

XII. Master of Philosophy Degree Regulations

Postgraduate research students are responsible for familiarising themselves with the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes approved by Senate, which is reviewed annually and made available each academic year and included in the Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors.

The basis for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy to staff candidates shall be the same as the basis for the award of the degree to students.

A. Introduction

1. Applicants for the degree of Master of Philosophy are required to show familiarity and understanding of the chosen subject and its principal sources and authorities. A student must demonstrate the ability to deal with the chosen subject in a competent and scholarly manner displaying critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating the evidence and opinions of others. (The University Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees provides further details in the section, 'Criteria for the Master of Philosophy'.) The thesis submitted by the student should be clear, well-written and orderly in arrangement and include a bibliography in which the sources used are accurately and systematically presented.

2. Where the University has approved that research students may be registered and managed by a research institute, the director of the institute has the same authority and responsibility as a head of school. In these situations references to school and head of school include *institute* and *director of institute*.

B. Admission as a Student for the Degree of Master of Philosophy

3. An applicant may be approved for admission as a student for the degree of Master of Philosophy by a minimum of two postgraduate admissions selectors in accordance with the University's *Postgraduate Admissions Policy* and faculty / programme criteria approved by respective deans of postgraduate studies where an applicant:

- a) is a graduate of this or another approved university or other approved degree awarding body or holds other qualifications approved by the dean of postgraduate studies;
- b) has completed an approved application, including:
 - i. evidence of the applicant's suitability to become a student in terms of academic ability and prior training and experience.
 - ii. evidence that the applicant's English language proficiency meets the published requirements for the programme of research;
 - iii. a research proposal, if required;

- c) has supplied details of two recent referees and evidence of qualifications and experience as the postgraduate admissions selectors and/or the dean of postgraduate studies may require.
4. Where an applicant has previously studied for a Master of Philosophy at another institution and wishes this to be taken into account at Newcastle University, the application must be approved by the dean of postgraduate studies.
5. In considering an application for admission as a student for the degree of Master of Philosophy, the postgraduate admissions selectors must be satisfied not only as to the suitability of the applicant, but also as to the availability to the applicant of appropriate supervision and suitable facilities and resources once the applicant is admitted. It is the responsibility of the relevant head of school, directly or through the postgraduate admissions selectors, to ensure that appropriate supervision, suitable facilities and resources will be available to an applicant once admitted.

C. Admission as a Staff Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

6. In addition to the requirements set out in Regulation B, a member of staff seeking approval as a staff candidate for the degree of Master of Philosophy shall be required to complete and submit an application at the outset of studies in which is set out:

- a) a research proposal;
- b) details of the nature of the appointment held by the member of staff and its duration;
- c) approval from both the head of the school of employment and the head of school of study.

Note: For the purpose of agreeing staff fee, the applicant must hold a substantive post, defined as being a contract of employment of at least 25% FTE over a full 12 months period, and covering the annual period of registration with the University. This does not include people who were initially Students and then employed part-time by the University, e.g. as demonstrators, General Duty Assistants, Laboratory Technicians, etc.

D. General Preconditions to the Award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy

7. Before being awarded the degree of Master of Philosophy, a student must:

- a) satisfy the entrance requirements for the degree;
- b) register for and make satisfactory progress throughout the relevant programme of study;
- c) satisfy the examiners in the assessments specified.

E. Supervision of Students

8. A student for the degree of Master of Philosophy must engage in advanced study and research under the direction of a supervisory team in the University. The supervisory team normally consists of at least two members of University staff and the academic supervisor is appointed by the head of school, or nominee, before a student is accepted onto the programme of study.

9. To be eligible to supervise students for the degree of Master of Philosophy, a member of staff must hold a research degree or have equivalent research expertise. The appropriateness of the research degree or equivalent expertise should be determined by the relevant head of school in consultation with the dean of postgraduate studies.

10. The academic supervisor will be a member of staff of Newcastle University and will normally have had previous experience of at least one successful supervision. The academic supervisor will have primary responsibility for supporting the student throughout the period of study. Any reference to the supervisor or supervisory team in these regulations or in the *Code of Practice for Research Degree programmes* or in other documents shall be deemed to be a reference to the supervisory team.

11. In any case where students are studying outside the University at another institution, arrangements may also be made for local supervision and support to be provided to the candidate by staff at that institution (see Regulation 16). Such arrangements will supplement the role of the academic supervisor detailed in Regulation 10 above. Where External Supervisors are added to the supervisory team, the 'Principles for External Supervision Arrangements' should be consulted.

Notes:

(i) Where the members of the supervisory team are permanently changed students should normally be consulted in advance. The outcome of the consultation informs decisions made regarding the supervisory team.

