

Part B: Regulations for the degree award of Professional Doctorate

Effective from August 2023

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SECTION B1: GENERAL REGULATIONS

Award Titles

- 1.1 The University of Wolverhampton shall award the degree of Professional Doctorate to registered students in recognition of successful completion of an approved course of study, supervised research, and development within a particular profession.
- 1.2 Professional Doctorates are of a level and intellectual challenge equivalent to PhD degree courses. They are rooted within a particular profession. A Professional Doctorate course is designed to develop research and professional skills in addition to supporting the conduct of original research related to professional practice.
- 1.3 Some Professional Doctorate courses will be designed to meet professional or statutory body requirements, and this must be specified at the time of approval. Also, all these courses must conform to the relevant sections of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- 1.4 In order to meet the requirements of professional bodies, some programmes will include work-based learning, alongside research and taught study. Discipline specific modules will develop the candidates understanding of theoretical issues relevant to their professional context. Candidates will be expected to make a contribution to professional knowledge and practice and evidence this within academic and research submissions.
- 1.5 Professional Doctorate awards will include the name of the discipline in the title. The title of the award and its abbreviation will be agreed at the time of course approval. Successful completion entitles the use of the phrase 'Doctor in...' prior to the name.
- 1.6 All Professional Doctorate students are Research Students of the University and as such are expected to be able at all times to demonstrate an awareness of:
 - i) research-related topics such as respecting copyright, safeguarding intellectual property rights, ethical concerns in conducting research, health and safety, etc.
 - ii) practice-related issues such as developing and demonstrating competences relevant to the profession and appropriate to their level of training, adhering to professional ethical guidelines, equality and diversity etc.
- 1.7 These regulations should be read in conjunction with the relevant course and modules guides.

Learning Outcomes

- 1.8 Professional Doctorates are awarded to students who following the completion of the taught component of the award, who have satisfied a team of specially appointed examiners that both the thesis and the oral defence of that thesis demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes appropriate to the award sought, as specified in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Examiners are asked to confirm in their final report that students have met the learning outcomes for the award.

Required Learning Outcomes:

Professional Doctorate degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- Substantial critical investigation and evaluation of a topic or set of related topics resulting in an independent and original contribution to practice and understanding in the field to which the topic belongs, and which is expressed in a work of publishable quality.
- Originality is demonstrated through the discovery of new facts or methodologies, through subjecting known facts or methodologies to new insights derived from investigation, and/or through the revision, confirmation or adaptation of existing theories or methodologies to the new circumstances described in the thesis.
- Evidence of systematic, thorough, current and detailed knowledge of the specific subject area of the research as well as the general context in which that subject area is located.
- Evidence of knowledge of an appropriate range of research methodologies and a critical evaluation of their merits.
- Evidence of an ability to develop new hypotheses or research questions that have the capacity to extend the frontier of knowledge of the discipline.
- Evidence of an ability to design, plan and implement a research programme to test, explore and evaluate these hypotheses or questions.
- Evidence of an ability to analyse critically one's own findings and those of others.

Structure of the Award

- 1.9 Professional Doctorate courses delivered by the University are credit rated and modular, with an emphasis on professionally relevant and practice-oriented independent learning and research that together make an original contribution to knowledge. Successful completion of a Professional Doctorate course will require the award of 540 credits at level 7 and 8, as specified below. A minimum 360 credits are at level 8 (Doctoral or “D” level), with assessment reflecting the QAA Master’s and Doctoral outcomes as defined in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.
- 1.10 Each module has a set of formally identified learning outcomes. Credit for the module will be awarded once a student has demonstrated through assessment that they have achieved these outcomes.
- 1.11 A University of Wolverhampton Professional Doctorate course will comprise two stages, a taught component, (Stage 1) and a research component (Stage 2):

| | Credits |
|---|---|
| Professional Doctorate course totals: Comprising: | 540 credits |
| Stage 1: Assessed taught modules, developing professional and research skills; to include the development and approval of a proposal for independent research in Stage 2 | Maximum of 240 credits, at L7 or L8. (Maximum of 180 credits at L7) |
| Stage 2: Independent, supervised research May include in addition a practice-based component | Minimum of 300 credits, at L8. |

- 1.12 Normally, these stages are sequential, and a student progresses to stage 2 when stage 1 is completed (as illustrated below):

| Mode | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|-----------|------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Full-time | Stage 1 (Taught) | | Stage 2 (Research) |

| Mode | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|-----------|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| Part-time | Stage 1 (Taught) | | | | Stage 2 (Research) | |

However, it is possible that stages 1 and 2 are concurrent.

- 1.13 Supervised, independent research must comprise the majority of the Professional Doctorate course (where Professional, Statutory, Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) guidelines permit). Candidates will undertake a research project and present for assessment a thesis (which may include, where appropriate, a portfolio or collection of other artefacts, together with an extended commentary). The thesis will represent a single, sustained, independent research project. The final assessment will include an oral examination.
- 1.14 Candidates who withdraw from or are required to withdraw from a Professional Doctorate course will be considered by the Professional Doctorate Progression & Award Board for an interim award based on the number of credits obtained (see table 1). Candidates may be required to undertake additional work in order to meet the criteria for an interim award. A candidate awarded such an intermediate award, will not be guaranteed, re-entry onto a Professional Doctorate programme through the University’s Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedures.
- 1.15 Candidates who at the final assessment fail to meet the criteria for the award of a Professional Doctorate degree will be considered by the Professional Doctorate Progression & Award Board for an interim award based on the number of credits obtained (see table 1). Candidates may be required to undertake additional work to meet the criteria for an interim award. A candidate awarded the intermediate award in these circumstances will not be able to continue studying on the professional doctorate.

Table 1: Hierarchy of Awards

| Qualification | Total Credits | Level 7 | Level 8 |
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------|
| Post Graduate Certificate | 60 | 60 or above | |
| Post Graduate Diploma | 120 | 120 or above | |
| Master’s Degree | 180 | 180 or above | |
| Professional Doctorate | 540 | 180 | 360 |

SECTION B2: ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

General Admission Regulations

- 2.1 The University will ensure that procedures in place for the recruitment and admission of students are readily accessible, fair, clear, and implemented consistently, that decisions regarding admissions are made by those equipped to make the required judgement, and who are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.
- 2.2 The University will ensure the speedy conversion of appropriate applications into offers to suitable prospective students by having transparent academic and non-academic entry requirements, which lead to the enrolment of new entrants at appropriate levels in the University.
- 2.3 Applicants will be provided with timely information and advice needed for them to make informed choices best suited to their individual needs and circumstances and financial support and costs, together with the obligations placed upon them at the point at which an offer of a place is made.
- 2.4 The University will inform prospective students as soon as possible of any significant changes and will inform successful applicants of the arrangements for enrolment, registration, and induction. The University will ensure that effective and appropriate arrangements are in place for providing feedback to applicants who have not been offered a place.
- 2.5 The University will ensure that procedures are in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of the admissions process, and appeals about the outcome of a selection decision, and will ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the procedures.
- 2.6 All applicants to the University will be required to complete the appropriate application form which is subject to consideration by appropriate staff within the faculty.
- 2.7 Applicants must satisfy the entry requirements for admission to the degree as prescribed by the Regulations and must satisfy the University that they are fit by reason of their ability and training to undertake the degree.
- 2.8 These minimum requirements may be supplemented by additional requirements as determined by individual Faculties.

Entry Requirements for the degree award of Professional Doctorate

- 2.9 An applicant seeking admission to the degree of Professional Doctorate shall hold either:
 - a first or upper second-class honours degree, in an appropriate cognate area, of a university or any other institution of higher education with degree-awarding powers, or
 - a master's degree, or
 - evidence of prior practice or learning that is accepted by the University, or
 - a qualification which is regarded by the University as equivalent to a first or upper second-class honours degree.
- 2.10 To be eligible to study the Professional Doctorate Award applicants will be working or have experience of working in the subject area relevant to the Professional Doctorate.
- 2.11 Applicants for a Professional Doctorate course will:
 - a) Will be assessed on the basis of their professional experience or professional practice. Other relevant experience, training, publications, contracts, consultancies, residencies, exhibitions, performances, written reports, or other evidence of accomplishment shall be taken into consideration as appropriate to the nature and scope of the Professional Doctorate.
 - b) have relevant professional experience at a level and for a minimum period agreed by the University at the time of course approval.

- 2.12 Applicants may apply for entry with advanced standing through the University's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedures, if they hold appropriate experience or accredited learning, or qualifications. Applicants must demonstrate that the learning was appropriate to the objectives of their chosen Professional Doctorate course and met the learning outcomes of the Professional Doctorate course. Applicants shall not be awarded credit through RPLS for any Level 8 component of the course. Applicants awarded credit through RPLS for all Stage 1 Level 7 modules will have to seek approval from the relevant Research Student Board for their research proposal to be undertaken in Stage 2, which may require candidates to undertake the Stage 1 module in which this proposal is normally developed.
- 2.13 The total credit and level value of awarded RPL will be recorded on the student record. Any grades associated with the previous study and/or RPL will not be individually recorded and are excluded from the final classification calculations.

