's glossary.² QAA has also published a general guide to quality assurance in higher education.³

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¹ The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2843.
² The QAA glossary is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary.
³ A general guide to quality assurance can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality.
1  Context, purposes and graduate characteristics

1.1  Context

The master's degree is one of the most well-known and well-established postgraduate qualifications in UK higher education. Master's degrees in the UK are diverse and broad ranging. A wide variety of master's degrees are on offer, whose purposes can reflect both the desires and ambitions of students, and the traditions and needs of particular subjects and professions. However, despite their diversity, master's degrees all conform to a common threshold standard, which is set out in the Qualifications Frameworks.

Master's degrees may broadly be organised into three categories - 'research', 'specialised/advanced study' and 'professional/practice' - and these are explored in more detail in section 3 of this Statement. Each of these categories is based on shared characteristics, but the categories are not intended to be definitive. Some master's degrees may combine characteristics from different categories, and degrees bearing similar titles may be considered to fall within more than one category.

Master's degrees are delivered through a range of models and modes, and are often at the cutting edge of practice in terms of distance or remote learning. Flexibility in delivery is considered key to the ongoing success of master's degrees.

Some master's degrees are explicitly linked to further study through entry to a doctoral programme. In this arrangement a student progresses automatically onto a doctoral programme, provided that they achieve the master's degree outcomes to the standard required. In other cases, the degree equips successful graduates with the potential to be able to enrol for doctoral study, but entry is not guaranteed.

Where master's degrees aim to prepare students for entry to a particular field of employment, practice or profession, or for progression or transfer within it, a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) external to the provider may accredit the programme. Graduates of such programmes may be eligible for a particular professional status or may be permitted to enter a further period of practice, study or examination leading to the profession.

The UK master's degree in all its forms has been confirmed as being in alignment with European-wide guidance, in particular with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).4 This independent verification involving colleagues from non-UK European countries, as well as from the UK, recognised UK qualifications as having Europe-wide equivalence and standing, which supports the mobility of graduates within Europe.

1.2  Purposes of the master's degree

Higher education providers may offer a master's degree with one or more of the following aims:

- enabling students to focus on a particular aspect of a broader subject area in which they have prior knowledge or experience through previous study or employment
- enabling students to focus on a particular subject area or field of study in greater depth than they encountered during the course of previous study or experience (this may include enabling students to develop knowledge of a new subject or field of study in combination with a relevant subject area in which they have prior

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knowledge or experience, or enabling students to undertake inter or multidisciplinary study)

- enabling students to undertake a research project on a topic within the area of interest that makes up the majority of the overall assessment
- enabling students to learn how to conduct research and undertake training in research methods, often linked to a particular subject or field of study
- enabling students to specialise or to become more highly specialised in an area of employment or practice related to a particular profession
- supporting progression towards professional registration in a particular profession.

1.3 Characteristics of master's graduates

The Qualifications Frameworks level descriptor for the master's degree includes generic information about what all holders of the master's qualification are able to do, and the qualities and skills that they have (see the Qualifications Frameworks for details).

Beyond these core attributes, master's graduates are diverse, with wide-ranging strengths and abilities. This is a reflection of the diversity of master's programmes available as well as students' different aspirations, motivations, learning needs and personal circumstances.

Nonetheless, all master's degree graduates have in-depth and advanced knowledge and understanding of their subject and/or profession, informed by current practice, scholarship and research. This will include a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject and/or profession; critical skills; knowledge of professional responsibility, integrity and ethics; and the ability to reflect on their own progress as a learner.

Graduates of research master's are likely to be further characterised by their ability to study independently in the subject, and to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to advanced scholarship in the subject. Graduates of specialist or advanced study master's are likely to be characterised in particular by their ability to complete a research project in the subject, which in some subjects includes a critical review of existing literature or other scholarly outputs. Meanwhile, graduates of professional or practice master's are able to apply research and critical perspectives to professional situations, both practical and theoretical, and to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to their professional activities.

Graduates of all types of master's degrees are equipped to enter a variety of types of employment (either subject-specific or generalist) or to continue academic study at a higher level, for example a doctorate (provided that they meet the necessary entry requirements). Graduates of professional/practice master's programmes in particular possess the skills and experience necessary for some professions or areas of practice.
2 Forms of master's degrees

2.1 Forms of master's degrees

The descriptions of master's degrees, by category, that follow are intended to be indicative rather than definitive. It is recognised that master's degrees may combine characteristics from different categories and that degrees bearing similar titles may be considered to fall within more than one category.

A summary of common master's degree titles, and the categories to which they generally relate, is included in Appendix 1.

Category 1: Research master's degrees

Examples of research master's include the MPhil, MLitt and the M by Res.

Research master's degrees usually aim to prepare students for the next stage in a research career, whether pursuing a further research programme or entering research-based employment; or to enable those undertaking the programme to contribute towards research in the subject.

Programmes in this category often attract entrants with a bachelor's degree with honours in a cognate or closely related subject, or entrants who have acquired experience through work or other means that enables staff responsible for admissions to be confident of the candidate's ability to succeed in the programme.

The following characteristics are often associated with research master's programmes.

- The student conducts a research project through independent study.
- They include research methods training, which may be provided through 'taught' content modules.
- Assessment is specific to the individual and usually requires a dissertation or thesis, or other output, such as an artefact, performance or musical composition. The thesis is commonly defended in an oral examination. Where students must successfully complete 'taught' modules are part of a research master's degree, the assessment of those components may be separate from the overall assessment.
- The programme fits the description of a research master's given in the Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

Category 2: Specialised or advanced study master's degrees

Examples of specialised or advance study master's include the MSc, the MA, the MRes and some integrated master's (see section 2.2).

Specialised or advanced study master's degrees usually aim to prepare students for the next stage in their careers, whether that is further academic or professional study, or entering or progressing within employment of different kinds.

Programmes in this category often attract entrants who have a background in the subject or a related subject area, acquired through previous study (a bachelor's degree with honours or equivalent) and entrants who have acquired experience through work or other means that enables staff responsible for admissions to be confident of the candidate's ability to succeed in the programme.

In the case of integrated master's degrees, students may enroll directly onto the integrated master's programme or enroll on the associated bachelor's programme in
the first instance and transfer to the master's programme after demonstrating satisfactory academic progress.

The following characteristics are often associated with specialist or advanced study programmes.

- They are usually predominantly composed of structured learning opportunities (are 'taught'). Frequently, at least a third of the programme is devoted to a research project, leading to a dissertation or the production of other output such as an artefact, performance or musical composition.
- They include research methods training, which may be provided in a range of different ways (for example, through content modules).
- In the case of integrated master's degrees, master's level study is integrated with study at honours degree level within a single programme. The first two characteristics above apply to the master's level part of the overall award.
- Related awards, such as postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma, will often be offered as stages in the progression to a specialised/advanced study master's degree to facilitate continuing professional development at different stages of a professional career.

Category 3: Professional or practice master's degrees

Examples of professional or practice master's include the MBA, MDiv, LLM and MSW, post-experience MAAs and MScs and some integrated master's (see section 2.2).

Professional or practice master's degrees usually aim to enable graduates to qualify for entry into a profession, subject to any further conditions required by the PSRB; or to provide development opportunities related to particular professions or employment settings.

Programmes in this category (which are not integrated programmes) often attract entrants with a bachelor's degree with honours or equivalent, or experience that may or may not be directly relevant to the particular profession. Entrants may have acquired experience through work or other means that enables staff responsible for admissions to be confident of the candidate's ability to succeed in the programme. Some professional/practice master's will require entrants to be engaged in particular professions as a condition of entry to the programme.

The following characteristics are often associated with professional or practice master's.

- Learning tends to be structured, and programme structure may be developed in collaboration with the relevant PSRB or employer, and may include practical elements, such as fieldwork, placements or other opportunities for work-based learning, as well as a project undertaken through independent study.
- They include research methods training, which may be provided in a range of different ways (for example, through content modules).
- In the case of integrated master's degrees that fall within this type, master's level study is integrated with study at honours degree level within a single programme. The second characteristic above applies to the master's level part of the overall award.
- They may be a prerequisite for registration or entry to a profession in accordance with the requirements of the PSRB that recognises or accredits the award.
- Related awards, such as postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma, are often offered as stages in the progression to a professional/practice master's award to facilitate continuing professional development at different stages of a professional career.
2.2 Integrated master's degrees

Integrated master's degrees are common in science, mathematics and engineering but are also used in other subjects and delivered through a programme that combines study at the level of a bachelor's degree with honours with study at master's level during the latter stages of the programme. As such, a student usually graduates with a master's degree after a continuous four-year (or five-year in Scotland) programme of study. If a work placement is included, the time taken to complete the programme may be extended.

