

2023/24

# **Part C: Regulations for the degree award of Doctor of Medicine (MD)**

Effective from August 2023

# Contents

SECTION C1: GENERAL REGULATIONS.....	4
Award Titles .....	4
Learning Outcomes .....	4
SECTION C2: ADMISSION OF STUDENTS .....	4
General Admission Regulations .....	4
Entry Requirements for MD Degrees.....	5
Students Working as Part of a Research Group .....	6
Previous Registration at the University of Wolverhampton .....	6
Concurrent Study .....	7
Submitting Work for Assessment More Than Once .....	7
Transferring Course .....	7
Fraudulent Applications.....	7
Registration and Enrolment.....	8
Additional Requirements for Registration as an International Student.....	9
Mode of Study .....	10
Duration of the Degree.....	10
Maximum Periods of Registration .....	10
Researcher Development and Other Training .....	11
Holiday Entitlement .....	11
Change of Mode of Study (full-time/part-time) .....	11
Leave of Absence .....	12
Exceptional Extension to the Period of Registration .....	13
Withdrawal of Registration.....	14
SECTION C4: SUPERVISION .....	15
SECTION C5: CONTINUATION REGULATIONS .....	16
Supervisory meetings.....	16
Reviewing & Assessing Progress .....	16
SECTION C6: ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW (APR) & PROGRESSION .....	17
APR & Progression Outcomes .....	17
SECTION C7: THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT - THE EXAMINERS.....	18
SECTION C8: THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT - THE THESIS .....	18
General Regulations .....	18
Maximum Word Limits.....	19
Submission of the final thesis .....	20
Restrictions on access to a thesis .....	20
SECTION C9 - THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT - FIRST EXAMINATION .....	21
Preliminary Report on the Thesis .....	21
The Oral Examination.....	22
Recommendations Available to the Examiners.....	23
Award of the Degree Subject to Minor Amendments to the Thesis .....	23

Outright Failure ..... 24

Where Recommendations are not Unanimous..... 24

SECTION C10: RE-EXAMINATION..... 25

Outcomes on Re-Examination ..... 26

Failure on Re-Examination..... 26

SECTION C11: CONFERMENT OF AWARDS..... 26

SECTION C13: ACADEMIC APPEALS ..... 27

SECTION C14: COMPLAINTS ..... 27

SECTION C15: POSTHUMOUS AND AEGROTAT AWARDS ..... 28

SECTION C16: REVOCATION OF AWARD ..... 28

## SECTION C1: GENERAL REGULATIONS

### Award Titles

- 1.1 The Degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) is awarded by the University in recognition of the successful completion of a period of supervised research and training, the results of which show convincing evidence of scholarship, the competence of the candidate to pursue research and a significant contribution to new knowledge and understanding in the theory and/or practice of any area of medicine. The results of this research shall then be embodied in a thesis or other appropriate form and must contain material of a standard appropriate for peer-reviewed publication.

### Learning Outcomes

- 1.2 The University's research degrees are awarded to students 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 for the Award of MD**

- an original work making a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of study.
- contain material worthy of publication.
- show a comprehensive knowledge and a critical appreciation of the field of study and related literature.
- show that the student's observations have been carefully made.
- show the exercise of independent critical judgment with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field.
- contain material which presents a unified body of work.
- be satisfactory in its literary and general presentation, give full and adequate references and have a coherent structure understandable to a scholar in the same general field with regard to intentions, background, methods, results, discussion, and conclusions.

## SECTION C2: 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 School of Medicine and Clinical Practice.
- 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.

**See Appendix 1: Guidelines on the Application Process**

- 2.9 Applicants may be permitted to perform clinical duties depending on the mode of study:
- a) for **full-time study** the degree shall be continuous; students will however be permitted to perform limited clinical duties if the prior approval of their supervisor(s) is obtained. Such limited duties might equate to one session per week (10% of working week) and 'out of hours' on call duties. Students will be required to devote the whole of the remaining time to the degree and to attend in the University at all appropriate times.
  - b) for **part-time study** the degree shall be continuous and include study time equivalent to a full-time degree, but registration should not exceed twice the full-time study. The students shall be required to attend the University at all appropriate times.