English Language Competence

- 2.14 Applicants must demonstrate proficiency in English at least to the level of an IELTS score (or equivalent) of 7.0, with no individual element less than 6.0. The only exemption to this is for students who are not required to do so as per UKVI regulations: <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/knowledge-of-english>

Guidelines - Student Route Visa

Students requiring a visa to study in the UK must ensure that they meet, both at the beginning and for the duration of the course, requirements stipulated by the UK Government and conditions of their visa. [See <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/international/visa-and-immigration/prospective-students/>]

Additionally, students requiring an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate must gain this before making immigration applications to come to the UK as a student or stay longer in the UK as a student. [See <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/international/visa-and-immigration/prospective-students/applying-for-a-student-visa/>]

Previous Registration at the University of Wolverhampton

- 2.15 Where an applicant has previously registered as a student for a postgraduate research degree at the University of Wolverhampton but has not gained an award, the relevant Faculty may take account of all or part of the previous registration time in their offer of a place. This would only be appropriate where the proposed new research is sufficiently similar to that for which the applicant was previously registered.
- 2.16 Students who voluntarily withdraw may apply for re-admission provided that:
- a) the student is able:
 - i) if appropriate, to provide clear evidence of a change in personal circumstances since the date of withdrawal.
 - ii) to demonstrate a positive commitment to resume study at postgraduate research degree level.
 - iii) to demonstrate an enhanced knowledge-base and/or relevant experience (for example, based on employment in a relevant area in the period since the date of withdrawal); and
 - b) the student has been formally interviewed by at least two members of academic staff whose decision to re-admit the student is unanimous.
- 2.17 Students who have been withdrawn due to academic failure are permitted to apply for re-admission to a postgraduate research degree provided:
- a) that they meet the criteria in regulation 2.16 above, and
 - b) at least twelve months have lapsed between the date of withdrawal and the date of application for re-admission.
- 2.18 Students who have previously been excluded from any course in the University for reasons of discipline, or academic/research/ethical misconduct will have no right to study at the University again.

Applicants Transferring their Registration from another Institution

- 2.19 Where an applicant has previously undertaken research as a registered student for a postgraduate research degree at another institution, the relevant Faculty may approve a shorter than usual registration period which takes account of all, or part of the time already spent by the student on such research.

- 2.20 An applicant transferring their registration from another institution during the research phase shall be required to provide the following information prior to an offer letter being issued:
- a) a letter of agreement to the transfer from the institution where the student is currently registered.
 - b) a copy of the student's original research proposal to the other institution.
 - c) a current progress report from the student's Director of Studies (or equivalent) which should include any reports from Annual Progress Review (or equivalent) and Progression/Transfer Report (or equivalent) as applicable.
 - d) the date, and mode, of original registration and the period of registration remaining under the regulations of their current institution (including detail of any absences and extension of registration).
 - e) the title of the research project and the names and email-addresses of current supervisors.
 - f) an indication of the level of resources required to support the research project.
 - g) details of all researcher development activities attended.
- 2.21 This also applies to students transferring from another HEI to follow a supervisor newly appointed to the University of Wolverhampton.
- 2.22 Any application lacking the information set out in Regulation 2.20 above will be rejected.

Concurrent Study

- 2.23 Students registered at another institution to study for a research degree are not eligible for admission or registration for a research degree at the University of Wolverhampton unless their registration elsewhere is terminated.
- 2.24 A student will not be permitted to register concurrently for two postgraduate research degrees at the University of Wolverhampton.
- 2.25 The Research Student Board may permit a student to register for another course or module concurrently with their postgraduate research degree registration, provided that either the postgraduate research degree registration and/or the other course or module is by part-time study and the dual registration will not detract from the research.

Submitting Work for Assessment More Than Once

- 2.26 A student will not be permitted to submit substantially the same piece of work for assessment for more than one award at the University of Wolverhampton.
- 2.27 A student found to have submitted substantially the same piece of work for an award at Wolverhampton and for an award at another institution will be investigated using the procedures detailed in section B13:Academic, Research or Ethical Misconduct.

Transferring Course

- 2.28 A student who wishes to transfer their registration from one postgraduate research course to another must seek the written support of their Director of Studies before applying to the Research Student Board for approval. If a student is on a student route visa, they must also contact the Visa & Immigration Team prior to the change being processed.

Fraudulent Applications

- 2.29 The University may withdraw an offer made on the basis of an application which is proven, or where the University has a reasonable belief, to contain fraudulent information, plagiarism or where key information has been omitted.
- 2.30 Any registered student who, following investigations, is found to have been admitted on the basis of fraudulent information, plagiarism or omitting key information, may be subject to our student disciplinary procedures.

SECTION A3: REGISTRATION AS A PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENT

Registration and Enrolment

- 3.1 All applicants who have accepted the offer of a place are required to register for their intended research award to become a student of the University of Wolverhampton. This process involves completion of online enrolment, providing evidence of identity and relevant qualifications, and payment of academic fees, in return for access to the University's facilities and to the supervisory team.
- 3.2 Students are responsible for ensuring that they are fully enrolled on the correct course by the course commencement date. Students may be admitted later than the course start date provided they are enrolled no later than the start of the third week of teaching according to the academic calendar. Students not fully enrolled by the third week of teaching may be de-registered from their course and barred from study.
- 3.3 Students on Professional Doctorate Courses that require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must ensure that they apply for and obtain a certificate to remain registered on the course.
- 3.4 Continued enrolment for students on programmes leading to professional doctorate awards recognised for inclusion in a relevant professional register is subject to ongoing fitness to practise requirements.

Definitions

Registration is the activity confirming a student's place on a research degree programme for its full duration.

Enrolment is the annual process through which students formally agree to be a student member of the University for either the whole or part of the academic year, and also agree to abide by the University Regulations, Bye-Laws and their liability for annual fee payments.

Academic Fees include the tuition fee and any Research Support Fees required for the programme. These will be confirmed during the application process. [See Policy on Research Support Fees for Postgraduate Research Students].

- 3.5 Students are responsible for ensuring that they remain fully registered, by completion of enrolment and payment of any academic fees at the appropriate point each year. All returning students are required to re-enrol in each year of their studies on the anniversary of their start date.
- 3.6 Continuing students who do not re-enrol will be assumed to have withdrawn from their course and be presented at the next Progression and Award Board for consideration of a relevant interim qualification.
- 3.7 Students must remain enrolled each year until conferment of the award. This includes any periods following the examination (including re-submission) during which the Examiners' recommendations are implemented.
- 3.8 Students must ensure that all academic fees and other payments due to the University are paid within the academic year such costs are incurred. Where appropriate, they may agree to use any sponsorship or stipend in part payment of fees. Students owing the University money from a previous year or course, outside any agreed limit set annually by the University, will not be permitted to re-enrol. Students unable to enrol, because of outstanding debts, will not be entitled to access University facilities or their supervisory team and will be obliged to take a Leave of Absence or withdraw.
- 3.9 Any student who is not enrolled, (including those on a Leave of Absence), will not be covered by the University Insurance policy or by the University Health & Safety policy and will be excluded from their study, research, supervision, and direction at the University.

Guidelines – email communications

Students are required to use their university email address (e.g., 00000000@wlv.ac.uk). This will be the main form of communication between the university and the student, with key information coming to the student from Registry Services, the Doctoral College, and Faculties. All information will be sent to this account, so students will be required to check this account regularly.

Students who prefer to access emails in a personal email account, can easily forward University emails to it, so any important messages are not missed. Instructions to do so can be accessed at: <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/its/self-help/university-email/email-for-students/forwarding-student-email/>

- 3.10 Students who persistently do not respond to formal communications from the University by specified deadlines may be at risk of 'Proceed with Caution' procedures and of termination of registration.
- 3.11 Students must, at all times, ensure that the data the University holds for them is accurate. The registration process allows students to check and update key personal information in their record. Changes which occur at other times in the academic year must be notified to the University. This includes notifying the University of their withdrawal, Leave of Absence, or transfer.

Registration of Members of Staff as Research Students

- 3.12 Members of University staff undertaking a research degree of this University must enrol as research students every year under the same conditions as above.
- 3.13 Tuition fees are charged at the standard approved rate. Staff may apply for their fees to be paid, in part or full, from the Staff Scholarship Scheme.
- 3.14 A letter confirming the source of fees must be provided at registration and at each subsequent year of enrolment. If such a letter is not provided, the appropriate tuition fee will be charged to the member of staff until sponsorship details are approved.
- 3.15 Members of staff accepting staff scholarship funding must abide by the terms and conditions of the scheme.
- 3.16 If a member of staff leaves the University of Wolverhampton while engaged in a research degree programme, a review of the programme must be undertaken for registration to continue:
- If continued access to and use of resources is understood to be necessary, permission must be sought and approved by the Dean of Faculty in discussion with the Associate Dean of Research.
 - Additionally, they must reapply to the Faculty Ethics Committee for the continuation of the research project.
 - Where student data is being used as part of the research the continued access and utilisation of the data must be expressly approved by the Academic Registrar after discussion with the Dean of Faculty and then approved by the Ethics Committee. This is true even if the member of staff transfers their studies, based on this data, to another HEI.
 - The same process of renewal of permissions will also apply to data relating to the wider university experience, in respect to surveys conducted on staff (academic or otherwise), and engagements with resources / learning spaces provisions.