Integrated master's degree programmes typically include study equivalent to at least one full-time academic year at level 7 of The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)/Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 11 on the The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS) (for example, at master's level). Thus, study at bachelor's level is integrated with study at master's level. Programmes are designed to meet the qualification descriptors in full at level 6 of the FHEQ/SCQF level 10 on the FQHEIS; and level 7 of the FHEQ/SCQF level 11 on the FQHEIS.

As the table in Appendix 1 illustrates, integrated master's degrees can occur across all three of the categories of master's described above.

There are also examples of master's degrees that are delivered through an integrated programme of study that includes a three-year doctoral degree. In such cases, a student graduates with a doctoral degree after a single, four-year (minimum) programme of study, to which they are able to progress provided that they achieve the master's degree outcomes at the required standard.

Further information on the integrated master's degree is available in the Qualifications Frameworks.

2.3 Other qualifications at master's level

Qualifications in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science

Primary qualifications in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science generally include study equivalent to at least one full-time academic year at level 7 of the FHEQ/SCQF level 11 on the FQHEIS. They are designed to meet in full the Qualifications Framework descriptors for both bachelor's degrees with honours and master's degrees, and therefore are master's level qualifications. However, for historical reasons they retain the title 'bachelor'. For further information, see the Qualifications Frameworks.

Postgraduate certificates and diplomas

While this document focuses on master's degrees, much of the information provided about master's degrees can also apply to postgraduate certificates and diplomas. These qualifications are located at the same academic level as master's degrees in the Qualifications Frameworks but involve a lower overall volume of learning (and credit where credit is used). They are often used in the context of initial and continuing professional development. Master's degrees may incorporate progression through postgraduate certificate and diploma stages.

Further information on the nature of postgraduate certificates and diplomas, and their relationship to master's degrees, is available in the Qualifications Frameworks.
3 Content, structure and delivery of master's degrees

3.1 Content

Higher education providers determine the content of a master's degree in terms of the knowledge and understanding, expertise and skills that the student is intended to acquire. Often master's degrees do not fall within traditional subject boundaries that are recognisable at previous academic levels of study; they may also be highly specialised and near the boundaries of current knowledge.

Some subject communities have developed Subject Benchmark Statements for master's awards in particular areas, which may offer guidance around programme content.5

3.2 Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning methods used in master's degrees are diverse. Providers have traditionally distinguished between master's degrees that are awarded on the basis of an independent, though supervised, research project undertaken by the student, and those for which structured learning contributes the majority of the material to be assessed. However, any master's degree may draw upon a combination of methods of delivery as appropriate to the programme's overall aims.

Flexible and distance learning are common, in particular for professional or practice master's.

Many master's degrees, and especially those aimed at initial or continuing professional development, involve learning that takes place in a professional or practice environment.

All master's degree involve training in research methods.

Further guidance on methods of teaching and learning may be found in Subject Benchmark Statements. Although most are aimed at bachelor's degrees with honours, the guidance on teaching and learning may also be helpful to those dealing with master's degrees. Master's degree programmes will typically feature a greater emphasis on methods involving independent study leading towards a dissertation or other project-based work.

3.3 Assessment

Assessment methods are also diverse and vary significantly depending upon the overall aims of a particular programme.

Most master's degrees include a research project, leading to the production of a dissertation or other output, but this is not the case in all master's.

Programmes assess not only academic skills but also other skills and attributes, including, where relevant, the requirements of any professional body that recognises or accredits the award. The descriptors in the Qualifications Frameworks set out the broad level of skills and competencies that master's students are expected to achieve.

As above, further guidance on methods of assessment may be found in Subject Benchmark Statements.

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3.4 Volume of learning and credit

While the nature of a master's degree is not determined by the volume of credit associated with it (and not all UK higher education providers use credit), the allocation of credit provides information about the amount of learning and the academic demands of that learning. As such, it may assist in decisions about academic progression between programmes or from one academic level to another.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland a master's degree will have a typical minimum of 180 credits, of which at least 150 will be at master's level on the FHEQ. For an integrated master's a credit allocation of 480 with at least 120 at master's level on the FHEQ is identified.

In Scotland, the FQHEIS identifies a minimum of 180 credits for a master's degree, of which at least 150 should be at master's level on the FQHEIS. The integrated master's has a higher overall volume of credit than similar awards in the rest of the UK, which reflects the longer, four-year bachelor's with honours degree in Scotland. In Scotland, the integrated master's typically attracts 600 credits, of which at least 120 should be at master's level on the FQHEIS.

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), developed by the European Commission, is a system for the use of academic credit aimed at facilitating student mobility in Europe. The QF-EHEA identifies typical ECTS credit values associated with master's (second cycle) qualifications. Master's degrees have a minimum of 60 ECTS credits (120 UK credits) and typically have 90-120 ECTS credits (180-240 UK credits).

For the award of ECTS credits, the learning outcomes of a qualification must be consistent with the relevant outcomes identified in the qualification descriptor for the end-of-cycle award (the 'Dublin Descriptors') set out in the QF-EHEA. For those seeking further information, a revised users' guide to ECTS was published in 2015. In addition, the UK Higher Education International Unit has published guidance on the relationship between UK arrangements for academic credit and ECTS.

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6 See: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/academic-credit.
7 Available at: www.ehea.info/Uploads/QF/050520_Framework_qualifications.pdf.
8 In everyday practice, as identified in the Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Guidance on Academic Credit Arrangements in Higher Education in England (2008), two UK credits are equivalent to one ECTS credit.
Related guidance and further references

This Statement is a component of the Quality Code, Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards.

Those interested in the academic standards of master's degrees should read this Statement alongside other components of Part A and especially the Qualifications Frameworks. As this Statement is concerned with master's degrees, it relates particularly to the 'Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 on the FHEQ and SCQF level 11 on the FQHEIS: master's degree', which is in section 4 of the Qualifications Frameworks.

Those interested in and/or responsible for the design, delivery and review of master's programmes should read this document alongside the Quality Code, Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality, which applies equally to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Those interested in and/or responsible for the design, delivery and review of research master's programmes will find it particularly helpful to refer to the Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

Further guidelines, references and resources

ECTS Users' Guide

Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)

www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Academic-Credit-Framework.pdf

QAA, Subject Benchmark Statements
www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements

QAA Scotland, Enhancement Themes: Learning from International Practice in the Taught Postgraduate Student Experience
www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/sheec/learning-from-international-practice/taught-postgraduate-student-experience

UK Higher Education Europe Unit, guidance on the relationship between UK arrangements for academic credit and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/ects_en.htm
Appendix 1: Summary of master's degree titles

The table below contains an indicative list of some of the most commonly used award titles with their abbreviations, and brief descriptions of characteristics with which they are often associated.

The table is intended to serve as a quick reference guide to UK master's degree qualification titles. However, it is important to note that, although certain titling conventions are specified in the Qualifications Frameworks, there are no nationally agreed definitions of master's award titles. The ways in which titles are used vary depending on the degree-awarding body, and individual providers are best placed to explain their own master's degrees in detail.11

For further information about titling conventions set out in the Qualifications Frameworks, see: www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full title</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Key characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>The MA involves specialist study in a particular subject or subjects. It is most commonly associated with the arts, humanities and some social sciences. The title can be used across the three types of master's degree described in this Statement: research master's; specialised or advanced study master's; professional or practice master's. If used for a master's completed by research in a relevant subject the qualification may be titled 'MA by research'. If used for a master's in a specialist or advanced area of study the relevant subject is often included in the full title of the award (see below) If used for a professional or practice based master's the profession or type of practice may be included in the full title of the award</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
The following awards bear the title MA but fall outside of the scope of this document.

The Master of Arts granted by the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. This is not covered by the Statement because it is not an academic qualification.

The Master of Arts with Honours (MA (Hons)), used in some faculties in a small number of universities in Scotland for the Scottish Bachelor's Degree with Honours. This is not covered by the Statement because it relates to a bachelor's, not a master's degree

11 There may be exceptions where the title of an award is protected by a PSRB.
| Master of Science | MSc | The MSc involves specialist study in a particular subject or subjects. It is most commonly associated with science, technology, engineering, mathematics and some social sciences.