### Entry Requirements for MD Degrees

- 2.10 Applicants for admission must be recognised graduates in Medicine of at least three years' standing who holds a M.B., Ch.B. degree or an equivalent qualification conferring eligibility for full or provisional registration with the General Medical Council, and either:
- a) have for at least three years prior to entry for the degree, held a research or teaching appointment, or
  - b) have been engaged in the practice of medicine or surgery.
- 2.11 Applicants proposing to undertake hands-on clinical research must be registered and hold appropriate indemnity.
- 2.12 Applicants for an MD will have a contract in a specialism (at Registrar or equivalent level) at a hospital with appropriate resources and support for clinical research.
- 2.13 The hospital/Trust will provide the student with the appropriate time (70%) over the two years for their research whilst allowing them to continue to undertake appropriate clinical duties (10% up to a maximum of 30% of their time) as essential for continued GMC registration and in order to effectively undertake clinically related research.

### English Language Competence

- 2.14 Applicants must demonstrate proficiency in English at least to the level of an IELTS score 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/> ]

## The Application

- 2.15 Applicants who demonstrate that they have met the entry requirements and have provided an acceptable outline of the research that they propose to conduct will be required to complete a research proposal in conjunction with a senior experienced clinical advisor (a senior consultant in the field of research but not the proposed clinical supervisors).
- 2.16 The proposal should give sufficient detail to enable the Research Student Board to determine whether the proposed study is of sufficient academic weight and is capable of completion within the available time.

## Students Working as Part of a Research Group

- 2.17 An applicant whose work forms part of a larger group project may register for a postgraduate research degree. In such cases, each individually approved project shall be distinguishable for the purposes of assessment and be appropriate for the award being sought. The application shall clearly indicate each individual contribution and its relationship to the group project.
- 2.18 Where a postgraduate research degree project is part of a piece of funded research, the faculty shall establish to its satisfaction that the terms on which the research is funded do not detract from the fulfilment of the objectives and requirements of the student's postgraduate research degree.

## Previous Registration at the University of Wolverhampton

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 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.
- 2.21 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 2.20 above, and
  - b) at least twelve months have lapsed between the date of withdrawal and the date of application for re-admission.
- 2.22 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

- 2.23 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.
- 2.24 An applicant transferring their registration from another institution 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.
- 2.25 This also applies to students transferring from another HEI to follow a supervisor newly appointed to the University of Wolverhampton.
- 2.26 Any application lacking the information set out in Regulation 2.24 above will be rejected.

## Concurrent Study

- 2.27 Students registered at another institution to study for a research degree are not eligible for admission for a research degree at the University of Wolverhampton unless their registration elsewhere is terminated.
- 2.28 A student will not be permitted to register concurrently for two postgraduate research degrees at the University of Wolverhampton.
- 2.29 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

- 2.30 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.
- 2.31 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 A12: Academic, Research or Ethical Misconduct.

## Transferring Course

- 2.32 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

- 2.33 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.

- 2.34 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 C3: REGISTRATION AS A MEDICAL DOCTORATE STUDENT

- 3.1 A student may be admitted to a MD degree only if an appropriate research environment is available for the duration of the degree. This should include the availability of appropriate academic staff to provide supervision and training, other research-support staff, research facilities and learning resources.

### Registration and Enrolment

#### Guidelines – Registration

Once the Research Proposal has been approved and any other conditions are met, a formal offer letter is sent to successful applicants offering them a place on a postgraduate research degree at the University of Wolverhampton. On receipt of confirmation of acceptance of the offer, students are sent registration details that includes details of the enrolment process.