Additional Requirements for Registration as an International Student

- 3.17 Students who have been granted a visa to study in the UK must ensure that they meet the requirements stipulated in the student route immigration rules. It is a student's responsibility to ensure they comply with these regulations at all times:
- As part of the enrolment process, all new students must provide a copy of their passport and visa documentation to the visa team so that a copy of both documents can be made and stored on the student records system.
 - If a student visa is extended or a passport is renewed at any time during the period of registration the student must bring the new biometric ID card/passport so that their record can be updated.
 - Students must ensure their passport and student visa are valid throughout their period of registration.
 - Attendance is monitored throughout the period of registration. If a student does not meet the attendance requirements or is on Leave of Absence of more than 60 days from the University for any reason, the University is required to inform the immigration authorities.
 - Student visa holders are allowed to study on a full-time basis only. Part-time study is not permitted.
 - Students must inform the University of any change of address and telephone number (UK and overseas). This can be undertaken via e-vision.
 - Students must ensure that they re-enrol at the required time. The University is required to inform the immigration authorities of any student who fails to re-enrol.

Guidelines - Adjustments for Students

Students with additional needs associated with disability, learning difference or long-term health condition are encouraged to register with Student Support and Wellbeing. Upon completion of a self-declaration form students will receive support to identify any reasonable adjustments to be made to the approved programme. Application for Disabled Students Allowances may be considered appropriate. A Tutor Awareness Sheet may be created. Permission to access Tutor Awareness Sheets will be granted to the Director of the Doctoral College, the Postgraduate Research Tutor, and members of the supervisory team.

Mode of Study

- 3.18 Students may study on a full or part-time basis.
- Full-time students will devote on average 35 hours per week over a minimum of 45 weeks per year to the programme.
 - Part-time students will devote on average 15-18 hours per week over a minimum of 45 weeks per year to the programme.
- 3.19 A full-time student is expected to study 180 credits over a 12-month period.
- 3.20 A part-time student can study a minimum of 20 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in any University academic year.

Guidelines – Mode of Study

The research stage of the Professional Doctorate does not follow a standard term-time/vacation pattern.

The Director of Studies will stipulate levels of attendance and agree a schedule of supervisory meetings and attendance at appropriate seminars. These may vary depending on the discipline.

Full-time research is not compatible with full-time employment. Part-time students with major work or other commitments should discuss these at the outset with their Director of Studies so that a realistic assessment of likely progress can be made.

Students may vary the pace at which they proceed through their course by varying the mode of study. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they are fully aware of any financial consequences that the decision to vary the pace of study may have.

Holiday Entitlement

- 3.21 Students in the research phase may take up to 35 working days holiday in each year (pro rata for part time) inclusive of normal public holidays. The timing of their holidays must be agreed with their Director of Studies.

Guidelines – Student Visa Holders

Student visa holders must ensure that Registry Services is informed of any leave taken outside of the UK (via the eVision 'Leave the UK' task) so that it can be monitored in line with the University's student route visa sponsorship duties.

Maximum Periods of Registration

3.22 The maximum period over which a Professional Doctorate award may be studied will be:

| Mode of Study | Normal | Maximum |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| Full-time | 3 years | 4 years |
| Part-time | 6 years | 8 years |

3.23 Those students admitted with advanced standing will have their minimum and maximum period of registration adjusted appropriately. For candidates entering with 180 credits at Level 7, the minimum and maximum period of registration is as follows:

| Candidates entering with 180 Level 7 credits | Normal | Maximum |
|--|---------|---------|
| Full-time | 2 years | 3 years |
| Part-time | 4 years | 6 years |

3.24 The standard and maximum periods of registration are calculated from the initial date of registration.

3.25 The maximum registration period includes the period up to the submission of the thesis. Excluding periods of Leave of Absence, where any delay is outside the control of the student, the registration period will be adjusted to reflect the delay (see Exceptional Extension to the Period of Registration).

3.26 To be eligible to continue to study for an award governed by these Regulations, a student must not exceed the relevant maximum periods of registration and must successfully complete the progression stage of the award being studied.

3.27 Professional doctorate programmes incorporate the possibility of a transfer to MPhil or PhD. Where this is approved, the transfer is restricted to the early stage of the research degree programme – i.e. before completion of the “Progression” stage. Upon transfer to MPhil or PhD students become subject to the ‘Regulations for the degree awards of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy’.

Change of Mode of Study (full-time/part-time)

3.28 A student may apply to change their mode of study.

3.29 Where a student changes mode of study, the maximum period of registration shall be calculated on a pro-rata basis as a proportion of the stated maximum periods of registration, in accordance with the length of time spent as a full or part-time student. Before making a request to change mode of study, students and their supervisors should fully consider the implications.

Guidelines – Change of Mode of Study

When a student changes mode of study their remaining registration time will be arrived at by applying the following procedure:

- Take the maximum period of registration in the original mode.
- Subtract from it the actual period of registration in the original mode to produce the original remaining period of registration.
- Then take the original remaining period of registration and divide it by the maximum period of registration on the original mode multiplied by maximum period of registration on the new mode.
- This produces the new remaining period of registration.

Any periods of Leave of Absence or extension should be considered, and all figures should be expressed in months.

Leave of Absence

- 3.30 Where a research student is prevented, by ill-health or other serious and evidenced causes, from making progress with the research, they may apply for a Leave of Absence, where they declare that they are not undertaking any research activities for a period of time (i.e. a temporary withdrawal from studies).
- 3.31 The University reserves the right to ask for evidence to support any request for Leave of Absence.
- 3.32 All applications will be considered on an individual basis. It should be noted that approval will not automatically be granted.
- 3.33 No single period of Leave of Absence will be granted for a period in excess of 12 months. The total period of Leave of Absence allowable is 24 months. Students cannot take consecutive periods of Leave of Absence for longer than 12 months and must re-engage with their research studies for a minimum of 3 months after taking the maximum 12 months allowable. Any request for Leave of Absence in excess of the permitted periods shall be referred to the Research Awards Sub-committee and, as appropriate, the Professional Doctorate Progression and Award Board.

Leave of Absence during the Taught Phase

- 3.34 Where a student takes a Leave of Absence during a University academic year before completing a module, any summative assessment submitted will be carried forward and will contribute to the student's assessment result for that module when the student returns from Leave of Absence, provided the same assessment requirements remain.
- 3.35 Where a student takes a Leave of Absence and has not passed any summative assessment, the student will be required to recommence the module without penalty.
- 3.36 If a student takes a Leave of Absence because of extenuating circumstances, when they return to study, they will deem themselves fit to study and the circumstances which affected their ability to study previously will not be considered a valid cause of poor performance again. The University will, however, exceptionally consider sudden or unexpected worsening of a disability and / or medical condition for a student registered with Student Support & Wellbeing and where medical evidence is provided to confirm the condition.
- 3.37 When a student is studying taught modules only then periods of Leave of Absence should fit into the start and end dates of a module.
- 3.38 If a student is studying both taught modules and towards their thesis, then the period of Leave of Absence is determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the course leader. It is not possible to be on Leave of Absence for part of a course.
- 3.39 Students who are studying for a course that may be accredited or recognised by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) should be aware that they may have additional requirements or responsibilities relating to their attendance students are advised to check their course materials or contact their Student Centre prior to submitting a Leave of Absence request.

Leave of Absence during the Research Phase

- 3.40 After agreeing this option with their supervisor, students must apply for a Leave of Absence via e: Vision. The student will have to confirm that they will not be undertaking any research activities whilst on Leave of Absence. The student will give the reason why they are requesting Leave of Absence and the date that they believe that they will return to their studies. Leave of Absence will not be granted retrospectively.
- 3.41 Requests to take a Leave of Absence and the decision to grant this or not, will be reported to the Director of Studies and the Postgraduate Research Tutor. It will also be reported to the Research Student Board.
- 3.42 Whilst on a Leave of Absence, a student will have restricted access to university services and facilities, including their supervisor in respect of their research work, but will be encouraged to keep in touch with their supervisor for pastoral support.
- 3.43 The minimum period of Leave of Absence is one month, and any period of Leave of Absence will be granted in month-long blocks, and then added to the registration period.

- 3.44 If a Leave of Absence is approved, liability to pay tuition fees will cease from the point of Leave of Absence and will be reactivated on the date of return. Students are still liable for any debts incurred prior to taking Leave of Absence.

