

Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study

Academic Year 2022-23

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Introduction

1. These regulations set out the framework within which Middlesex University (“we”, “us”, “our”) offers postgraduate research study to students (“you”, “your”, “doctoral researcher”, “postgraduate researcher”). They form part of our Enrolment Terms and Conditions, and in cases of doubt have precedence of specific individual policies. You should also read the guidance for postgraduate researchers.
2. The following regulations and policies also apply:
 - a. The University Regulations, and in particular sections F (Academic Integrity and Misconduct) and H (Student Responsibilities).
 - b. Any university research policies apply to you as a research student.
3. If there is a dispute about the meaning of these regulations, or their interpretation, the University’s Academic Registrar will be asked to decide. Their decision will be final.
4. These regulations apply to all students who registered for a postgraduate research degree from September 2022. The provisions relating to assessment benefit all students and are therefore applicable to all postgraduate research students regardless of the date of registration.
5. A research degree means an award with the following characteristics
 - a. A research degree is an advanced study programme that gives you an opportunity to deeply explore a topic, focus or domain of practice of your choice.
 - b. A research degree allows you to conduct your own, unique research, and produce new knowledge and expertise that is innovative, relevant, and enlightened through a process of investigation leading to new insights effectively shared.
 - c. Research degrees offer graduates the opportunity to develop and enhance the core attributes and transferable skills necessary for challenging and diverse roles in society, industry, government and business, as well as in research and academic organisations.
6. You can see a list of the research degrees which we offer in the University Regulations, section J (Middlesex University Qualifications) and specifically sections J1.4 (FHEQ Level 7) and J1.5 (FHEQ Level 8)
7. These regulations apply to you if you are registered with us for a research degree.
8. These regulations also apply if you are studying for a research degree at one of our partner institutions.
 - a. For some programmes at partner institutions these regulations are supplemented by programme specifications. If you are studying at a partner institution you should check if this applies to you.
 - b. Partner institutions may, with our agreement, offer award titles which are not included in these regulations. In such cases the programme-specification will set out what students must do to achieve the award. In cases of uncertainty or dispute, the decision of the Middlesex University Academic Registrar will be final.

Glossary

9. Some words in these regulations have specific meanings, as follows:

Admission means the process through which we decide whether to offer a place to you and you decide whether to accept the offer.

Award means the degree qualification which is awarded on successful completion of a degree programme.

Conditional registration means an initial period of registration, during which we monitor carefully your progress and at the end of which we may confirm or end your registration.

Degree programme means the approved programme of study and programme of research or research study which leads to a specific award.

Director of Studies means the lead member of your supervisory team

Enrolment means the annual process in which you confirm to us that you will be actively undertaking studies, confirm various personal details such as your contact details, and ensure that your tuition fees are paid.

Extenuating circumstances means events in your personal or professional life and/or conditions which affect your physical and/or mental health such that they have an impact upon your ability to research or study

Full-time is a registration category: if you are full-time we expect you to spend, on average, 35 hours per week on research study

Interruption means an agreed and formal break from your registration, the length of which does not count against the maximum period of registration for your award.

Level refers to the levels of The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies published by the QAA: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

Part-time is a registration category: if you are part-time we expect you to spend, on average, 17.5 hours per week on research study

Registration means your formal acceptance of a place to study with us and your acceptance of our terms and conditions, including these regulations.

Registration plan means an agreed timeline for your research project, setting out anticipated dates for milestones significant for your research and a supervision plan.

Supervision means the individual advice and guidance which our staff experts in your fields/domains of practice provide to support your development as a researcher and your progress with your research.

Supervisor means one of the members of academic staff appointed to supervise and guide your research study. Normally this will be a member of our own staff; occasionally it may be an external supervisor.

Thesis means the written work and any other artefacts which you submit for assessment. This can encompass a portfolio of creative work and evidence of performance (for example, video or audio recordings); or a book and published papers. Theses must conform to the specifications set out in guidance.

Stage 2 Review means the change in your registration from a level 7 qualification (e.g. MPhil, MProf) to the associated level 8 qualification (e.g. PhD, DProf)

Viva or viva voce means the oral examination at which the examiners discuss with you your research and thesis/portfolio and which enables them to come to a judgment on whether you have met the criteria for award.

Accountabilities and responsibilities

Admissions

11. You must apply for, and be accepted by us, to register as a postgraduate researcher.
12. We may offer you a place on a degree programme different to that for which you applied.
13. In the case of research degrees where there are linked awards at level 7 (masters) and level 8 (doctoral) we will admit you to the level 7 (masters) programme.
14. If you apply to us having started, but not completed, research study at another university, we may admit you as a postgraduate researcher and exempt you from some elements of the research programme we would normally require you to complete. You will need to comply with any relevant IP conditions from the university at which you were originally registered.
15. The University's Admissions Policy and Recruitment Guidance provides further information.