- 3.2 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. Students who do not fully register within 2 months of receipt of an unconditional offer may be de-registered and barred from study.

#### 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].

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 Continuing students who do not re-enrol will be assumed to have withdrawn from their course.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.

If prefer to access your emails in your personal email account, you can easily forward your University emails to it, so you don't miss any important messages. Instructions to do so can be accessed at: <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/its/self-help/university-email/email-for-students/forwarding-student-email/>

- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 Students must, at all times, ensure that the data the University holds for them are 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.

#### **Additional Requirements for Registration as an International Student**

- 3.10 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:
- a) 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.
  - b) 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.
  - c) Students must ensure their passport and student visa are valid throughout their period of registration.
  - d) 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.
  - e) Student visa holders are allowed to study on a full-time basis only. Part-time study is not permitted.
  - f) Students must inform the University of any change of address and telephone number (UK and overseas). This can be undertaken via e-vision.
  - g) 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

- 3.11 The MD is primarily studied full-time.
- 3.12 Applicants may also be admitted as a part-time student for the degree of MD if:
- the periods for which they will be free from employment or other commitments will be sufficient for the purposes of the degree, and
  - the subject is suitable for part-time study.

### Guidelines – Mode of Study

Research programmes do 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.

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.

## Duration of the Degree

- 3.13 Candidates for the degree of MD shall be registered for a continuous prescribed period of not less than 2 years in which they will conduct the research.
- 3.14 The duration of a part-time prescribed period will be dependent upon the time to be committed by the candidate for study but shall be no more than 4 years.

Mode of Study	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Full-time	Prescribed Period		Submission Period

Mode of Study	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Part-time	Prescribed Period			Submission Period		

- 3.15 Extensions to the duration of a MD degree to permit further supervised research may be considered only in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.16 Full-time candidates registered on an MD degree may register for the submission period at the discretion of the University to allow additional time for preparation of the thesis for up to one year (3 years PT) beyond the prescribed period of the MD degree.  
A 'writing up' fee will be payable annually for any such submission period that is granted by the University.
- 3.17 A student who is registered for an MD may apply for conversion to an alternative degree, including completing a 2-year full time equivalent prescribed period to complete an MPhil, or extending the prescribed period to 3 years full time equivalent to complete a PhD. Conversion can only be considered prospectively, in advance of completing the necessary prescribed period of research and will incur fees applicable to the new degree.

## Maximum Periods of Registration

- 3.18 The maximum period over which an MD award may be studied will be:

	Standard	Maximum
Full-time Students	2 years (24 months)	3 years (36 months)
Part-time Students	3 years (36 months)	6 years (72 months)

- 3.19 The standard and maximum periods of registration are calculated from the initial date of registration.
- 3.20 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).

- 3.21 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.
- 3.22 Where a research student can demonstrate that they have achieved all or some of the learning outcomes through research training and personal development undertaken outside the University, RASC may recommend that the student be accredited for such prior achievement and thus be deemed to have completed all or part of the specified programme of research training. This recommendation may also consider a reduced registration period.

## Researcher Development and Other Training

- 3.23 A programme of skills development is a mandatory component of the MD degree.
- 3.24 All candidates for the degree of MD must undertake a Training Needs Analysis at the beginning of their degree, and annually thereafter throughout their degree to determine their research, transferable and generic skills requirements. The analysis will provide the basis for a planned programme of skills training and development. The outcomes of the analysis and programme of skills development must be agreed by the student and the supervisory team. The supervisory team will be responsible for ensuring that the student has access to the required skills training and development opportunities.

## Holiday Entitlement

- 3.25 Students 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. 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.