The title can be used across the three types of master’s degree described in this Statement: research master’s; specialised or advanced study master’s; professional or practice master’s.

If used for a master's completed by research in a relevant subject the qualification may be titled 'MSc by research'.

If used for a master's in a specialist or advanced area of study the relevant subject is often be included in the full title of the award (see below).

If used for a professional or practice based master's the profession or type of practice may be included in the full title of the award.

An alternative abbreviation used for some master of science qualifications (such as some integrated master's degrees) is MSci. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Master of Research | MRes | The Master of Research is a specialised or advanced study master's degree during which the student develops a deeper understanding of the core principles of research as well as the ability to conduct research.

It is different from the Master by Research because the focus is on learning about research itself rather than studying a particular subject through research; programmes are usually oriented around structured learning. |
| Master by Research | MbyRes or MRes or ResM | The Master by Research is a research degree and is similar to MPhil and some MLitt awards (see below).

The student spends the majority of their programme undertaking independent research with supervision and guidance. They may attend some structured courses to learn about research methods. However, it differs from the Master of Research because the focus is on a specific subject, studied through research methods. |
### Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

**Note:**
As a research degree, the MRes falls within the scope of the Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*.

This sets out the Expectation that all providers are required to meet to assure and enhance the quality of their research degrees. Please refer to the Quality Code, *Chapter B11* for further information.

The MPhil is a research master’s degree and may be similar to the Master by Research and some MLitt awards (see above).

The MPhil may be linked to a doctorate. Some providers may allow students to register for an MPhil as an entry qualification for a doctorate.

**Note:** As a research degree, the MPhil falls within the scope of the Quality Code Part B, *Chapter B11: Research degrees*. This sets out the Expectation that all providers are required to meet to assure and enhance the quality of their research degrees. Please refer to *Chapter B11* for further information.

### Master of Letters (MLitt)

**Note:**
As a research degree, the MLitt falls within the scope of the Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*.

This sets out the Expectation that all providers are required to meet to assure and enhance the quality of their research degrees. Please refer to the Quality Code, *Chapter B11* for further information.

The MLitt is usually but not always a research master’s degree and is often similar to the master's by research and the MPhil (see above).

### Master of [subject name] (M[subject name])

A range of master's degree titles are used that include specific subject names.

This approach is especially common for integrated master's, where a wide range of examples exist, including the following:

- Master of Business (MBus)
- *Master of Chemistry (MChem)*
- *Master of Computing (MComp)*
- *Master of Engineering (MEng)*
- Master of Geology (MGeol)
- Master of Law (MLaw)
- Master of Liberal Arts (MLibArts)
- *Master of Mathematics (MMath)*
- *Master of Mathematics and Statistics (MMathStat)*
- *Master of Optometry (MOptom)*
| *Master of Physics (MPhys)  
| *Master of Theology (MTh). |

A similar approach is used for some professional or practice master's degrees. Examples include the following:

- Master in Arts (MArt)
- *Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Design (MDes)
- *Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Master of Education (MEd)
- Master of Enterprise (MEnt)
- Master of Fine Art (MFA)
- Master of Jurisprudence (MJur)
- Master of Midwifery (MMidwifery)
- Master of Music (MMus)
- Master of Pharmacy (MPharm)
- Master of Planning (MPlan)
- Master of Public Administration (MPA)
- Master of Social Work (MSW)
- Professional Master's (MProf).

*Awards marked with an asterisk are discussed in more detail in the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement. The majority of these statements focus on bachelor's degrees with honours, but some also cover master's level qualifications. Please see the individual statements for further information.
Appendix 2: Members of the advisory groups for the Master’s Degree Characteristics

QAA is grateful to members of the Postgraduate Advisory Group for support in revising and updating this document in 2015.

Professor Veronica Bamber  
Queen Margaret University
Dr Paul Bennett  
Higher Education Academy
Dr Iain Cameron  
Research Councils UK
Gill Clarke  
UK Council for Graduate Education
Tish Bourke/Emma Creasey/  
HEFCE
Brooke Storer-Church (alternates)
Professor Rosemary Deem  
Royal Holloway, University of London
Professor Pam Denicolo  
Universities of Surrey and Reading
Shane Dowle  
ARC/University of Surrey
Dr Michael Gilmore  
Durham University
Louisa Green  
London School of Economics
Dr Susan Grey  
University of Hertfordshire
Professor Sharon Huttly  
Lancaster University
Dr Janet Metcalfe  
Vitae
Professor Louise Morley  
University of Sussex
Professor Alan Reed  
University of Greenwich
Dr Adam Wright  
NUS
Dr Anne Rixom  
Nottingham Trent University
Dr Julian White  
White Rose University Consortium
Dr Cat Ball  
Biochemical Society and Society of Biology
Dr Amanda Rouse  
University of Cardiff

Membership of the external development group for Master’s Degree Characteristics 2010 (details as published in the 2010 version).

Professor Bob Munn (Chair)  
Former Vice-President (Teaching and Learning)  
University of Manchester

Dr Laura Bellingham  
QAA

Professor Bruce Brown  
Pro Vice-Chancellor Research  
University of Brighton

Ms Gill Clarke  
Director, Education Support Unit  
University of Bristol, and formerly QAA

Professor Peter Main  
Director, Education and Science  
Institute of Physics

Professor Simon van Heyningen  
Former Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching)  
University of Edinburgh

Professor Michael Worton  
Vice-Provost (Academic and International)  
University College London
Characteristics Statement

Doctoral Degree

September 2015

UK Quality Code for Higher Education
Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards
# Contents

**About this Statement** ........................................................................................................................................... 1

How can I use this document? ......................................................................................................................... 1

1 **Context, purposes and graduate characteristics** ....................................................................................... 3

1.1 Context for the doctorate .......................................................................................................................... 3

1.2 The doctorate in Europe and internationally ......................................................................................... 4

1.3 Purposes of the doctorate ....................................................................................................................... 4

1.4 Characteristics of doctoral graduates .................................................................................................... 4

2 **Forms of doctorate** .................................................................................................................................. 6

2.1 UK doctoral awards and their main characteristics ............................................................................... 6

   Category 1: Subject specialist doctorates ................................................................................................. 6

   Integrated subject specialist doctorates .................................................................................................. 7

   Category 2: Doctorates by publication .................................................................................................... 7

   Category 3: Professional and practice-based (or practitioner) doctorates ........................................... 8

2.2 Higher doctorates ...................................................................................................................................... 10

3 **Key features of the content, structure and delivery of doctoral degrees** ............................................. 11

3.1 Overview .................................................................................................................................................. 11

3.2 Entry to, and progression through, doctoral degrees ............................................................................ 11

3.3 The research environment ..................................................................................................................... 12

3.4 The role of supervision .......................................................................................................................... 12

3.5 Professional development for doctoral candidates ............................................................................... 13

4 **Doctoral outcomes and assessment** .......................................................................................................... 15

4.1 Progress and review ............................................................................................................................... 15

4.2 Submission .............................................................................................................................................. 15

4.3 Final assessment ..................................................................................................................................... 15

4.4 Credit for doctoral degrees ................................................................................................................... 17

Related guidance and further references ...................................................................................................... 18

Appendix 1: Summary of doctoral award titles ............................................................................................. 20

Appendix 2: Members of the advisory groups for the Doctoral Degree Characteristics ..................................... 22
About this Statement

This document is a Qualification Characteristics Statement about the characteristics of doctoral degrees. It describes the distinctive features of the doctorate in the UK. It becomes a reference point for the purposes of reviews coordinated by QAA from August 2016.

Qualification Characteristics Statements are a component of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards. Expectation A1 requires that:

In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

[...]

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics [...].

Characteristics Statements are closely linked to The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (the Qualifications Frameworks)¹ (also included in Expectation A1 of the Quality Code). They complement and contextualise the information provided within the Qualifications Frameworks, providing more detail about the distinctive features of qualifications at particular levels of the frameworks and/or of qualifications at any level, which are awarded in a particular way.

As this Statement is concerned with doctoral degrees, it relates particularly to the 'Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8 on the FHEQ and SCQF level 12 on the FQHEIS: doctoral degree', which is in section 4 of the Qualifications Frameworks.

This version of the Statement forms its second edition, following initial publication in 2011.

How can I use this document?