(ii) On rare occasions supervisory relations may break down. In such circumstances, in the first instance students should consult with another member of the supervisory team. If it is not possible to resolve the problems in this manner, then the student and/or a member of the supervisory team should report difficulties, in writing, to the head of school (or nominee), who may refer the matter, if necessary, to the relevant graduate school administrator or dean of postgraduate studies for advice.

(iii) All supervisory changes must be notified to the relevant graduate school administrator and be agreed by the dean of postgraduate studies.

(iv) The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes provides further details on changes to supervisory teams and on appropriate supervisory support for research students.

F. Period of Study and Registration Requirements

12. An applicant may be approved as a student for the degree of Master of Philosophy on the basis of either:

- a) a minimum period of 12 months in full-time study; *or*
- b) a minimum period of 24 months in part-time study.

13. Approved applicants shall be required to register as appropriate as full-time or part-time students of the University for the duration of the minimum period specified, and to abide by the requirements of the University's *General Regulations*. A student's period of study is reckoned from the date of first registration for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

Note: Staff candidates shall be deemed to be registered as part-time students during their period of candidature and therefore, shall normally be two years in length as outlined in Regulation 12(b). However, if the dean of postgraduate studies is satisfied that the greater part of the candidate's time is devoted to supervised research the candidature can be deemed to be 1 year of full-time study as outlined in Regulation 12(a).

14. Any student who wishes to transfer from one of the categories of candidature specified in Regulation 12 to another such category may do so only with the approval of the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies and subject to the recommendation of the relevant supervisory team and head of school.

15. In all cases of candidature approved under Regulation 12, approved students shall be required to register continuously from commencement of their candidature until their thesis is submitted. During this time a student must abide by the requirements of the University's *General Regulations*.

G. Study Undertaken Outside the University

16. Any student may be permitted by a dean of postgraduate studies, on the recommendation of the relevant supervisory team and head of school, to study outside the University (or an approved campus) for more than one month, provided that in respect of any period of study not undertaken in the University (or an approved campus), the dean of postgraduate studies is satisfied before the beginning of that period of study that:

- a) the student will have access to adequate facilities, resources and appropriate research training;
- b) sufficient time for study and research will be available to the student;
- c) appropriate arrangements have been made for the student's supervision and progress monitoring during the period of study outside the University, including arrangements for the supervisory team to maintain contact with and to meet with the student in accordance with requirements stated in the Code of Practice for Research Degree programmes and as often as is necessary;
- d) appropriate arrangements have been made in any case where the student is attached to or working at an institution outside the

University and is offered local supervision and support by staff at that institution.

- e) any relevant health and safety issues have been considered and approved by the head of school/nominee in line with University guidelines and University Insurance policies.

Approval should normally be sought three months in advance of the start of the period of outside study)

All study visits, of any duration, by students to high-risk locations (as specified in the Postgraduate Student Travel and Outside Study Policy), must also be signed off by the dean of postgraduate studies, or Faculty PVC under certain circumstances.

Notes:

(i) that periods of study outside the University of less than one month should be agreed within the student's school and the student should complete a Student Notice of Absence form.

(ii) that any student who is permitted to undertake part of their study outside of the University is still required to pay the standard fees whilst within their candidature unless alternative arrangements were approved as part of the admission process.

(iii) that any student who is permitted to undertake part of their study outside of the University is still required to have their attendance monitored on the programme, including time registered as a pending or extended submission student.

(iv) that any student who is permitted to undertake part of their study outside of the University is still required to adhere to their deadline for submission, unless an extension or interruption of studies has been agreed as part of the outside study approval.

H. Attendance and Progress

17. A student registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy shall comply with the University's requirements for progression, as follows:

- a) Within one month of registering for the research programme, the student and the University shall have signed an approved learning agreement to cover the period of candidature;
- b) Students should submit project proposals within the guidelines identified by the relevant graduate school committee, up to a maximum of three months (up to six months for part-time students) of registering on the programme. The student's project proposal must be approved by an independent school panel and head of school/nominee, before being submitted for approval by the dean of postgraduate studies. Where a student's project proposal has already been reviewed and approved by external peer review, a project plan and supervisory team list should still be submitted to the panel for approval before being submitted for approval by the dean of postgraduate studies.

Progression on the programme will be dependent upon acceptance of the project proposal. If the school panel is unable to support the initial project proposal, a student will be permitted an opportunity for re-assessment, normally within three months (six months for part-time students). If, even after a re-assessment opportunity, the school panel does not approve the arrangements for the project it will be the annual progression panel that will be required to make a recommendation regarding the outcome for a student (see Regulation 20);

- c) Students should attend the University as frequently and at such intervals as the supervisory team shall require, bearing in mind whether the candidate is registered as full-time or part-time and allowing for any period of study undertaken outside the University. As a minimum, for full-time students, in accordance with the *Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*, students should have regular contact with their academic supervisor at least ten times a year, approximately once per month, and should have formal contact with their supervisory team at least three times a year, normally once per term (structured interactions for part-time students should be pro-rata). The University requires that students record and confirm the outcomes of supervisory meetings, via ePortfolio.
- d) Students should maintain a record of their personal development throughout their period of registration and submit this as evidence of development on an annual basis to their progress panel;
- e) Students should submit reports and evidence of achievement as specified by the school or faculty graduate school committee on an annual basis. Students may also be required to make a project presentation or submit a piece of work or to attend a viva as prescribed by the school. This material, along with reports from the supervisory team, will be considered as part of an annual submission to the progress panel for each student.