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

- 3.26 A student may apply to change their mode of study.
- 3.27 A student holding a studentship (internal or external) must check the terms and conditions of the award before they request a change of mode of study.
- 3.28 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

- 3.29 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).
- 3.30 After agreeing this option with their supervisor, students must apply for a Leave of Absence via their e: Vision account. The student will have to confirm that they will not be undertaking any research activities whilst on Leave of Absence. The student will need to 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.
- 3.31 The University reserves the right to ask for evidence to support any request for Leave of Absence.
- 3.32 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.
- 3.33 All applications will be considered on an individual basis. It should be noted that approval will not automatically be granted.
- 3.34 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.
- 3.35 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.
- 3.36 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.
- 3.37 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

- 3.38 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.
- 3.39 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

- 3.40 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.
- 3.41 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

- 3.42 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

- 3.43 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.
- 3.44 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.
- 3.45 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).
- 3.46 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

- 3.47 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.
- 3.48 On their return from Leave of Absence students are subject to the then current edition of the Research Degrees Regulations.
- 3.49 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.

## Exceptional Extension to the Period of Registration

- 3.50 A student is expected to submit their thesis before the expiry of the maximum period of registration.
- 3.51 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 above 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).
- 3.52 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.
- 3.53 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.
- 3.54 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.

- 3.55 An extension will be granted in month-long blocks. A new maximum registration date will be calculated that takes account of the period granted.
- 3.56 The total period of extension allowable will not exceed 12 months.
- 3.57 Research students may be liable for fees for any extended period of registration.
- 3.58 An extension shall not be granted retrospectively.
- 3.59 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

- 3.60 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.
- 3.61 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.

#### Withdrawal of Registration

- 3.62 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.
- 3.63 Where a student fails to re-enrol or to meet their fee liability, the student will be withdrawn from the programme.
- 3.64 In addition, 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 C4: SUPERVISION

- 4.1 MD students will have a designated supervisory team with at least two supervisors, and no more than three. Supervision and support are provided by a carefully selected team that will include at least one medical doctor in the specialty and others as required. Students meet with their supervisors at least monthly.
- 4.2 Depending on the research project students may be based in laboratories at the University of Wolverhampton but most will be clinically based at an approved hospital trust.
- 4.3 The supervisory team must have appropriate subject and research expertise and the necessary skills and experience to monitor, support and direct students' work.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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**

- 4.7 A third supervisor may not be added to the team purely for the purposes of meeting the conditions stipulated in Regulation 4.5.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 The supervisory team should include members with experience of internal or external examining at the level of the award being supervised.

## SECTION C5: CONTINUATION REGULATIONS

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 The University Research Committee will convene a Research Awards Sub-committee, which will meet at least six times each year, to consider:
  - a) The performance of students currently subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' process,
  - b) The annual progress review of all students,
  - c) The performance of students at the "progression" stage
  - d) Nomination of Research Degree Examiners
  - e) The conferment of awards

### Supervisory meetings

- 5.3 There should be regular contact between the student and members of the supervisory team. As a minimum:
  - a) Full-time students should meet with a supervisor once a month (12 sessions a calendar year).
  - b) 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 on Records of Meetings between Supervisors and Students**

### Reviewing & Assessing Progress

- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Student progress will be **assessed** throughout the research degree programme by independent assessors at scheduled assessment points:
  - a) Annual progress review (APR) and forward planning, and
  - b) The Progression stage to confirm whether the research has progressed sufficiently to obtain a doctoral qualification.
- 5.6 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**



## SECTION C6: ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW (APR) & PROGRESSION

- 6.1 Full-time students admitted to the degree of MD shall demonstrate satisfactory progress by month 9 (Part-time month 21) of their research degree by submission of an 'Annual Review and Progression Form' accompanied by an oral presentation to the independent assessors. Failure to submit within these periods will result in the student being made subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' process.
- 6.2 Successful completion of the agreed programme of skills development and training will be a condition of progression between each year of the prescribed period of study.