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery (especially supervision) and review of doctoral programmes
- a prospective student thinking about undertaking a doctorate
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of doctoral graduates
- a higher education provider outside of the UK, thinking of entering into a joint doctoral arrangement with a UK university.

Those interested in and/or responsible for the design, delivery and review of doctoral programmes should read this document alongside the Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees. Current doctoral candidates and those interested in undertaking doctoral study may find it helpful to refer to The UK Doctorate: A Guide for Current and Prospective Candidates.²

Unlike the Quality Code, Chapter B11, this document does not cover research master's degrees such as the MbyRes or MPhil, except where they form part of a doctoral programme. For further information see the Master's Degree Characteristics Statement.

Throughout this Statement we refer to doctoral candidates rather than doctoral students. The consensus is that this is the most suitable term to use for this Statement. However, it

¹ The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2843.
should be noted that in some higher education providers a distinction is made between 'student' and 'candidate' depending on whether the individual has successfully completed some kind of transfer of status stage, and some providers may use words other than 'student' or 'candidate', for example 'researcher' to describe an individual undertaking a research degree or 'participant' to refer to someone undertaking a professional doctorate. It is recognised that the use of the term 'student' is at odds with many mainland European countries where the doctoral candidate is considered to be an early career member of staff. Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Statement can be found in QAA's glossary. QAA has also published a general guide to quality assurance in higher education.

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3 The QAA glossary is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary.
4 A general guide to quality assurance can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality.
1 Context, purposes and graduate characteristics

1.1 Context for the doctorate

The doctoral degree is one of the most well-known and well-established postgraduate qualifications. The PhD (or DPhil in some universities) is the main doctoral qualification in the UK. Since the early 1990s, however, the form of the UK doctorate has diversified, leading to differently structured degrees to accommodate the needs of increasingly diverse professions employing doctoral graduates. Doctorates other than the PhD have evolved leading to the emergence of the titles 'professional' doctorate, and 'practice-based' or 'practice-led' doctorate.

Initially, and beginning with the Doctor of Education (EdD), professional doctorates in different subjects emerged catering for employed professionals returning mid-career to undertake doctoral study. Because of the need for these candidates to re-engage with research methodologies while undertaking employment, they had a significantly different structure from the PhD and included intensive taught modules at the beginning of the programme of study. Many professional and practice-based doctorates have always included structured elements such as lectures and seminars, and have an emphasis on acquiring research and professional skills in addition to conducting original research.

Traditionally, the PhD in the UK has followed an apprentice/master model, but increased attention to research and generic skills training for all doctoral candidates has emerged since 2003 (see section 3), and as a consequence the PhD has also become more structured, especially in the earlier years of study. Major funders of research training, such as the Research Councils UK and the European Commission, have explicit but flexible requirements for the development opportunities available to the candidates they support financially through studentships.

All UK doctorates, regardless of their form, continue to require the main focus of the candidate’s work to demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge in their subject, field or profession, through original research or the original application of existing knowledge or understanding.

Doctorates are delivered through a range of models and modes. Part-time and distance learning are common.

Where doctoral degrees aim to prepare candidates for entry to a particular field of employment, practice or profession, or for progression or transfer within it, a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) external to the provider may accredit the programme. Graduates of such programmes may be eligible for a particular professional status or may be permitted to enter a further period of practice, study or examination leading to the profession (for example, the EngD may be accredited as meeting the academic requirement for further learning for registration as a Chartered Engineer through the Engineering Council).

PSRBs may be involved in the design and delivery of doctoral degree programmes, especially professional doctorates. They may contribute to the design of any structured elements of the doctorate, including skills training components, and to assessment criteria. Members of PSRBs may also act as external examiners of doctoral candidates. These contributions help to ensure the consistency of outcomes for doctoral graduates in particular subject areas, and in some cases to maintain standards in a relevant profession.

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5 The 'apprenticeship' model dates back to the early nineteenth century, where the PhD candidate followed a form of apprenticeship and was normally awarded the degree in middle age. It is closely associated with F. W. H. Alexander von Humboldt, the German/Prussian physical geographer and anthropologist.
1.2 The doctorate in Europe and internationally

The UK actively contributes to the development of the doctorate worldwide while ensuring that global changes are taken into account in UK policy-making and practice.

It is important to benchmark the UK doctorate in a global environment in order to promote mobility and to strengthen career opportunities for UK doctoral graduates. Key factors affecting the reputation of UK doctorates include having in place adequate and rigorous quality assurance mechanisms for doctoral programmes, and the ability to demonstrate consistency of standards across varied programmes. This document provides for a comparison between doctorates and demonstrates the equivalence among doctorates of all kinds.

The UK doctorate in all its forms has been confirmed as being in alignment with European-wide guidance, in particular with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. This independent verification involving colleagues from non-UK European countries, as well as from the UK, recognised UK qualifications as having Europe-wide equivalence, which supports the mobility of graduates within Europe. Such mobility continues to increase through programmes such as the EU Erasmus Mundus and Marie Skłodowska-Curie initiatives, and a growing number of UK universities offer joint or jointly supervised doctoral programmes with non-UK European partner providers.

1.3 Purposes of the doctorate

Doctoral degrees are the most individually distinct of the academic qualifications available because of their roots in research and the pursuit of knowledge, and the requirement for the candidate to produce work demonstrating original thought, based on independent study. Whereas until the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries the primary purpose of acquiring a doctorate in the UK was for entry to the academic profession, now this is just one of many options for doctoral graduates, who enter diverse jobs across all sectors, bringing their research skills to bear in their own professional context. It is now the case that most academic staff in UK universities have a doctoral degree; this is an expected qualification for most new entrants to academia and contributes to the ongoing high quality research output from higher education providers.

1.4 Characteristics of doctoral graduates

The Qualifications Frameworks level descriptor for the doctoral degree includes generic information about what all holders of the doctorate will be able to do, and the qualities and skills that they will have (see the Qualifications Frameworks for details).

Beyond these core attributes, doctoral researchers will have had diverse life experiences and varying opportunities during their doctoral studies, thus each graduates with a unique range of attributes. However, all doctoral graduates should be able to:

- search for, discover, access, retrieve, sift, interpret, analyse, evaluate, manage, conserve and communicate an ever-increasing volume of knowledge from a range of sources
- think critically about problems to produce innovative solutions and create new knowledge

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• plan, manage and deliver projects, selecting and justifying appropriate methodological processes while recognising, evaluating and minimising the risks involved and impact on the environment
• exercise professional standards in research and research integrity, and engage in professional practice, including ethical, legal, and health and safety aspects, bringing enthusiasm, perseverance and integrity to bear on their work activities
• support, collaborate with and lead colleagues, using a range of teaching, communication and networking skills to influence practice and policy in diverse environments
• appreciate the need to engage in research with impact and to be able to communicate it to diverse audiences, including the public
• build relationships with peers, senior colleagues, students and stakeholders with sensitivity to equality, diversity and cultural issues.

Furthermore, doctoral researchers are increasingly being encouraged to develop their foreign language and enterprise skills, and to cultivate business acumen.

All doctoral graduates will have developed during the course of their research additional specialist knowledge within their discipline, while those who have studied a professional doctorate are likely to have been required to have particular professional experience that informs the topic of their research studies. They may well also have been required to engage in further study related to that professional field as part of their doctorate.

Finally, doctoral graduates are able to prepare, plan and manage their own career development while knowing when and where to draw on support.
2 Forms of doctorate

2.1 UK doctoral awards and their main characteristics

The descriptions by category provided below are intended to show both the similarities that exist among doctoral awards and their defining characteristics as individual qualifications, so that it is possible to distinguish between them and the different purposes they fulfil. The descriptions are not comprehensive but are intended to give a flavour of what makes each category of award distinctive.

A summary of common doctoral award titles, and the categories to which they can relate, is included in Appendix 1.

Category 1: Subject specialist doctorates

An example of a subject specialist doctorate is the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD or DPhil, used interchangeably).

Subject specialist doctorates are by far the most common form of doctorate in the UK. They are awarded on the basis of registration on a formal programme of study offered by a higher education provider, and an output that constitutes original research as defined by the academic community into which the candidate wishes to be admitted.

Characteristics often associated with subject specialist doctorates awards are as follows.

- Programmes are based largely on a supervised research project, during which the candidate is registered by a higher education provider. All doctoral candidates are required to make an original contribution to knowledge by conducting an independent research project; the form this takes usually depends on the candidate's academic subject and the degree-awarding body's regulations.