Student Route Visa

- 3.45 Students can request a leave of absence from their studies as per university regulations. However, if the leave of absence exceeds 60 days, the university is required to inform the UKVI, and students in this position will have their visas curtailed. Presuming the student leaves the UK the university will then support an application to return following the period of absence.
- 3.46 If a student requires a new visa to return to the UK after a period of Leave of Absence, they should seek advice from the Visa and Immigration team at least two months before they are due to return.

Debts to the University

- 3.47 If a student has an outstanding academic debt to the University that they cannot clear before the enrolment deadline date, then they must take a Leave of Absence.
- 3.48 Whilst on a Leave of Absence, any outstanding debt remains due and may be referred to a Debt Collection Agency. Any outstanding debt must be cleared for a student to re-enrol.

Parental Leave

- 3.49 Periods of leave undertaken due to statutory childcare (including maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave and adoptive leave) will not be counted towards the maximum total Leave of Absence period of 24 months, although the maximum registration period will be amended accordingly. Evidence will be sought confirming that the student is eligible for parental leave.

Jury Service

- 3.50 Eligible students may be summoned by HM Courts and Tribunal Service for jury service during their studies. It is up to the student to establish whether they can either accommodate the request for jury service or whether it is not reasonable at the time. In these circumstances, they must return the 'Reply to the Jury Summons' and ask for jury service to be deferred to a later date or to be excused altogether.
- 3.51 If a request for deferral is turned down, there is the right of appeal when appearing in court to serve on the jury as the presiding judge has the discretion to excuse jury members who they deem to have compelling reasons not to serve at that point.
- 3.52 If the initial request for excusal has been refused, the student is advised to discuss this with their Director of Studies who can provide a supporting statement outlining why they should be excused (e.g. if the trial is likely to be longer than the statutory two weeks which would impact on current field or lab based research or that the service would conflict with a submission deadline or viva).
- 3.53 Periods of leave undertaken due to statutory jury service will not be counted towards the maximum total period of 24 months, although the maximum registration period will be amended accordingly.

Returning from a Leave of Absence

- 3.54 Students are expected to notify the University at the end of the Leave of Absence that they wish to return to their studies. Alternatively, at this time, they may request an extension to the Leave of Absence provided it does not extend the period of leave beyond the limits outlined above.
- 3.55 On their return from Leave of Absence students are subject to the then current edition of the Professional Doctorate Regulations.
- 3.56 If a student fails to return from a Leave of Absence and enrol within 14 calendar days of the expected date of return, they will be considered to have withdrawn and will be de-registered from the course.

Guidelines – Returning from a Leave of Absence

International students are advised to contact the Visa & Immigration Support Team for advice about their visa before returning to their studies.

Students returning from a period of Leave of Absence may wish to liaise with SSW and its mental health and well-being team to ensure that the University is aware of any relevant circumstances for which they may be able to provide support.

Withdrawal of Registration

- 3.57 Where a student wishes to withdraw their registration, they will do so by completing the necessary eVision task. Registry Services will notify the relevant Research Student Board.
- 3.58 Where a student fails to re-enrol or to meet their fee liability, the student will be withdrawn from the programme.
- 3.59 In addition, during the research phase, the Research Student Board can withdraw a student for failing to make academic progress. Examples of failing to make academic progress include (the list is not exhaustive):
- a) the student has persistently failed to respond to formal communications from the University by specified deadlines.
 - b) the period of registration has expired, and an application for extension of registration has not been approved.
 - c) the student is subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure which has not resulted in an improvement in the student's ability to progress.
 - d) the annual progress review has recommended withdrawal.
 - e) the student has failed to submit a satisfactory, or any, Research Proposal, Annual Progress Review, Special Progress Review, or Progression stage documentation.
 - f) the student has failed to submit a revised thesis for examination by the stated deadline.
 - g) the student is found to have committed Academic, Ethical or Research Misconduct

SECTION B4: CONTINUATION REGULATIONS – TAUGHT PHASE (STAGE 1)

- 4.1 To gain academic credit, a student must demonstrate that they have achieved specified learning outcomes (see section 1). Academic credit will only be awarded to students as follows:
- through granted accreditation for recognition of prior learning through the defined University process, or
 - successful completion of module summative assessments that meet the specified learning outcomes.
- 4.2 The modules in Stage 1 shall be assessed individually. All modules must include at least one summative assessment designed to enable students to demonstrate that the module learning outcomes have been met. Module Guides will detail all forms of assessment required.
- 4.3 There may be more than one element of assessment for a module. A range of assessment methods may be used including process reports, presentations formal examinations, class tests, essays, projects, and case studies. The assessment requirements for each module will be stated in the course specification and the Award Handbook.
- 4.4 Students not registered for a module cannot study the module, cannot submit assessment for the module, nor will they be granted academic credit for the module.
- 4.5 Mandatory attendance is required at taught sessions where the course specification requires.
- 4.6 Students must ensure that they have studied any modules recorded in the Module Guide as being a pre-requisite module prior to beginning post-requisite modules, otherwise they will not be granted credit for any assessed work submitted.
- 4.7 Assessment of modules where all or a significant amount of the candidate learning is conducted in a workplace can involve feedback from a workplace mentor who should not be associated with the supervision of a candidate's professional research module. Arrangements for the assessment of work-based learning should be explained in the course specification and Award Handbook.
- 4.8 Students on a Professional Doctorate course are required to pass all modules. The pass mark for all taught modules shall be 50%.
- 4.9 All assessment marks of all taught modules on a Professional Doctorate course will be submitted to the Professional Doctorates Assessment/Award Board, which will agree the results for each module.
- 4.10 The University uses grading schemes for recording the results of summative assessment and overall module results. There are two grading schemes operating, to meet the different requirements at different academic levels.

Level 7 Modules

- 4.11 For modules at level 7, results will be recorded using the following percentage mark scheme;

| Mark | Performance | Result Level 7 |
|---------|---|--|
| 90-100% | Outstanding Pass | Pass |
| 80-89% | Excellent Pass | Pass |
| 70-79% | Very Good Pass | Pass |
| 60-69% | Good Pass | Pass |
| 50-59% | Pass | Pass |
| 0-49% | Fail | Defer (first attempt) Fail (following second attempt) |
| NS | Assessment not submitted | Defer (first attempt) Fail (following second attempt) |
| GA | Assessment grade awaited | Held - assessment has been submitted but mark / placement outcome has been delayed |
| AM | Academic Misconduct under investigation | Held |

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| M | Valid Extenuating Circumstances | Defer - may submit assessment within the academic year the module was studied |
|---|---------------------------------|---|

- 4.12 Students must submit all pieces of assessment required for each module on or before the submission date set for each piece of assessment. The grade 0NS will be awarded to all students who do not submit assessment or submit after the published submission deadline.
- 4.13 Students who fail a module at the first attempt will be permitted to attempt the failed summative assessment task(s) again. This resit attempt must be taken at the first opportunity within the academic year the module was studied unless valid extenuating circumstances are approved.
- 4.14 Students who successfully resit a failed summative assessment will be awarded a pass (50%) for this resit attempt. For any summative assessment tasks being awarded a capped pass, the pass awarded will contribute to the overall module grade.
- 4.15 Students who fail a module will be permitted to repeat the module. The University cannot guarantee that all modules will be available to be repeated, in which case the student will be required to take a replacement module. A student who fails an option module may study a suitable substitute module rather than repeat the module they have failed.
- 4.16 Where students pass a module they will have no further right to take re-assessment of the specific learning outcomes associated with that module, unless the student has been granted permission to submit assessment again because their claim for extenuating circumstances was accepted as valid. This submission must normally occur within the academic year that the module was studied.

Extenuating Circumstances and Assessment Deadline Extensions

- 4.17 If a student believes they have a valid reason (such as illness) for not completing a piece of summative assessment in advance, they must follow the University Fit to Sit and Extenuating Circumstances Policy, which includes the need to provide independent evidence in order to ensure that each case is assessed fairly.
- 4.18 Before submitting work, or attend examinations, students are required to declare themselves as 'fit to sit' by confirming they are not aware of any extenuating circumstances which could affect their performance during the relevant assessment and therefore cannot subsequently claim mitigation. If a student does submit work for which an extenuating circumstances claim has already been granted, it will and be marked, the grade awarded, and the extenuating circumstances claim nullified.
- 4.19 Retrospective claims for mitigation may be considered exceptionally within 10 working days of the original examination or submission date, and prior to publication of results, after which these must follow the University Academic Appeals procedure no later than 20 working days after the publication of results.
- 4.20 Students who are affected by unforeseen circumstances during an examination may be able to claim extenuating circumstances. If granted, no grade will be awarded for the examination at the first attempt.
- 4.21 Students with accepted extenuating circumstances on the first sit of a piece of summative assessment (where that work has not been submitted) are expected to submit the assessment at the next published opportunity. If they do not do so, they will be required to resit the assessment. The grade will be awarded in accordance with regulation 4.14.