18. The school will appoint a progress panel for each student. The progress of each student will be reviewed annually via ePortfolio, until submission of the thesis for examination although this requirement may be stayed at the discretion of the dean if the candidate is ready to submit a thesis within the 12 month registration period.

19. The supervisory team shall submit an annual report via ePortfolio concerning the progress of the candidate's research for review by the appointed progress panel.

20. The progress panel will make a report to the dean of postgraduate studies via ePortfolio and further progress on the programme of study is subject to approval by the dean of postgraduate studies. In addition to detailed feedback that the progress panel may wish to provide to the student and the supervisory team, the progress panel will make one of the following recommendations:

- a) that the student's performance is satisfactory and that study for the Master of Philosophy may continue;

- b) that notwithstanding some concerns which the student and supervisory team should note, the student's overall performance is satisfactory and that the student may continue;
- c) that the student's performance is unsatisfactory and that a further assessment should be held normally within two months (four months for part-time students) to determine whether progress on the programme will be recommended;
- d) that the student's performance is unsatisfactory and that no submission for a Master of Philosophy examination is recommended, and that the candidate's candidature is terminated.

21. In exceptional cases where the progress panel is not satisfied that the supervisory arrangements are adequate and appropriate, but considers that the student would otherwise be able to achieve the standards of the award, the panel may seek the approval of the head of school, to make a recommendation to the dean of postgraduate studies for the replacement of all or part of the supervisory team.

22. The annual progression review procedure will be deemed equivalent to a board of examiners and therefore the University's procedure for assessment irregularities shall apply to any reported or suspected cheating or plagiarism. The procedure is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/assessment.htm>.

Notes:

- (i) That the progress panel should not normally recommend that a student's registration is terminated (Regulation 20(d), without having previously provided a further assessment opportunity to the student (Regulation 20(c).*
- (ii) That any additional assessment should normally be recorded via ePortfolio.*
- (iii) In each annual Progress Review, a student should normally only have one re-assessment.*

J. Progress of Students Intending to Transfer to Registration for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

23. Students who are accepted as candidates for the degree of Master of Philosophy intending subsequently to transfer to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, must normally have received the recommendation of the progress panel and approval of the relevant dean of postgraduate studies to transfer not later than 12 months after commencing their studies (if studying full-time) and not later than 24 months (if studying part-time). Transfer from registration for the degree of Master of Philosophy to registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall not normally be permitted unless the student has been registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy for at least nine months. Any student shall, for all purposes under the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, be deemed to have registered for that degree at the date of initial registration as candidate for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

K. Mid Year Procedure for Dealing with Unsatisfactory Progress

24. A student whose progress is considered unsatisfactory by the supervisory team at times other than the normal annual assessment of progress shall be notified in writing of the reasons for this opinion and shall be given the opportunity of an interview with the supervisory team. Following this notice and any interview, and taking account of all known circumstances, the supervisory team may, either

- a) monitor the student's attendance, progress and performance for a specified period; this may require the undertaking of additional pieces of work. If the student's performance has not improved within the period specified in the written notice, the supervisory team shall notify the head of school or nominee and submit a report for review by the progress panel.

or

- b) the supervisory team shall notify the head of school or nominee and submit a report for review by the progress panel without undertaking a period of monitoring.

In either case, where a report is made to the progress panel for review of the student's progress, the student shall also be given the opportunity to submit a report to the progress panel. The progress panel will make a report to the dean of postgraduate studies (in accordance with Regulation 20). The review should be carried out via ePortfolio.

L. Procedure for Review of Penalties for Unsatisfactory Progress

25. A student applying for review of the decision of the progress panel may only do so in writing, using the University Academic Appeals Procedure (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/appeals.htm>), specifying one or more of the following grounds:

- a) that the progress panel were not aware of circumstances affecting the student's performance. (That is: the student was adversely affected by illness or other factors of which s/he was previously unaware, or which for a good cause, s/he was unable to disclose to the progress panel);
- b) procedural irregularity on the part of the progress panel;
- c) bias or prejudice on the part of the progress panel;
- d) That the decision reached was perverse in that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.