- Candidates follow structured programmes that include both research and generic skills training. This emphasis on personal and professional development emerged particularly during the period of ring-fenced 'Roberts' funding at the beginning of the twenty-first century, managed by Research Councils UK, and continued by initiatives such as the Researcher Development Framework.\(^8\) Acquisition of these skills, together with evaluation of the candidate's subject-specific research skills, is generally monitored or assessed through annual progress reviews. Whether or not the structured elements are formally assessed, examination of the research degree itself focuses on the quality and originality of the candidate's thesis or equivalent, and his/her defence of it at the oral examination ('viva' or 'viva voce').

- Practical work, such as in the creative and performing arts, may well form part of a candidate's output. The form of artefacts and outputs of a practical nature, sometimes involving multimedia, relates to the candidate's subject area rather than to the form of degree programme.

- In the final assessment, candidates are assessed on their thesis, portfolio, artefact or composition (the latter two normally, and the portfolio sometimes, are accompanied by a critical commentary on the work), and by an oral examination. A minimum of two examiners are usually present at the oral examination, usually one internal and a minimum of one external to the higher education provider. Some universities allow the supervisor to attend the oral examination, with the candidate's agreement, and many universities now involve an independent chair or

\(^{8}\) See: www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf.
convenor to assure fairness and consistency of practice. Others record all vivas to ensure an accurate record is kept, for the benefits of candidates and staff.

**Integrated subject specialist doctorates**

Some universities offer ‘integrated’ programmes in a range of subjects. Such degrees were encouraged by the HEFCE-funded New Route PhD initiative in 2000, and while the use of the term ‘New Route PhD’ has declined across the UK, the integrated doctorate model has persisted in some subject areas and at some providers.

These programmes are distinguished by the fact that they are more structured in nature, normally with a choice of taught modules and a range of research topic options within the field of study, and include formal lectures, research seminars and workshops at master's or doctoral level during the first year or two years. To accommodate this requirement for taught components, integrated doctorates are often of four years' duration, full time.

The supervised research project may begin at the point of registration and be undertaken in parallel with the structured taught elements, or may depend on successful completion of taught elements and be undertaken in later years.

Integrated PhDs normally offer exit awards at master's level based on successful completion of taught modules. If the doctorate is in a scientific discipline, they may offer candidates the opportunity to move into a specialist research area in another scientific discipline.

Although some integrated doctoral candidates may have to pass taught elements, the overall assessment for the award is submission of a satisfactory thesis, portfolio or similar output and successfully passing an oral examination with independent examiners, as for all subject specialist study programmes.

Further information about integrated programmes, including programmes where study at master's level is integrated with study at doctoral level, is available in the *Master's Degree Characteristics Statement*.

**Category 2: Doctorates by publication**

Examples of doctorates by publication include the PhD by Publication or the PhD by Published Work (s).9

Different research degree-awarding bodies have different eligibility requirements and may award this qualification infrequently. They may also differentiate between retrospective publication (published before registration) and concurrent/prospective publications (published within the period of registration).

Characteristics often associated with doctorate by retrospective publication awards are as follows.

- Normally awarded on the basis of a thesis containing a series of peer-reviewed academic papers, books, cited works or other materials that have been placed in the public domain as articles that have been published, accepted for publication, exhibited or performed, accompanied by a substantial commentary linking the published work and outlining its coherence and significance, together with an oral examination at which the candidate defends his/her research.

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9 See: [www.ukcge.ac.uk/pdf/2015%20UKCGE-The%20Role%20of%20Publications%20and%20Other%20Artefacts%20Book%20A5%20final.pdf](http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/pdf/2015%20UKCGE-The%20Role%20of%20Publications%20and%20Other%20Artefacts%20Book%20A5%20final.pdf)
• The candidate may not be required to register formally for the qualification or to have followed a formal programme of study towards the degree; in other cases a shorter than normal period of registration is permitted for such candidates, who may already be graduates or academic staff members of the provider, or of a partner provider.

A doctorate by prospective/concurrent publication is now offered by some providers, particularly in science and engineering subjects, the main characteristics of which are as follows:

• A candidate presents a portfolio of interconnected, published research papers contextualised by a coherent narrative, demonstrating overall an original contribution to knowledge. Such publications may include papers, chapters, monographs, books, scholarly editions of a text, technical reports, creative work in relevant areas, or other artefacts.

In the assessment of doctorates by publication, the candidate is examined on these materials and the commentary, sometimes supported by a CV. The final assessment takes the same form as outlined above for other doctorates, namely assessment of the thesis and/or portfolio and an oral examination (‘viva' or ‘viva voce').

**Category 3: Professional and practice-based (or practitioner) doctorates**

Examples of professional and practice-based (or practitioner) doctorates include the Professional Doctorate (ProfDoc).

Professional and practice-based doctorates make up a small but significant proportion of the doctoral qualifications currently on offer in the UK.

Professional and practice-based doctorates provide an opportunity for individuals to situate professional knowledge developed over time in a theoretical academic framework. As such, they have different structures from other forms of doctorate. They are often post-experience qualifications and therefore they are frequently the doctoral degree of choice for mid-career professionals. However, in some cases they are required for entry to a profession, namely as a license to practice, or undertaken for reasons other than career development.

Doctorates in which the candidate is involved in professional learning may fall in either the professional or practice-based category, depending on degree content and context, and on the candidate's circumstances. For the purposes of this Statement, information about professional and practice-based doctorates is combined in one section to avoid repetition, and because, at the macro level of doctoral characteristics with which this Statement is concerned, it is difficult to address detailed differences. This approach may not be in line with some of the current thinking about these degrees, but the document makes clear the differences between the two, where they are significant. Individual higher education providers make the final decision about whether a qualification should be described as a professional or practice-based doctorate, using defining criteria that may differ somewhat.

Titles of professional and practice-based doctorates normally reflect the subject or field of study of the candidate and thus there is considerable variation in nomenclature. However, providers normally use the convention of 'Doctor of…', for example Doctor of Education (EdD) or Doctor of Business Administration (DBA). This helps to achieve a degree of consistency, with providers making the final decisions about the titles of their academic awards in consultation with any relevant PSRBs (see Appendix 1 for further information).
UK professional doctorates are designed to meet the needs of the various professions in which they are rooted, including: business, creative arts, education, engineering, law, nursing and psychology. They can advance professional practice or use practice as a legitimate research method. Examples of professional doctorates include distinctive qualifications such as the Engineering Doctorate (EngD). EngD programmes are industry focused doctoral programmes in which the candidate or Research Engineer undertakes academic research in an industrial setting, spending the majority of their study period researching a topic set by the industry partner. A similar programme structure can be found in the Industrial PhD, which shares many of the characteristics with the EngD but the qualification title is 'Industrial PhD' and not 'doctorate'. The Research Councils are currently sponsoring candidates on these programmes through their Industrial Doctorate Centres, and the Industrial PhD is a commonly recognised qualification in mainland Europe.

The main characteristics of professional and practice-based doctorates are as follows.

- Professional and practice-based doctorates usually contain taught elements with significant lecture and seminar content, but final award of the doctorate is based on a supervised research project, projects or portfolio. In some programmes, the taught elements are assessed and either a pass/fail, or a mark or grade, is given. Such assessments may act as incremental hurdles for the candidate as part of his/her progress towards the independent research project.
- Research projects in professional doctorates are normally located within the candidate's profession or practice. In practice-based or practitioner doctorates the candidate's output involves practice-related materials. For example, in the performing arts, the output involves a written component, which complements the practice-based element (this may be shorter than the traditional PhD thesis, and includes both reflection and context), and one or more other artefacts, such as a novel (for creative writing), a portfolio of work (for art and design), or one or more performance pieces (for theatre studies, dance or music). In clinical practice-based doctorates, such as the DClinPsy or the MD, the research is likely to draw on clinical work involving clinical trials or other work with patients in the practical/clinical setting; the clinically based and academic research are then combined in the candidate's thesis or portfolio.
- Professional doctorates are rooted in an academic discipline as well as in a profession (education, engineering, law and so on). Candidates whose research arises out of practice alone, who are not working in an academically related professional field and who spend most of their time learning in their work environment rather than with the higher education provider would be more likely to complete a practice-based doctorate. In both practice-based and professional doctorate settings, the candidate's research may result directly in organisational or policy-related change.
- As for the subject specialist study doctorate, professional and practice-based doctorates are assessed through submission of a thesis or portfolio, and in the vast majority of cases an individual oral examination ('viva' or 'viva voce'). The provider's definition of whether the award is a professional or practice-based doctorate will have a bearing on the assessment criteria for the degree. In the assessment of professional and/or practice-based doctorates, similar to the PhD, examiners' criteria may include the extent to which the candidate understands current techniques in the subject, for example through demonstrating engagement with and use of research methods and how they inform professional practice.
- In the case of professional doctorates, successful completion of the degree normally leads to professional and/or organisational change that is often direct rather than achieved through the implementation of subsequent research findings.
2.2 Higher doctorates

Higher doctorates (typically the Doctor of Science, DSc or ScD, and the Doctor of Letters, DLitt) are a higher level of award than the doctorates described in this Statement. They are normally awarded by research degree-awarding bodies to staff who have earned a high reputation for research in their field through their professional practice, which may or may not have been gained in an academic institution. This Statement does not therefore apply to higher doctorates.