Late Submission and Extensions

- 4.22 Students may submit work up to 7 calendar days after the published submission date in accordance with the University Late Submissions and Extension Policy.
- 4.23 Students with a valid reason, as defined in the University Late Submissions and Extension Policy, may apply for an extension to the submission date of up to 7 calendar days.
- 4.24 Students without a valid reason, as defined in the University Late Submissions and Extension Policy, may submit work up to 7 calendar days after the published deadline but the mark will be subject to a penalty as follows;
- a) Up to 2 days after the published deadline - a deduction of 10% of the maximum mark available from the actual mark achieved by the student.

b) After 2 days and up to 7 days after the published deadline - a deduction of 20% of the maximum mark available from the actual mark achieved by the student.

- 4.25 The final mark for the assessment, after penalty has been imposed, will not fall below the minimum pass mark for that assessment.
- 4.26 If the awarded mark for the assessment was already below the pass mark, prior to late submission penalty, the awarded mark will stand as the final mark.
- 4.27 These regulations do not apply to assessments submitted in a published resit period.

Level 8 Modules

- 4.28 For modules at level 8, a Pass/Fail grade will be used.
- 4.29 Students must submit all pieces of assessment required for each module on or before the submission date set for each piece of assessment. A fail grade will be awarded to all students who do not submit assessment or submit after the published submission deadline.
- 4.30 Students who fail a level 8 module at the first attempt will be permitted to attempt the failed summative assessment task(s) again. This resit attempt must be taken at the first opportunity within the academic year the module was studied, no further attempt to resit will be offered.
- 4.31 Students who fail a level 8 module will not be permitted to repeat the module.

Compensation

- 4.32 No compensation is allowed for modules on a Professional Doctorate course.
- 4.33 The Professional Doctorate Progression Award Board is responsible for determining whether a student has successfully completed Stage 1. Students must successfully complete all elements of Stage 1 before proceeding to Stage 2 unless the structure of the award is such as to allow concurrent study of stages.

SECTION B5: CONTINUATION REGULATIONS – RESEARCH PHASE (STAGE 2)

- 5.1 Where Stage 2 includes a practice-based module (one not constituting supervised research and not directly contributing to the research portfolio required of Stage 2), then the Regulations relating to Stage 1 will apply to this module.

The following Regulations will apply to the research component of Stage 2.

- 5.2 Where the taught and research phases are being delivered sequentially, the Professional Doctorate Progression & Award Board must confirm completion of Stage 1, before a student progresses to Stage 2 and the research proposal must be approved by the relevant Research Student Board (RSB). Where the taught and research phases are concurrent, due to requirements of professional bodies, the research proposal must be approved before the independent research project commences.
- 5.3 In approving the proposal, the RSB will ensure that:
- the proposed project is of doctoral-level scope and depth; the project design and methods are appropriate and realistic; and the outcomes would represent a contribution to professional knowledge in the area.
 - Ethics and risk approval, and any third-party agreements, are all in place before the student commences the research.
- 5.4 The University will convene Research Student Boards (RSBs) to monitor the progress of students and receive and approve documents relating to various key stages in a student's progress.
- 5.5 The University Research Committee will convene a Research Awards Sub-committee, which will meet at least six times each year, to consider:
- The performance of students currently subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' process,
 - The annual progress review of all students,
 - The performance of students at the "progression" stage
 - Nomination of Research Degree Examiners
 - The conferment of awards

Supervisory meetings

- 5.6 When a student progresses to stage 2, by acceptance of the research proposal this includes the appointment of a supervisory team. The team will comprise at least two supervisors, and no more than three.
- 5.7 There should be regular contact between the student and members of the supervisory team. As a minimum:
- Full-time students should meet with a supervisor once a month (12 sessions a calendar year).
 - Part-time students should meet with a supervisor every other month (6 sessions a calendar year).

The full supervision team must meet with the student at least twice per calendar year.

See Appendix 3: Guidelines of Records of Meetings between Supervisors and Students

Reviewing & Assessing Progress

- 5.8 Student progress will be **reviewed** throughout the research degree programme by the supervisory team as part of the regular supervisory meetings, and by the Research Student Board, to provide encouragement and support to students to enable them to complete successfully within an appropriate timescale.
- 5.9 Student progress will be **assessed** throughout the research degree programme by independent assessors at scheduled assessment points:
- Annual progress review (APR) and forward planning, and
 - The Progression stage to confirm whether the research has progressed sufficiently to obtain a doctoral qualification.
- 5.10 Should a student's progress not be satisfactory; the review process includes provision, via the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure, to ensure that support is available for the student to make improvements.

See Appendix 4: The 'Proceed with Caution' Procedure

Exceptional Extension to the Period of Registration

- 5.11 A student is expected to submit their thesis before the expiry of the maximum period of registration.
- 5.12 There may be very exceptional circumstances when a student cannot submit their thesis within the maximum period of registration, but the Leave of Absence process outlined in section 3 is not appropriate. This may be either:
- because they have already exceeded the maximum length of absence, or
 - they need a longer period to complete their research because of a setback for which the University takes full responsibility (e.g. equipment failure).
- 5.13 A Director of Studies, on behalf of a research student, may apply for an extension to the maximum registration period only in these very exceptional circumstances. Extensions will not be granted for 'unexceptional' circumstances such as everyday life events, work pressure, financial difficulties, academic failure, and poor project/time management.
- 5.14 In all cases an application must be accompanied by supporting evidence and a detailed action plan demonstrating how the extension to registration will enable the successful completion of the thesis.
- 5.15 Any request for an extension shall be referred to the Dean of Research and Academic Registrar (or nominees) and reported to the University Research Awards Sub-committee and, as appropriate, the Professional Doctorate Progression and Award Board.
- 5.16 An extension will be granted in month-long blocks. A new maximum registration date will be calculated that takes account of the period granted.
- 5.17 The total period of extension allowable will not exceed 12 months.
- 5.18 Research students may be liable for fees for any extended period of registration.
- 5.19 An extension shall not be granted retrospectively.
- 5.20 If the request is unsuccessful, the student should submit their thesis on or before the date of the original maximum registration. If this date has already passed, the student and the Director of Studies will receive a letter to inform them that the student will be withdrawn from the programme.

International Students Requesting Extensions

- 5.21 Any period of extension shall be subject to a student's immigration status. Students on a student route visa should seek advice from the Visa & Immigration team at least two months before their current visa expires.
- 5.22 The University may refuse to support a student visa extension in the UK if a student is not making satisfactory progress, has outstanding debts, has breached their immigration conditions, or has overstayed their visa.

SECTION B6: SUPERVISION

- 6.1 The supervisory team must have appropriate subject and research expertise and the necessary skills and experience to monitor, support and direct students' work.
- 6.2 All members of the supervisory team should possess:
- qualifications equivalent to at least the level of the qualification sought by the student; and,
 - an established and current research record in a relevant field, to ensure that the direction and monitoring of the student's progress is informed by up-to-date subject knowledge and research.
- 6.3 A supervisory team shall collectively meet the following minimum levels of training and/or experience:
- Successful completion of the 'Introduction to Research Supervision at UoW' and 'Research Supervision and the Research Regulations', plus
 - One successful completion to the level of the award being supervised. This supervision must have been for at least 50% of a student's registration period.
- 6.4 One supervisor shall be designated as the Director of Studies (DoS) with responsibility to supervise the student on a regular and frequent basis and to act as the principal point of contact on administrative matters. The DoS will also be accountable to the faculty in the first instance and to the University for the proper conduct of the research programme, including compliance with relevant University regulations and policies.

See Appendix 2: Guidelines on Supervision & Supervisory Teams

- 6.5 A third supervisor may not be added to the team purely for the purposes of meeting the conditions stipulated in Regulation 6.3.
- 6.6 The Faculty Research Committee will consider exceptions to the above regulations in the case of proposed members of the supervisory team who have professional expertise germane to the project.
- 6.7 A student for a research degree (whether registered at the University of Wolverhampton or elsewhere) is not eligible to act as a member of the supervisory team for another research degree student.
- 6.8 The supervisory team should include members with experience of internal or external examining at the level of the award being supervised.

Guidelines – Researcher Development and Other Training

Supervisors are expected to conduct a Research Skills Training Needs Analysis with all students at the start of the research degree programme to establish their skills development needs and create a personal development plan. This must be updated and submitted each year as part of the process of Annual Progress Review.

Students are required to attend the Doctoral College Induction within six months of registration. It is also mandatory to complete research ethics and integrity training.

Students are required to attend all of the training and skills development workshops identified in their personal development plan.

All students who are engaged in undertaking teaching or demonstrating on any University programmes will be provided with appropriate training, which they must undertake during their first year of teaching/demonstrating at the University. If the student's teaching activity also extends to assessing students, the training they receive must reflect this. Where possible, students who undertake teaching will do so as part of a teaching team and will benefit from the peer support provided.