M. Interruption of Study

26. The University normally expects students to complete their candidature in a single continuous period, i.e. to be continuously registered until completion. Sympathetic consideration will be given to requests for periods of interruption, however, candidature should not normally be held in abeyance

for more than twelve months. An interruption to registration may be granted by the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies, subject to the student providing a strong justification, supported by the supervisory team. A request for any period of absence for more than one month should be submitted to the graduate school administrator as soon as possible prior to the time of the occurrence. The request should be supported by evidence and approved by the dean of postgraduate studies.

Notes:

(i) As a result of a formal interruption of study, a student's latest submission deadline will be adjusted accordingly.

(ii) Absences of less than one month should be recorded via the Student Notice of Absence form, but do not constitute a formal interruptions of study and as such the latest submission deadline is not adjusted

N. Teaching Duties

27. Students for the degree of Master of Philosophy may undertake paid duties in the University during term in any period of full-time study, provided that they consult their academic supervisor about the time that may be devoted to such duties and provided that they do not contravene the terms of any studentship that they might hold. Ordinarily, this will mean that teaching duties are additional to the normal commitments of a sponsored full-time student. All teaching *must be conducted in accordance with the University's Postgraduates Who Teach Policy*: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/resources/pg-policy/>.

P. Submission

28. The results of a student's advanced study and research must be embodied in a thesis in the approved form in accordance with the *Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees* and the *Rules for the Form of Theses* (see sections XVIII and XIX). The length of a thesis shall be determined bearing in mind the requirements laid down, or guidance issued, if any, by the candidate's graduate school committee. The thesis must be submitted, together with the necessary submission form and other material, to the relevant graduate school administrator.

In addition to the soft bound copies of the thesis, students must also submit an electronic copy of the thesis, to allow the University to operate plagiarism detection software. If any incidences of plagiarism are detected then the University's Procedure for Assessment Irregularities will apply.

29. The exact title of a student's thesis should normally be submitted on the appropriate form for approval by the dean of postgraduate studies normally three months before the thesis is submitted. Any change to the approved title of thesis following the initial approval must be notified to the relevant graduate school administrator and be agreed by the dean of postgraduate studies.

30. The thesis for all students must be submitted for examination within the period specified below from the date appointed as the beginning of the period of study:

- a) within two years in the case of students registered full time;
- b) within three years in the case of students registered part time.

31. Except with the permission of the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies, a student may not submit a thesis earlier than the beginning of the last term of the prescribed period of study. Any student who submits a thesis earlier than the minimum period of advanced study and research with the appropriate permission, shall nevertheless still be required to pay tuition fees (full-time or part-time as appropriate, depending on the type of candidature) for the whole of the minimum prescribed period of study.

R. Pending Submission for Candidates completing their minimum period of Candidature

32. All students, staff or students, who have completed their minimum candidature and have not submitted their thesis may be permitted on the recommendation of their progress panel to proceed to 'pending submission' student status for one further year. All 'pending submission' students are required to register with the University.

Notes

(i) *Students who have completed their minimum candidature and who still require more time to work on their research and thesis must continue full registration with the University*

(ii) *The fact that a student has completed their minimum candidature does not of itself constitute grounds for transferring to 'pending submission' registration. Students who require normal facilities and supervision must continue full registration and will pay the full fee for their continued candidature. Students registering under the 'pending submission' category will not be permitted to work in laboratories or studios or to take part in field trips (unless they have the authority of the appropriate head of school to do so for teaching or demonstrating purposes).*

(iii) *It is expected that students who are registered as 'pending submission' will continue to receive regular structured interactions with members of the supervisory team and full access to Library and computing facilities will be available.*

S. Extensions of Time for Submission

33. In exceptional cases, an extension of time for submission may be granted by the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies, subject to the student providing strong justification and evidence for an extension, supported by the supervisory team. The request for an extension of time for submission should normally be submitted to the graduate school administrator before the current deadline for submission. Students granted extensions of time in accordance with this provision, may be required to pay fees as the University shall prescribe from time to time.

Note: It is expected that students who are registered as 'extended submission' will continue to receive regular structured interactions with

members of the supervisory team and full access to Library and computing facilities will be available.

U. Language of Submission

34. A student's thesis must be written in English. In exceptional cases, subject to the student justifying such a concession, the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies may allow the student to submit a thesis written in a modern language other than English. Such a concession shall be granted only where a student can demonstrate that the language of submission is integral to the research project, for example where the object of study is an aspect of the literary or linguistic culture of the language of submission and/or a significant proportion of the secondary literature on the object of study is written in the language of submission. Approval for submission in a language other than English must be sought at the time of application to study for the degree. Where approval is granted, the abstract of the thesis must be written in English.

Note: The University cannot undertake to arrange the examination of a thesis immediately after its submission. Students are warned that several weeks may elapse between the submission of a thesis and the completion of the examination.

T. Examination

35. Details of the required arrangements for the examination are provided in the *Master of Philosophy Examination Conventions*.