Individual higher education providers' regulations specify a limited range of titles for higher doctorates, which can be awarded either for a substantial body of published original research of distinction over a significant period or as an 'honorary' degree, to recognise an individual's contribution to a particular field of knowledge.
3 Key features of the content, structure and delivery of doctoral degrees

3.1 Overview

Irrespective of the type of programme, provider or subject, certain elements are key to the success of doctoral programmes: a high-quality and vibrant research environment; supervision that is appropriate to the candidate and the stage he/she has reached in the programme; access to resources and development opportunities; opportunities for peer interaction and support; demanding but fair academic standards; and the need for the candidate to take responsibility for his/her own learning and research output.

Studying for a doctorate means doing, as well as learning about, research. Doctoral education is, by nature, an individual experience. Each person's route to the degree is different when a range of factors is considered, including:

- the field in which the candidate is studying and the broad subject area, whether single subject or multidisciplinary
- the individual's experience (academic and life) before enrolling on the doctorate
- the qualification chosen
- the university/ies at which the candidate is studying, depending on whether he/she is enrolled on a degree that is jointly offered by more than one provider
- the school or department in which the candidate is based and the form in which skills training is provided
- the candidate's mode of study, for example full-time, part-time, campus-based or distance learning
- the candidate's relationship with the supervisory team, the members of which may be based in different providers, especially if a joint degree, or in collaboration with industry
- whether funding is available for the degree, and any potential requirements that the sponsor may stipulate.

This is not a comprehensive list but it begins to demonstrate the inadvisability of generalising about the educational experience of a doctoral candidate. The content, structure and engagement with a doctoral programme vary significantly according to the candidate's subject area and personal circumstances.

Doing and learning about original research provides a different experience for each individual, but every subject has clear expectations of what this means for the candidate who is working towards a doctoral qualification. In inter and multidisciplinary research contexts, for example in centres for doctoral training, subject-based expectations are combined to deliver a broad-based research training without dilution of subject-specific requirements.

3.2 Entry to, and progression through, doctoral degrees

Individual higher education providers specify entry requirements for doctoral degrees. Increasingly, doctoral candidates possess a master's degree, but in some subjects it is usual to begin a doctoral programme with a bachelor's degree or, in some circumstances, its professional equivalent.¹⁰

¹⁰ A HEFCE commissioned report, published in 2013, explores the trends in transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study, focusing on full-time first degree UK qualifiers from English higher education providers between 2002-03 and 2010-11. The report demonstrates the diversity of routes taken to postgraduate degrees, including doctorates. See: www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2013/201313/name.82612.en.html.
In some cases, candidates are initially registered for a master's degree and transfer to doctoral status at or around the end of the first year on successfully completing a formal progression event.

Other providers, sometimes to meet the needs of some international funding bodies, register candidates immediately for a doctoral programme and confirm (or otherwise) the doctoral candidate status at the first formal, usually annual, progression event.

Some doctoral degrees are structured around a '1+3' model, with candidates completing a taught master's degree before embarking on doctoral studies. This model was previously related to the funding structures used by some research councils, but the majority have now phased it out.

Some candidates are able to enter doctoral programmes on the basis of their prior professional knowledge and experience. The Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees summarises the most common acceptable routes for entry to research degree programmes.

3.3 The research environment

As is widely acknowledged and highlighted in the Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees, the quality of the research environment is critical to the provision of doctoral degree programmes. Access to an active and vibrant research environment, including contact with other researchers, is fundamental to doctoral candidates' success, irrespective of subject, mode of study, or location. Chapter B11 summarises some of the conditions that are present in high-quality research environments.

3.4 The role of supervision

The supervisor is fundamental to the support and development of the doctoral candidate. The candidate's relationship with their supervisory team is key to a successful completion of a research degree programme. In some higher education providers, supervisors may count their supervisory achievements in making a case for promotion.

Effective supervision is often linked to a candidate's ability to complete their studies within an agreed time frame, and to maintaining a high quality learning experience in doctoral programmes. The Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees emphasises the fundamental role of supervisors in maintaining quality and consistency across doctoral programmes. It promotes the use of supervisory teams, not only to provide effective support for candidates but to provide a framework in which new supervisors can gain experience alongside those with more experience.

Higher education providers offer a variety of opportunities for professional development for supervisors of doctoral candidates: some have separate induction events for new and experienced supervisors; others favour joint programmes that enable supervisors with different backgrounds and experience to learn from one another. It is also common for supervisor development to occur at school or faculty level, or in Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres, where there is a shared understanding of supervisory roles in a particular group of subject areas. There is no single model, but as the Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees makes clear, higher education providers support and encourage supervisors to engage in development opportunities.
3.5 Professional development for doctoral candidates

Professional skills development takes different forms in different higher education providers, with some being more formal than others. In some providers such programmes are compulsory (for example, successful completion of some elements being a prerequisite to graduating with a doctorate), but in the majority these are optional but strongly recommended. Some are credit-based, but most are not. The approach in every provider that awards research degrees is informed by the Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees, which states that higher education providers ‘provide research students with appropriate opportunities for developing research, personal and professional skills’.

Providers give their doctoral candidates opportunities to acquire and develop skills and competence in a range of areas, including: research skills and techniques, research environment, research management, personal effectiveness, communication skills, networking and teamworking, and career management, as outlined in the Researcher Development Statement,11 a summary of the Researcher Development Framework,12 designed to integrate more effectively the requirements of doctoral researchers with those of other researchers at different career stages. The Researcher Development Framework ‘describes the knowledge, behaviours and attitudes of researchers and encourages them to aspire to excellence through achieving higher levels of development’.

Doctoral candidates in the UK are offered a variety of professional development opportunities during their programme. Specifically, they undertake research methods training relevant to their subject area, together with personal skills development that is an important part of preparing for the next stage in their careers.

Subject-specific research methods training often occurs at department or faculty level, whereas professional skills may be developed by being part of a wider network. Depending on the provider’s context, professional development may take place in a graduate school, doctoral college, Doctoral Training Partnership, Centre for Doctoral Training, or other organisational structure. Candidates who embark on doctoral programmes when already in employment normally also experience professional development in the work context. Below are summarised some of the most frequently occurring structures designed to support professional development for doctoral candidates.

Graduate schools

These play an important part in the delivery of personal, professional and career development skills training for doctoral candidates.13 Some combine taught and research postgraduate students, others are solely for research degree students doctoral candidates. The structure and coherence of the graduate school structure, whether single-subject, at faculty or department level, or at provider level (single provider or as part of a collaboration), also helps to encourage timely progress and completion and to provide postgraduates with a peer group network. Graduate schools may have a geographical location or may be virtual, with postgraduates from multiple providers sometimes being part of a collaborative and possibly interdisciplinary graduate school.

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11 See: www.vitae.ac.uk/rds.
12 See: www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf.
13 The UK Council for Graduate Education has tracked the development of graduate schools, beginning with a survey in 1994, at which time such schools were a ‘relatively new phenomenon’ (Denicolo et al, 2010) in the UK, undertaking a further review in 2004 (Woodward et al), and more recently conducting a major review (UK Council for Graduate Education Review of Graduate Schools in the UK, Denicolo et al, 2010).
**Doctoral colleges**
These provide training and support for postgraduate students, usually at a university or cross-faculty level. They may bring together various graduate schools or training centres and often provide a framework for central management of doctoral education.