As part of their research, a student may follow a programme of related studies where this is necessary for the attainment of competence in research methods and/or to broaden their disciplinary knowledge.

SECTION B7: ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW & PROGRESSION

- 7.1 Progress is formally assessed annually through the Annual Progress Review (APR) process and continuing registration is dependent upon satisfactory progress.
- 7.2 Full-time students in Stage 2 of the Professional Doctorate shall demonstrate satisfactory progress by month 33 (month 9 of year 3) of their Professional Doctorate by submission of an 'Annual Review and Progression Form' accompanied by an oral presentation to the independent assessors.

| APR | Month of Study | |
|--------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Full-time Students | Part-time Students |
| Year 1 | - | - |
| Year 2 | - | - |
| Year 3 | 33 | - |
| Year 4 | 42 | - |
| Year 5 | | 57 |
| Year 6 | | 69 |
| Year 7 | | 81 |
| Year 8 | | 90 |

- 7.3 Professional Doctorate students must then complete the APR process each year until their award is conferred. The following exceptions apply:
- Students who are completing minor corrections to their thesis following examination.
 - Students who have submitted their thesis and are awaiting their viva voce.
- Students who are revising their thesis for resubmission are required to complete APR.
- Where a student is on Leave of Absence at the relevant APR month, the APR process should be completed within 2 months of return from Leave of Absence.
- 7.4 Failure to return the Annual Progress Review Form or to attend the scheduled APR meeting will automatically invoke the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure.

See Appendix 5: The Annual Progress Review Process

APR Outcomes

- 7.5 The Research Student Board will consider the Annual Progress Review Form and recommend that the student:
- proceeds to the next year of their programme.
 - proceeds subject to amendments being made.
 - becomes subject to the 'proceed with caution' process.
 - is withdrawn from their programme for demonstrating lack of progress.
- Recommendation d) should be preceded by the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure.
- 7.6 The student will be informed of the recommendation of their RSB along with any feedback.
- 7.7 Students who are not able to demonstrate satisfactory progress before the end of their first year of stage 2 registration will not be permitted to register for the second year of the degree. They may, at the discretion of the Professional Doctorate Award & Progression Board be considered for an interim award within the programme. In this event, candidates must fulfil all the requirements for the alternate award, including submission of a satisfactory research project/dissertation.

See Appendix 4: The 'Proceed with Caution' Procedure

SECTION B8: THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT - THE EXAMINERS

- 8.1 A team of examiners will be convened to examine students at the appropriate time.
- 8.2 At least two examiners must be appointed for each thesis presented for examination, at least one of whom must be an external examiner. It is normal practice to appoint one internal and one external examiner. However, if the student is or has been, within the 12 months prior to the submission of the thesis, a member of university staff, two external examiners and an internal examiner must be appointed.
- 8.3 A student employed to do casual ad-hoc work, where there is no guarantee of work from one week to the next, the work on offer may vary in terms of hours, and there is no obligation for them to accept work if offered (a zero hours arrangement) will not be regarded as a member of staff in this respect. However, a student employed on a fractional FTE, fixed term contract will be regarded as a member of staff. In the latter case the student will continue to be considered a member of staff in this regard for 12 months after the end of the contract.

See Appendix 8: Guidelines for Nomination of Examiners

- 8.4 All oral examinations will be Chaired by a representative of the University. The Chair will be independent of the project, student and supervisors. Their role is to ensure that the examination is conducted fairly and in accordance with the University's regulations.
- 8.5 Once the examining team has been appointed, neither the student nor the supervisory team shall have any contact with the Examiners in relation to the thesis until the oral examination.

See Appendix 9: External Examiners (Research Degrees) - Process for Checking Right to Work in the UK

SECTION B9: THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT - THE THESIS

General Regulations

- 9.1 All research students must present a written thesis, presented in English, in the format agreed by the University Research Committee, on the subject of their research, for examination by a team of Examiners.

See Appendix 11: Format Requirements for the Thesis

- 9.2 All research degrees must reach a standard of written English and academic communication appropriate for the topic and the level of award, and examiners will be asked to consider this element of the work.
- 9.3 Research students are required to submit their thesis for examination within the registration periods for the award.
- 9.4 A student must have successfully completed all taught modules and placement hours before the submission of the Doctoral thesis/portfolio.

See Appendix 10: Submission of the Thesis

- 9.5 The student will submit sufficient copies of the thesis in printed form to supply one for each examiner. An identical digital version – in Word format - must be supplied for the viva Chair for reference.

Editorial support on the thesis

- 9.6 When a research student submits their thesis, it must be solely their own work (except where the Regulations permit the inclusion of appropriately referenced collaborative research or work). The student must not appoint or employ a 'ghost writer' to write parts or all of their thesis, whether in draft or as a final version.
- 9.7 Editors, whether they are part of the supervisory team, informal mentors, family or friends or professional proof-readers or editors, need to be clear about the extent and nature of help they can offer to a student in their editing role. Supervisors also need to be clear about the role of 'third party' editors as well as their own editorial role.
- 9.8 A student may use 'third party' editorial assistance or proof-readers (paid or voluntary) from an outside source. However, this must be with the knowledge and support of the student's Director of Studies and must strictly follow the regulations.
- 9.9 A 'third party' editor cannot be used to:
- Change the text of the thesis to clarify and/or develop the ideas and arguments.
 - Reduce the length of the thesis so it falls within the specified word limit.
 - Correct information within the thesis
 - Change ideas and arguments put forward within the thesis.
 - Translate the thesis into English.
- 9.10 A 'third party' editor can be used to offer advice on:
- Spelling and punctuation
 - Formatting and sorting of footnotes and endnotes for consistency and order.
 - Ensuring the thesis follows the conventions of grammar and syntax in written English.
 - Shortening long sentences and editing long paragraphs
 - Changing passives and impersonal usages into actives, or vice versa, as may be appropriate.
 - Improving the positioning of tables and illustrations and the clarity, grammar, spelling and punctuation of any text in or under tables and illustrations
 - Ensuring consistency of page numbers, headers, and footers.

Maximum Word Limits

- 9.11 The text of the thesis should not exceed the maximum length for the type of research degree set out in the table below. This word limit includes the abstract, main text, endnotes, footnotes, and words in diagrams/tables, but excludes references/bibliography and essential ancillary data in appendices.

Appendices should only include work previously published or exhibited, statements on copyright, evidence that the appropriate ethical approval has been granted, and material that is appropriate to substantiate the arguments and conclusions drawn within the thesis, but do not belong in the main text.

| Research Degree | Maximum Words |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Professional Doctorates | 60,000 |

Guidelines: Word Limits

The word limits stated in regulation 9.11 are the maximum and not something to aim for. Students should write as concisely as is possible, with clear and adequate explanation. Students should seek advice from their supervisory team on what is appropriate for their individual research programme.

- 9.12 In exceptional cases, applications to exceed these word limits must be made to RASC, by the Director of Studies, a minimum of three months prior to submission of the thesis to Registry Services. Applications will only be considered where there is compelling evidence and/or the new total is not greater than 10 percent of the word limits.
- 9.13 Any thesis found to be over-length on submission, without prior agreement, will not be accepted and will be returned to the student.

- 9.14 A thesis that is found to be substantially over-length (more than 10%) during examination, without prior agreement, may be cited as a reason for re-examination by the examination team.

Submission of the final thesis

- 9.15 Following successful examination and the approval of any amendments, which the examiners require, the student will be required to submit a final electronic version (E-Thesis) to Registry Services to be loaded to the University institutional repository (WIRE). Once the e-thesis is deposited in WIRE, it is published online so it can be accessed by scholars and others anywhere in the world.

See Appendix 12: Preparing the E-Thesis for Deposit

Restrictions on access to a thesis

- 9.16 An application for confidentiality may be made to the Dean of Research on the following grounds:
- to enable a patent application to be lodged.
 - the thesis contains politically sensitive material.
 - the thesis contains sensitive material that relates to questions of national security.
 - the thesis contains commercially sensitive information, the release of which might prejudice the commercial interests of any person including the author, the University, or an external company.
 - placing the thesis in the public domain might endanger the physical or mental health or the safety of an individual.
 - placing the thesis in the public domain would cause the author or third parties mentioned in the text to be open to legal challenge or racial, ethnic, political, or other persecution.
- 9.17 An application for restricted access must be made at the earliest opportunity and approval must be sought and granted no later than the time at which examination arrangements are approved. The normal maximum period of confidentiality is two years. Where a shorter period would be adequate, the University shall not automatically grant the full two years.
- 9.18 Where an application for confidentiality has been granted, the thesis will, immediately on completion of the programme of work, be retained by the University on restricted access and, for a time not exceeding the approved period, shall only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project.
- 9.19 A data only record will appear in WIRE (including author, title, keywords etc.) until the restricted access period has expired. The copies of the thesis submitted for examination shall remain the property of the University, but the copyright of the thesis shall be vested in the student.