<b>APR for Full Time Students</b>	<b>Month of Study</b>	<b>Indicative Word Count</b>
First Year (APR & Progression)	9	20,000
Second Year	21	40,000

<b>APR for Part Time Students</b>	<b>Month of Study</b>	<b>Indicative Word Count</b>
First Year	9	10,000
Second Year (APR & Progression)	21	20,000
Third Year	33	30,000
Fourth Year	45	40,000
Fifth Year	57	50,000

- 6.3 Students who are not able to demonstrate satisfactory progress before the end of their first year of registration, will not be permitted to register for the second year of the degree. They may, at the discretion of independent assessors, be offered the opportunity to submit a thesis for the degree of MPhil.
- 6.4 At each annual review, it would be permissible for a student to transfer to the equivalent point of the PhD degree. For this purpose, the student shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the independent assessors, their understanding of the subject and that their ability plus the subject were suitable for PhD level research.

### APR & Progression Outcomes

- 6.5 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 directed to submit for the award of MPhil (if within the maximum registration period for an MPhil).
  - is withdrawn from their programme for demonstrating lack of progress.
- Recommendations d) and e) should be preceded by the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure.
- 6.6 The student will be informed of the recommendation of their RSB along with any feedback.

**See Appendix 5: The Annual Progress Review Process**

**See Appendix 6: The Progression Stage Process**

## SECTION C7: THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT - THE EXAMINERS

- 7.1 A team of examiners will be convened to examine students at the appropriate time.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 In an examination for a Doctor of Medicine the examining team shall have experience of examining at least one Doctor of Medicine student, and one examiner must be an appropriately qualified medical practitioner.

**See Appendix 8: Guidelines for Nomination of Examiners**

- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 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 C8: THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT - THE THESIS

### General Regulations

- 8.1 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**

- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 If a thesis is not submitted before the end of the MD degree or submission period, the student's candidacy automatically lapses and the student cannot subsequently submit, unless further approval is granted by the University.
- 8.4 If a student wishes to submit a thesis more than 3 months before the end of their prescribed period (or 6 months if part-time) they will require the permission of the supervisory team and the University. Permission will only be granted up to one year before the end of the MD degree for full time students, and 2 years before the end of the MD degree for part time students.

**See Appendix 10: Submission of the Thesis**

- 8.5 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

- 8.6 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.
- 8.7 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.
- 8.8 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.
- 8.9 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.
- 8.10 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

- 8.11 The text of the thesis should not exceed **60,000 words**. 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.
- 8.12 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.
- 8.13 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.
- 8.14 Any thesis found to be over-length on submission, without prior agreement, will not be accepted and will be returned to the student.
- 8.15 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

- 8.16 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

- 8.17 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.
- 8.18 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.
- 8.19 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.
- 8.20 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 C9 - THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT - FIRST EXAMINATION

- 9.1 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.

- 9.2 Students are required to attend the viva voce examination on the agreed date unless there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, which prevent attendance.
- 9.3 The viva voce examination should take place within 3 calendar months of the examiners receiving the thesis.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 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 RASC, acting on behalf of Academic Board of the University of Wolverhampton.

### **Guidelines - Assessment Criteria for Medical Doctorate Degrees**

The following criteria are used in assessing MD student research, and examiners will need to be satisfied that:

- the student has met the learning outcomes for the award submitted.
- 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.
- the student has demonstrated, where appropriate, good research practice, and conformity with the ethics, legal and safety requirements, as set out by the University.
- 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.
- 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).
- 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.
- the MD thesis displays appropriate evidence of:
  - originality and independent critical judgement; and
  - constitutes a contribution to subject knowledge in the research field.

## Preliminary Report on the Thesis

- 9.6 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.
- 9.7 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.

- 9.8 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.
- 9.9 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

- 9.10 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.
- 9.11 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.
- 9.12 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.