**Doctoral Training Partnerships**
These provide training for students across a broad range of subjects determined by a research organisation or consortia of research organisations. Partnerships involve strategic engagement between the research organisation(s) and the Research Council funder(s) in developing the overall programme of training.

**Centres for Doctoral Training**
Centres provide training for students within focused research areas, often defined strategically by the Research Council funder(s) from the outset. Centres can be focused on academic or industrially relevant research topics, or a mix of both.

Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres for Doctoral Training\(^\text{14}\) give students the opportunity to develop and carry out their doctoral-level research and may offer the added benefit of taught courses to give them a solid background in and knowledge of their chosen subject. They also provide a breadth of professional development training opportunities to enhance students' capability and competencies to develop a world-class, highly skilled workforce. In some programmes there is a mandatory requirement for doctoral candidates to participate in flexible professional internships during their doctorate. The objective is to support employability, in particular to deepen the awareness of employers to doctoral candidates and alert them to their skills and attributes. It is also intended to widen candidates' experience beyond academia to alert them to the types of careers in which their research training could have an impact.

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\(^{14}\) For further details see Research Councils UK, Research Council Common Terminology for Postgraduate Training, see: [www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/skills/RCUKCommonTerminologyforPostgraduateTraining2013.pdf](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/skills/RCUKCommonTerminologyforPostgraduateTraining2013.pdf).
4 Doctoral outcomes and assessment

Assessment is at the heart of doctoral degree standards. The candidate’s achievements and research-relevant attributes are tested through the final doctoral assessment, which includes a thorough review of the submitted written materials (and artefacts if appropriate), followed by an oral examination (‘viva’ or ‘viva voce’), at which the candidate defends the thesis. The importance of the single major research project as the principal output of a doctoral degree is demonstrated by the rigour and format of the final assessment process.

4.1 Progress and review

Progression towards achieving a doctorate is assessed during the programme, both at formal progression panels, when gaps in knowledge or skills are identified, and informally through discussions with the candidate’s supervisor. Although passing module assessments is a formal part of progression through the programme for some candidates, these milestones do not necessarily contribute to the overall assessment of the doctorate or to the award of the qualification; rather, they represent gateways for progression to the next stage of the programme. In all doctoral programmes there is some form of regular progress review, sometimes an annual progress review or similar, at which each candidate demonstrates his or her suitability to move on to the next stage. At some higher education providers, or in some subject areas, the candidate's progress is reviewed after the first six months, but the first progress review often occurs at the end of the first year (for full-time candidates); as a result of this the candidate’s status may change to something more formal, which confirms their candidature. Normally, a neutral assessor or panel of assessors is involved in formal progress reviews, as well as the candidate’s supervisor (as an observer). Regular reviews are an important part of the learning process in doctoral programmes as they provide both candidate and supervisor with useful feedback on progress. The Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees provides more detail on progress and review.

4.2 Submission

The doctoral candidate submits a substantial body of original work for assessment. This may vary in length according to the candidate’s subject. In mathematics, for example, a candidate may have developed an elegant formula to explain a long-standing problem, and the rest of the thesis, which may be relatively short, will explain the thinking behind the problem-solving: how the solution has been arrived at and what it solves or proves. In more discursive subjects, the thesis may be as long as 100,000 words. Such variations do not indicate different levels of achievement because the volume and complexity of study and research required to produce the output are similar. Such variations are well accepted within the relevant subject. In creative arts, as already mentioned, the 'thesis' may take the form of an artefact and a commentary, as is appropriate for the field of study. Most doctoral examiners are looking for work that is original in nature, makes a contribution to knowledge in the subject and is of peer-reviewed publishable quality in that subject: this may refer to elements of the thesis rather than the complete work.

Further information about the assessment of learning outcomes for (or criteria for the award of) all qualifications, and degree awarding bodies' responsibilities in this area, is available in the Qualifications Frameworks.

4.3 Final assessment

Whether a candidate is being examined on the basis of a ‘traditional’ thesis, portfolio, artefact(s), clinical practice or other output, the body of work presented demonstrates the research question and provides a critical evaluation of the extent to which it has been
addressed. This, combined with the candidate's performance in the oral examination, is the point at which a decision is made, initially by the examiners, about whether he/she can be awarded a doctorate. Formally, examiners of doctoral candidates usually make recommendations to the research degree-awarding body, with a high-level, official committee having final responsibility for deciding to award the degree in the provider's name. This formality is an important part of assuring the quality of doctoral output and achieving consistency of standards across the provider. The use of one or more external examiners helps to maintain consistency among providers.

The UK doctoral assessment (thesis and oral examination together) provides evidence of the equivalence of standards across different UK doctorates, as all doctoral candidates face similar intellectual challenges at the point of final examination. All doctoral candidates experience a similar format - that is, an assessment of the thesis followed by the closed oral examination, with two or even three examiners (some providers routinely use three examiners, two of whom are external, if a member of staff is being examined). External examining is a key feature of UK quality assurance processes, and at least one external examiner is required at each oral doctoral examination. External examiners may be international experts and may therefore be based outside the UK; in such cases it is particularly important that the external examiner is fully briefed about the regulations under which the candidate is being examined and the assessment process as a whole, both of which may differ from the assessment practices he/she is familiar with. The Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees* refers to the use of external examiners at doctoral level. The wider role of external examiners is addressed by the Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*.

The choice of examiners for any thesis or other doctoral output is made with careful attention to the content of the candidate's research and context in which the research was conducted. Examiners are chosen for their expertise in the field and particular interest in the candidate's research topic, as well as for their experience of the form of doctorate to be awarded. Examiners are usually members of academic staff in universities either in the UK or beyond but, depending on the type of degree for which the candidate is being examined, one examiner might also be from an industrial or other professional environment (Denicolo et al., 2005). Examiners are normally required to submit separate, independent reports (which are exchanged prior to the oral examination) after evaluating the candidate's thesis or equivalent, and a joint report following the oral examination. Practice varies among providers as to whether or not candidates are shown examiners' independent reports in advance of the oral examination. Some higher education providers take the view that this is helpful as it enables candidates to address the examiners' queries and/or concerns during the oral examination. It also allows the doctoral candidate to demonstrate how they are able to respond to academic argument as it arises.

The Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees* includes information about the use of assessment criteria and the procedures for doctoral assessment. Part of the guidance in *Chapter B11* refers to the use of an independent chair in oral examinations to promote consistency and fairness. An increasing number of UK providers use this feature; others record oral examinations, for similar reasons.

In the final part of the assessment, it is the intention that the candidate defends his or her research in the oral examination, and is expected to demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the field of study and originality of thought, either in the creation of new knowledge or in the novel application of existing knowledge. The doctoral assessment process is entirely distinct from the assessment of students on bachelor's or taught master's programmes who are usually examined as a cohort and do not normally experience individual oral examinations.
In the UK, the oral examination is usually a 'closed' examination, where only the candidate, examiners, and any independent observer or chair is present. Many providers permit the supervisor to be present to observe the examination, with the candidate's and examiners' permission, but they do not play an active role in the final decision making process. This differs from some non-UK European oral examination models involving a public defence, where the candidate may invite family and friends to join the audience in what is considered a celebration as well as a defence of the thesis, and where the outcome of the award is usually already known. Where UK universities are offering joint programmes with other European partners the public defence is sometimes used rather than the 'closed' UK model.

In the UK, examiners do not normally reveal the outcome to the candidate in advance of the oral examination because one of its purposes is to check on both authorship of the thesis and the candidate's engagement with the described research process. It is considered good practice that the examiners have a private meeting before the oral examination to discuss the merits of the candidate's output and to plan the conduct of the oral examination, including the questions they each wish to ask the candidate.

The oral examination is a difficult experience for some and may lead to a recommendation that the candidate should not be awarded a doctoral degree. However, only a minority of candidates fail the doctoral assessment outright. In most providers, examiners have the option of awarding a different qualification such as an MPhil if this is more appropriate to the candidate's achievements, and provided that such a qualification is awarded for positively defined learning outcomes (see the Quality Code, Expectation A1).

Even for successful candidates, it is often the case that doctoral examiners will ask for either 'minor' or 'major' amendments to the thesis, or for 'resubmission'. Providers have different definitions about what each of these three terms mean, particularly in terms of the length of time candidates are given to complete any required changes (but three to six months for minor changes and six to twelve months for major changes are not uncommon). Once any amendments have been made, there is no indication in the award certification of the corrections that have been required by the examiners; the UK doctorate is not graded or classified in any way, it is a pass/fail only.