Guidelines: Considerations for restricted access

Students should consider before any application that:

- The starting assumption is always that research can be made publicly available.
- A period of confidentiality should not be used as an alternative to legitimate ways of anonymising data to protect participants.
- Sensitive material can be removed to an appendix and embargoed separately so that the main body of research is still available publicly.
- Students should be following good practice in these areas (regardless of electronic access).
- Issues relating to potential harm to individuals, or the author should be considered as part of the research design and the ethical approval process.

SECTION B10 - THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT - FIRST EXAMINATION

- 10.1 The examination for a research degree shall have two stages: firstly, the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis and secondly its defence by oral examination; the viva voce.

Guidelines - Examinations

Prior to examination, students will be offered support to prepare them for the viva voce examination, in the form of a 'mock' viva with suitably qualified staff. The approved internal examiner must have no part in any such mock examination.

In cases where a student has declared a disability, learning difference or long-term health condition to the University, the student will be consulted about reasonable adjustments they may require during the oral examination. Where a student would be disadvantaged by an oral examination, alternative arrangements may be approved.

- 10.2 Students are required to attend the viva voce examination on the agreed date unless there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, which prevent attendance.
- 10.3 The viva voce examination should take place within 3 calendar months of the examiners receiving the thesis.
- 10.4 RASC shall ensure that all examinations are conducted, and the recommendations of the examiners are presented, wholly in accordance with the University's regulations. In any instance where RASC is made aware of failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.
- 10.5 RASC (or its Chair, acting on behalf of the sub-committee) shall make a decision on the reports and recommendation(s) of the examiners in respect of the student. The power to confer the degree shall rest with the Professional Doctorate Award and Progression Board, acting on behalf of Academic Board of the University of Wolverhampton.

Guidelines - Assessment Criteria for the Degree award of Professional Doctorate

The following criteria are used to assess Professional Doctorate degrees, and examiners will need to be satisfied that:

- a) the student has met the learning outcomes for the award submitted.
- b) the presentation of the thesis is satisfactory, and the standard of written English and academic communication is appropriate to the discipline and the level of award.
- c) the student has demonstrated, where appropriate, good research practice, and conformity with the ethics, legal and safety requirements, as set out by the University.
- d) the student has a satisfactory knowledge of the background literature and is able to relate the project to existing scholarship and research in the field.
- e) the thesis is the student's own work and is presented in a satisfactory manner (grammar, punctuation, spelling, clarity of expression, logical argument, and appropriate language).
- f) the thesis contains technical apparatus (abstract, preface and acknowledgements, footnotes, references, appendices, statistical tables, diagrams, illustrations, bibliography) set out according to the conventions of the field of study.

Preliminary Report on the Thesis

- 10.6 Registry Services will send a copy of the thesis to each examiner together with the examiner's Preliminary Report form, University Research Degrees Regulations, and the Notes of Guidance for Examiners. They will also respond to any questions the examiners have concerning the examination procedures.
- 10.7 Each examiner will read the thesis and provide an independent Preliminary Report on it to the University before any oral examination is held. In completing the Preliminary Report, each examiner shall consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree and where possible shall make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of an oral examination.
- 10.8 All Preliminary Reports must be received by Registry Services at least 10 working days before the scheduled date of the viva. The University may reschedule a viva where this is not the case.

- 10.9 Registry Services will ensure that the Chair has all Preliminary Reports to be distributed to the examination team on the day of the viva; but they will not be made available to the student.

The Oral Examination

- 10.10 Registry Services must notify the student, examiners, supervisors, and independent Chair in writing of the date and the arrangements for the oral examination. Arrangements include any agreed reasonable adjustments where these have been requested by the student, with reference to their tutor awareness sheet.
- 10.11 The oral examination shall not be arranged less than one month from the date of receipt of the thesis by the examiners to give the examiners a reasonable period in which to assess the work.
- 10.12 The oral examination shall be held in the UK (on university premises). In exceptional circumstances, RASC may give approval for the examination to take place by video conference, in line with the Policy on Remote Viva Voce Examinations.

Guidelines - Examiners' Pre-Meeting

Prior to the examination, the examiners will meet with the independent Chair to consider their preliminary reports and the student's thesis. The examiners will also clarify the issues, which they collectively, or independently, wish to raise with the student. The examiners should also agree the structure of their questioning and the time frame in which they hope to complete the oral examination.

Details of the implementation of any reasonable adjustments being made during the viva should be agreed, with the Chair ensuring that they comply with the student's entitlements.

- 10.13 A member of the supervisory team may, at the written request of the student, attend the oral examination as an observer, but shall withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.
- 10.14 Where a member of the supervisory team is not attending the examination, at least one member of the team should still be available to the student on the day of the viva for support.
- 10.15 The only other people who may attend the oral examination are those who are necessary for the University to discharge its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and where this has been agreed in advance.
- 10.16 At the end of the examination, the student and supervisor will leave the room. The examiners or the Chair may however invite them back to clarify any outstanding issues arising from the examination. If a supervisor has not been invited to attend the viva voce by the student, they are not permitted to join the meeting between the student and examination team that delivers the outcome.

Guidelines – The role of the Chair

Each examination shall be chaired by an independent Chair, nominated by RASC. The Chair must have attended the appropriate training. This training is provided to ensure that Chairs carry out their role rigorously, fairly, reliably, and consistently.

The Chair will have responsibility for arranging the examination and for ensuring that the student is given a fair opportunity to defend the work and for acquainting the External Examiner with any extenuating circumstances, which have a bearing on the case.

The Chair shall have a neutral role in the assessment process and will take no part in the actual assessment of the thesis or the deliberations of the examining team. The Chair will advise the examiners and/or the student and will ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with university regulations, procedures, policy, and practice.

Recommendations Available to the Examiners

- 10.17 Following the completion of the oral examination, the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit to Registry Services a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree.
- 10.18 The examiners will be asked to make one of the following recommendations, that:
- a) the student may be awarded the degree.
 - b) the student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis.
 - c) the student be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined with an oral examination.
 - d) the student be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined without an oral examination.
 - e) Fail. The student has no further opportunity for submission.
- 10.19 The examiners shall inform the student of their recommendations to RASC on the day of the examination.
- 10.20 The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable RASC to satisfy itself that the recommendation proposed is appropriate. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted.

Guidelines - Feedback from the Examiners to the Student Post-Viva

The examiners must supply Registry Services with a report detailing the amendments and corrections they require within 10 working days of the date of the oral examination.

Registry Services will supply the report to the student within 5 working days of receipt from the examiners.

Award of the Degree Subject to Minor Amendments to the Thesis

- 10.21 Where the examiners are satisfied that the student has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the thesis requires additional explanatory information or some minor amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the re-examination of a revised thesis, they may recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the student amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s).
- 10.22 The student should be able to undertake minor amendments with minimal supervision. Minor corrections that are permissible include typographical errors, minor amendments and/or replacement of, or additions to the text, references or diagrams. Other more extensive corrections may be made as long as they do not require significant (as defined by the examiners) re-working or re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis.
- 10.23 Where minor amendments are required, the student must submit the corrected thesis within a maximum of 12 weeks from the date the examiners' feedback is sent to the student. RASC may, where there are exceptional reasons, approve an extension of this period. For students with disabilities, learning differences or long term health conditions, where it is indicated on their tutor awareness sheet, an additional 25% time is given (totalling 15 weeks).
- 10.24 When students submit the corrected thesis, they shall attach a summary of the changes they have made identifying where the changes can be found in the corrected thesis.
- 10.25 If the thesis is not resubmitted within the time period indicated in 10.23, and in the absence of approved and recorded Leave of Absence, the University reserves the right not to confer the award.
- 10.26 The minor amendments must be made to the satisfaction of at least one examiner as agreed by the examiners following the viva voce. Examiners may not make additional requirements at this stage. Upon receipt of the corrected thesis, the nominated examiner will, within one month of receipt, complete the Examiner's Final Declaration Form and return it to Registry Services.
- 10.27 Where the examiners are unable to agree a joint recommendation following submission of the amended thesis, the procedures in Regulations 10.30 and 10.31 shall apply.

Outright Failure

- 10.28 Where the examiners recommend at the oral examination that the degree be not awarded and that no re-examination be permitted, they shall prepare for RASC an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation. Following RASC approval of the recommendation, the Committee Officer will forward this statement to the student.
- 10.29 A thesis should only be 'failed' on first examination if the examiners consider that the work could not form the basis of an acceptable thesis at a second attempt. Otherwise, the decision should be re-examination'.

Where Recommendations are not Unanimous

- 10.30 Where Examiners are unable to reach an agreed recommendation, the University may:
- a) accept a majority recommendation,
 - b) accept the recommendation of the external Examiner, or
 - c) require the appointment of an additional Examiner.
- 10.31 Where an additional external examiner is appointed under Regulation 10.30c) above, they shall prepare an independent report on the thesis and may request an additional oral examination. That examiner will neither seek nor be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. The reports from all the examiners are considered by the Dean of Research.