- 9.13 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.
- 9.14 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.
- 9.15 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.
- 9.16 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

- 9.17 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.
- 9.18 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) the student be permitted to re-submit for the degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners and which must meet the criteria for the award of MPhil.
  - f) Fail. The student has no further opportunity for submission.
- 9.19 The examiners shall inform the student of their recommendations to RASC on the day of the examination.
- 9.20 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

- 9.21 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).
- 9.22 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 if they do not require significant (as defined by the examiners) re-working or re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis.
- 9.23 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).
- 9.24 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.
- 9.25 If the thesis is not resubmitted within the time period indicated in 9.23, and in the absence of approved and recorded Leave of Absence, the University reserves the right not to confer the award.
- 9.26 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.
- 9.27 Where the examiners are unable to agree a joint recommendation following submission of the amended thesis, the procedures in Regulations 9.30 and 9.31 shall apply.

## Outright Failure

- 9.28 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.
- 9.29 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

- 9.30 Where Examiners are unable to reach an agreed recommendation, the Dean of Research may:
- a) accept a majority recommendation,
  - b) accept the recommendation of the external Examiner, or
  - c) require the appointment of an additional Examiner.
- 9.31 Where an additional external examiner is appointed under Regulation 9.30c) 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 C10: RE-EXAMINATION

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 If the thesis for a MD award is not considered to be of sufficiently high standard to recommend the full award and the examiners do not believe there is evidence of potential to reach the appropriate standard within 12 months, they may recommend that the student re-submit the thesis for an MPhil award. Such re-submission will take place within 6 calendar months of the date of the oral examination.
- 10.3 A student whose thesis has been recommended to re-submit for re-examination may exercise the option of re-submitting a revised thesis for the award of MPhil. Such re-submission will take place within 6 calendar months of the date of the oral examination.
- 10.4 With reference to regulation 10.1. 10.2 and 10.3 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.
- 10.5 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.
- 10.6 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.
- 10.7 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).
- 10.8 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.
- 10.9 All resubmitted theses must conform to the formatting requirements and word count of the intended award.
- 10.10 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.
- 10.11 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.
- 10.12 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 10.6b).
  - 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 10.6a).

- 10.13 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 9.30 and 9.31 shall apply.

### Outcomes on Re-Examination

- 10.14 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:
- the student be awarded the degree.
  - the student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis.
  - Fail. The student has no further opportunity for submission. (See Regulation 10.18).
- 10.15 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.
- 10.16 If the thesis is not resubmitted within the period indicated in 10.15, and in the absence of approved and recorded Leave of Absence, the University reserves the right not to confer the award.
- 10.17 Where the examiners are unable to agree a joint recommendation following submission of the amended thesis, the procedures in Regulations 9.30 and 9.31 shall apply.

### Failure on Re-Examination

- 10.18 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.
- 10.19 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 C11: CONFERMENT OF AWARDS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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 C12: ACADEMIC, RESEARCH OR ETHICAL MISCONDUCT

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 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.
- 12.4 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.
- 12.5 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 C13: ACADEMIC APPEALS

- 13.1 The University has an appeals procedure that is available for all research students. (<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/current-students/conduct-and-appeals/>)
- 13.2 Appellants will not be disadvantaged as a result of bringing an academic appeal.
- 13.3 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.
- 13.4 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 C14: COMPLAINTS

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 If a research student prefers not to discuss their concerns with the supervisor, the student should approach the Postgraduate Research Tutor.
- 14.3 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 C15: POSTHUMOUS AND AEGROTAT AWARDS

- 15.1 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 convene an Examination Panel in accordance with section C9.
- 15.2 In addition to the award sought (or an MPhil in the case of PhD and MD), the Examiners may recommend the award of Postgraduate Diploma (by research), if they believe the work is close to but not sufficient.
- 15.3 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.
- 15.4 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.
- 15.5 Research submitted for consideration for a Postgraduate Diploma (by Research) cannot subsequently be employed by the student towards a Research Degree.

## SECTION C16: REVOCATION OF AWARD

- 16.1 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.