In a minority of cases, the doctoral examination does not include an oral examination. For example, some professional clinical doctorates use a system of continuous assessment, normally involving production of a portfolio by the candidate and including an evaluation of a clinical research project.

### 4.4 Credit for doctoral degrees

Credit is not normally assigned to doctoral degrees because of the importance and diversity of the individual research project, which is at the heart of all doctorates. However, where credit is assigned, this is more common among professional doctorates than other forms of doctorate. Credit may be awarded to candidates for successful completion of assessed structured elements as part of research skills and training; in some cases the volume of such credit may contribute to a postgraduate certificate or diploma. Where credit is awarded for the doctorate overall, the normal credit volume in the UK is 540 credits, with a minimum of 360 at The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) level 8 or 420 at the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 12.15

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15 See: [www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Qualifications/Pages/Academic-Credit.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Qualifications/Pages/Academic-Credit.aspx).
Related guidance and further references

This Statement is a component of the Quality Code, Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards.

Those interested in the academic standards of doctoral degrees should read this Statement alongside other components of Part A and especially the Qualifications Frameworks. As this Statement is concerned with doctoral degrees, it relates particularly to the 'Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8 on the FHEQ and SCQF level 12 on the FQHEIS: doctoral degree', which is in section 4 of the Qualification Frameworks.

Those interested in and/or responsible for the design, delivery and review of doctoral programmes should read this document alongside the Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

Further guidelines, references and resources

Current doctoral candidates and those interested in undertaking doctoral study may find it helpful to refer to The UK Doctorate: A Guide for Current and Prospective Candidates. www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=53

Denicolo, P M, Fuller, M, Berry, D, with Raven, C (2010) A Review of Graduate Schools in the UK. Lichfield: UK Council for Graduate Education


InformAll, Transferable Know-how www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/transferable-skills

Research Councils UK website www.rcuk.ac.uk


Vitae, Impact and evaluation www.vitae.ac.uk/impact

UK Council for Graduate Education website www.ukcge.ac.uk

Vitae website  
www.vitae.ac.uk

Vitae, Researcher Development Framework  
www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf

Vitae, Researcher Development Statement  
www.vitae.ac.uk/rds

Vitae, What do researchers do?  
www.vitae.ac.uk/wdrd

UK Council for Graduate Education/Bruce Christianson and Martin Elliot with Ben Massey, The Role of Publications and Other Artefacts in Submissions for the PhD  
www.ukcge.ac.uk/pdf/2015%20UKCGE-The%20Role%20of%20Publications%20and%20Other%20Artefacts%20Book%20A5%20final.pdf

Appendix 1: Summary of doctoral award titles

The table below contains an indicative list of some of the most commonly used award titles with their abbreviations, and brief descriptions of characteristics with which they are often associated.

The table is intended to serve as a quick reference guide to UK doctoral degree qualification titles. However, it is important to note that, although certain titling conventions are specified in the Qualifications Frameworks, there are no nationally agreed definitions of doctoral award titles. The ways in which titles are used will vary depending on the research degree-awarding body and individual providers are best placed to explain their own awards in detail.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full title</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD is the most common award title at Doctoral level.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is used for the vast majority of subject specialist doctorates (including integrated doctorates) and doctorates achieved by publication, and for some professional and practice-based doctorates.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In the case of subject specialist doctorates, and integrated doctorates, the title is likely to have the title of the thesis attached. A very small number have a post-fix title, for example 'in Musical Composition'.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated doctorates will usually feature the term 'integrated' in the title (for example, Integrated PhD or PhD by or with integrated study).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The title is usually accompanied by 'by publication' or 'by published work' for doctorates achieved by publication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
<td>DPhil</td>
<td>The title DPhil is used for subject specialist doctorates at a small number of providers, as an alternative to the title PhD.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In the case of subject specialist doctorates, and integrated doctorates, the title is likely to have the title of the thesis attached. A very small number may have a post-fix title, for example 'in Musical Composition'.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated doctorates will usually feature the term 'integrated' in the title.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The title can also be used to refer to doctorates by publication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorate</td>
<td>ProfDoc</td>
<td>ProfDoc is a generic title used for professional doctorates. An alternative but less common abbreviation of the title is DProf.</td>
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</table>
| Doctor of [subject name] | D[subject abbreviation] or [Subject abbreviation]D | A range of doctoral award titles are used, which include specific subject names.  
This approach is especially common for professional and practice-based doctorates.  
A wide range of examples exist, including (but by no means limited to) the following:  
Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)  
Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)  
Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)  
Doctor of Education (EdD)  
Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)  
Doctor of Engineering or Engineering Doctorate (EngD)  
Doctor of Forensic Psychology Practice (Foren.Psy.D)  
Doctor of Health Research (DHRes)  
Doctor in Health Sciences (HScD)  
Doctor in Health Sciences (Clinical) (HScD (Clin))  
Doctor of Medicine (MD, or in some cases, MD (Res))  
Doctor of Ministry (DMin)  
Doctorate in Music (DMus)  
Doctor of Practical Theology (DPT)  
Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)  
Doctor of Social Science (DScoSci)  
Doctor of Theology (ThD). |
# Appendix 2: Members of the advisory groups for the Doctoral Degree Characteristics

QAA is grateful to members of the Postgraduate Advisory Group for revising and updating this document in 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Veronica Bamber</td>
<td>Queen Margaret University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Paul Bennett</td>
<td>Higher Education Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Iain Cameron</td>
<td>Research Councils UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gill Clarke</td>
<td>UK Council for Graduate Education; PhD candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tish Bourke/Emma Creasey/</td>
<td>HEFCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brooke Storer-Church (alternates)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Rosemary Deem</td>
<td>Royal Holloway, University of London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Pam Denicolo</td>
<td>Universities of Surrey and Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shane Dowle</td>
<td>ARC / University of Surrey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Michael Gilmore</td>
<td>Durham University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisa Green</td>
<td>London School of Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Susan Grey</td>
<td>University of Hertfordshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Sharon Huttly</td>
<td>Lancaster University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Janet Metcalfe</td>
<td>Vitae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Louise Morley</td>
<td>University of Sussex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Alan Reed</td>
<td>University of Greenwich</td>
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<td>Dr Adam Wright</td>
<td>NUS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Anne Rixom</td>
<td>Nottingham Trent University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Julian White</td>
<td>White Rose University Consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Cat Ball</td>
<td>Biochemical Society &amp; Society of Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Amanda Rouse</td>
<td>University of Cardiff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Julie Reeves (specialist reader)</td>
<td>University of Southampton</td>
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</tbody>
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Membership of the external development group for *Doctoral Degree Characteristics 2011* (details as published in the 2011 version).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Gill Clarke</td>
<td>Higher Education Consultant, Visiting Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DPhil candidate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Oxford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Professor Pam Denicolo           | Director of the Graduate School for the Social Sciences |
|                                  | Director of the Pharmacy Centre for Inter-Professional Postgraduate Education and Training |
|                                  | University of Reading                            |

| Professor Chris Park             | Higher education consultant, formerly at the       |
|                                  | University of Lancaster                           |
|                                  | Special advisor to the Higher Education Academy   |
Membership of the advisory group for *Doctoral Degree Characteristics 2011* (details as published in the 2011 version).

- **Dr Iain Cameron**
  Head of Research, Careers and Diversity
  Research Councils UK Strategy Unit

- **Professor Ingrid Lunt**
  Department of Education
  University of Oxford

- **Dr Debbie McVitty**
  Research and Policy Officer (Higher Education)
  National Union of Students

- **Dr Janet Metcalfe**
  Chair and Head
  Vitae

- **Professor Clive Neal-Sturgess**
  Emeritus Professor of Mechanical Engineering
  University of Birmingham
  Visiting Professor of Automotive Safety
  Coventry University
  Visiting Professor of Clinical Biomechanics
  Birmingham City University

- **Professor Vernon Trafford**
  Professor Emeritus
  Anglia Ruskin University

- **Dr Christian Yeomans**
  Policy Officer
  UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit

- **Ms Janet Bohrer**
  Assistant Director of Research, Development and Partnerships
  QAA
REGISTRY CONTACT DETAILS

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.

School of Advanced Study
University of London
Ground floor, Senate House
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU
This booklet can be made available in a range of formats. Please contact registry for further information.