SECTION B11: RE-EXAMINATION

- 11.1 If the thesis is not considered to be of sufficiently high standard to recommend the award submitted, but there is evidence of the potential of a successful submission, then the examiners may recommend that the student re-submit the thesis for re-examination. Such re-submission will take place not less than 3 months and not more than 12 calendar months from the date of the oral examination and students must remain registered at the University during this time. The maximum registration period will be extended to accommodate this requirement.
- 11.2 With reference to regulation 11.1, students with disabilities, learning differences or long-term health conditions, where it is indicated on their tutor awareness sheet an additional 25% time may be given.
- 11.3 There are two forms of re-examination:
- the thesis is to be revised and resubmitted and if deemed satisfactory by the examiners, the student will be exempt from further oral examination; or
 - the thesis is to be revised and resubmitted and the student must undergo a further oral examination.
- 11.4 A recommendation for a second oral examination may be made where:
- following the first examination the examiners are of the view that:
 - the revisions require significant new work (such as the gathering of new or additional data and/or any new analysis) that may affect the results and conclusions of the research, such that oral defence of the revised thesis and its findings is likely to be necessary.
 - the student's knowledge of research methods and the field of study in general require a level of development that can only be evaluated by further oral examination.
 - the first oral examination fell short of an acceptable standard.
 - following resubmission of the revised thesis the examiners are of the view that further oral defence is required.
- 11.5 The examiners must provide the student with written guidance on the deficiencies of the first submission and the remedial action required (including any additional research or experimental work).
- 11.6 When students resubmit their thesis, they shall attach a summary of the changes they have made identifying where the changes can be found in the resubmitted thesis.
- 11.7 All resubmitted theses must conform to the formatting requirements and word count of the intended award.
- 11.8 The original examiners will undertake the re-examination, but in the event of non-availability, new examiners shall be appointed by completing a new NOMEX form. The Research Awards Sub-committee may require that an additional external examiner be appointed for the re-examination.
- 11.9 Examiners are required to submit their independent preliminary report on the resubmitted thesis:
- at least 10 working days before any oral examination where there is a viva, or
 - within 25 working days of receiving the thesis where there is no viva.
- 11.10 When re-examining the resubmitted thesis, the examiners must indicate in the preliminary report:
- whether they wish to request a second oral examination when this had not been previously recommended but is deemed necessary to re-examine the research degree (see regulation 11.4b).
 - whether or not they wish to re-examine the student in a further oral examination when this had been previously recommended, where the resubmitted thesis fulfils all the stated deficiencies (see regulation 11.4a).
- 11.11 Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous at the re-examination stage, the reports are shared with each examiner and the examining team is asked to consult and to make every effort to provide a joint recommendation to RASC. Where this is not possible, the procedure in Regulations 10.30 and 10.31 shall apply.

Outcomes on Re-Examination

- 11.12 Where the thesis is re-examined, the examiners will only consider the issues that were previously referred. Following completion of the re-examination, the examiners may recommend that:
- a) the student be awarded the degree.
 - b) the student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis.
 - c) Fail. The student has no further opportunity for submission. (See Regulation 11.16).
- 11.13 Where minor amendments are required, the student must submit the corrected thesis within a maximum of 4 weeks from the date the examiners' feedback is sent to the student. RASC may, where there are exceptional reasons, approve an extension of this period. For students with disabilities, learning differences or long-term health conditions, where it is indicated on their tutor awareness sheet, an additional 25% time is given (totalling 5 weeks). When students submit the corrected thesis, they shall attach a summary of the changes they have made identifying where the changes can be found in the corrected thesis.
- 11.14 If the thesis is not resubmitted within the period indicated in 11.13, and in the absence of approved and recorded Leave of Absence, the University reserves the right not to confer the award.
- 11.15 Where the examiners are unable to agree a joint recommendation following submission of the amended thesis, the procedures in Regulations 10.30 and 10.31 shall apply.

Failure on Re-Examination

- 11.16 RASC may decide, on the recommendation of the examiners, that the degree be not awarded and that no further re-examination be permitted. In such cases, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation. Following RASC approval of the recommendation, this statement will be forwarded to the student by Committee Officer.
- 11.17 In all cases where a submission is failed, or where the degree awarded is other than that for which it was submitted, a panel of enquiry shall be set up to investigate the reasons. This shall report its conclusions to the University's Research Awards Sub-committee, and appropriate action shall be agreed and implemented.

SECTION B12: CONFERMENT OF AWARDS

- 12.1 Conferment of an award is withheld from any student who has not fulfilled a legitimate requirement of the University, including the settlement of any outstanding debt to the University.
- 12.2 A student must not state that they have been awarded a research degree on their CV, in job applications or at interview until a formal conferment letter is received from the University.

Guidelines – Conferment

The University provides an award certificate to each student on whom it confers an award. Following the conferment of the award, the student is invited to attend a graduation ceremony.

SECTION B13: ACADEMIC, RESEARCH OR ETHICAL MISCONDUCT

- 13.1 Any alleged misconduct in research (that is, other than academic misconduct in an assessment) will be dealt with initially through the Procedures for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research.
- 13.2 Any alleged assessment offence will be dealt with through the 'Procedure for managing an alleged assessment offence', where a student has:
- sought to gain unfair academic advantage in the assessment process for themselves or another student, and/or
 - not complied with internal or external ethical approval processes, and/or
 - breached a principle of research integrity.
- 13.3 An assessment offence may be committed in relation to a "piece of work contributing to a research award of the University". This includes any written work or oral presentation submitted for assessment or submitted to a Faculty Research Committee in support of the Progression stage of a Research Degree Programme or as part of the Annual Progress Review.
- 13.4 All research will use text-matching software to produce an originality report, to be submitted alongside assessed work, including:
- Annual Progress Review.
 - Progression Stage.
 - The thesis.
 - A resubmitted thesis, where resubmission is required.
- 13.5 The University reserves the right to submit any assessment item to a text-matching database for electronic originality checking with or without a student's consent.

See Appendix 13: Procedure for managing an alleged assessment offence

SECTION B14: ACADEMIC APPEALS

- 14.1 The University has an appeals procedure that is available for all research students. (<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/current-students/conduct-and-appeals/>) This process can also be used to appeal against the outcome of an Extenuating Circumstances claim.
- 14.2 Appellants will not be disadvantaged as a result of bringing an academic appeal.
- 14.3 A student registered for a postgraduate research degree has the right to appeal against a decision made at any of the key assessment points:
- Taught modules (Professional Doctorate Students only)
 - Progression decision (Annual Progress Review or Progression Stage)
 - Examination or re-examination of the thesis.
- 14.4 In addition, students may also appeal against decisions made relating to:
- the decision that there is no prima facie case for the award of a PhD by Published Work.
 - Withdrawal of registration due to lack of academic progress.

SECTION B15: COMPLAINTS

- 15.1 Research students who are dissatisfied with their conditions of work or the quality of their supervision should wherever possible discuss the difficulties with their supervisor.
- 15.2 If a research student prefers not to discuss their concerns with the supervisor, the student should approach the Postgraduate Research Tutor.
- 15.3 If the complaint is not resolved through informal routes then the University of Wolverhampton has a formal Student Complaints Procedure. Information on the complaints procedure may be found at: <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/policies-and-regulations/>

SECTION B16: POSTHUMOUS AND AEGROTAT AWARDS

- 16.1 The University may award consider an Aegrotat or Posthumous award, on the recommendation of the Dean of Research. In reaching the decision, the Dean of Research will normally convene an Examination Panel in accordance with section B10.
- 16.2 In addition to the award sought (or an MPhil in the case of PhD), the Examiners may recommend the award of Postgraduate Diploma (by research), if they believe the work is close to but not sufficient.
- 16.3 In considering whether to accept such a thesis, the relevant committee will assure itself that the work available is of sufficient quality to demonstrate to Examiners that the student had achieved the objectives of the research programme.
- 16.4 In considering the request for an Aegrotat award, the University Research Awards sub-committee will assure itself that appropriate efforts have been made to support the student and to retrieve the programme of study, and that the student is unlikely to be able to complete the programme in the foreseeable future.
- 16.5 Research submitted for consideration for a Postgraduate Diploma (by Research) cannot subsequently be employed by the student towards a Research Degree.

SECTION B17: REVOCATION OF AWARD

- 17.1 In exceptional circumstances, following an investigation, the University may at any time, on the recommendation of the Academic Registrar, revoke an award and all privileges connected therewith, having determined that there is good cause to do so. This may include:
 - a) Where an award is found to have been obtained by fraud or deception including academic and research misconduct.
 - b) Where a graduate has not met the requirements of the award conferred or
 - c) Where the award has been obtained due to administrative error or irregularities in the conduct of the Research Awards Sub-committee.