Registration and enrolment

16. You must enrol on an annual basis. This means confirming your contact and other details, and that you are actively undertaking study.
17. You must make arrangements which are acceptable to us for the payment of your tuition fees (this may mean, for example, confirmation from a sponsor), and ensure that your fees are paid in line with these arrangements. If you do not do this your registration will be withdrawn.
18. If you need a visa to study in the UK but do not have one, we may withdraw your registration.
19. You may transfer from one research degree programme to another research degree programme provided that
 - a. You have demonstrated a satisfactory level of academic performance
 - b. You meet the conditions of entry for the new programme
 - c. The relevant Faculty Research Committee (or equivalent) has agreed

Your Programme

20. Within your research degree there may be taught elements and mandatory research training. These may be distinct elements of your programme or integrated within it.
21. Your programme will have check-points, at which you will need to demonstrate that you are making sufficient progress to continue with registration, and at which we may set out requirements for your continued study.
 - a. If you are registered for the MPhil-PhD degree programme, or the MProf-DProf degree programme, or the ArtsM-ArtsD degree programme, you will initially be registered on a conditional basis. Your ongoing registration will be confirmed at a review in line with the timetable set out in paragraph 34 below.
 - b. Every year there will be an Annual Progress Review – see paragraph 30 below – to which you must contribute. If we do not think that you are making sufficient progress, we will let you know and set targets; if you do not meet these targets your registration will be ended and you will no longer be able to complete your postgraduate research with us.

- i. We will do this formally once a year
 - ii. We may also undertake a review during a year, if we have concerns about your progress
 - c. Our Annual Progress Review will include you even if you have interrupted your study or are writing up: this is to help us to ensure that your overall research study remains on track and to recalibrate your registration plan.
 - d. We will consider, when assessing your progress, any extenuating circumstances which you tell us about. We may ask to see evidence to support your claim.
22. If you require a visa to study at the University, and you make insufficient progress (see paragraph 21.b above) or you do not pay your tuition fees, we will withdraw sponsorship of your visa.
23. You must attend supervision and other prescribed sessions (including induction and research development programmes). We will monitor your attendance; this will form part of our decision-making at progress checks (see paragraph 21 above.)
24. We will agree with you a registration plan, confirmed during the Stage 1 Review (see paragraph 34 below), which sets out an overall timeline for your research project, including milestones, transfer and submission for final assessment.
25. You should expect to transfer registration from the level 7 award (e.g. MPhil) to the level 8 award (e.g. PhD) no later than 12 months before your expected date of submission, in the case of full-time study; or no later than 18 months before your expected date of submission, in the case of part-time study.
26. The minimum, expected and maximum lengths of registration for degree programmes, in months, are as follows:

Award	Mode	Registration period		
		Minimum	Submission Date	Candidature end date
MA/MSc/LLM by Research and MTh	Part-time	18	24	27
MA/MSc/LLM by Research and MTh	Full-time	12	12	15
MPhil/ArtsM/MProf	Part-time	24	36	48
MPhil/ArtsM/MProf	Full-time	12	24	36
MProf (stand-alone)	Part-time	12	18	24
MPhil/PhD, ArtsM/D	Part-time	48	60	84
MPhil/PhD, ArtsM/D	Full-time	24	36	60
M/DProf (incl. all SVPs) and DBA	Part-time	48	60	84
M/DProf (incl. all SVPs) and DBA	Full-time	24	36	60
PhD by Public Works	Part-time	12	18	24
DProf by Public Works	Part-time	12	18	24

27. You may not submit your thesis for final assessment before the minimum registration period for your degree outlined in paragraph 26 above has passed.
28. We expect you to submit your thesis/dissertation and all other work for your final assessment within the expected period outlined in paragraph 26 above.
29. If you have not submitted for your final assessment by the end of the maximum registration period set out in paragraph 26 above your registration will be ended and you will not be eligible for the award of a degree.

Annual progress review

30. University Progression Boards will annually review the progress of all postgraduate researchers. This may result in:
- Your ongoing registration, if you are making good progress
 - A judgment that your progress is unsatisfactory. In this case we will tell you what improvements we expect, and set out a reasonable timescale (not less than 4 months) for you to address our concerns. If you do not satisfactorily address our concerns, we will end your registration.
 - If we are unable to make a judgement about your progress, we may contact you for more information.

Break in Study

31. You may need to take a break from your research study. If you wish to do so, you must tell us and we will advise you on the consequences of this (for example on your registration plan, on practical issues of resuming study; of any implications for visas and so on).
32. During a break from your studies you will not have access to supervisory support, laboratories, studios or other research facilities. You will have access to welfare and pastoral support, library and computing facilities. An interruption is a pause in your research.
33. You may take a break from your research study for a maximum of 24 months across the whole programme. If, after 12 months, you wish to extend your break, you must again inform us so that we can advise you of the ongoing consequences.

Stage 1 Review

34. Stage 1 Reviews will take place on the following timescales:

Degree	Registration Review
MA/MSc/LLM by Research and MTh (Full-time)	2 months
MA/MSc/LLM by Research and MTh (Part-time)	3 months
MPhil/PhD (Full-time)	6 months
MPhil/PhD, MProf/DProf (Part-time)	9 months
ArtsM/ArtsD (Full-time)	6 months
ArtsM/ArtsD (Part-time)	9 months
MProf (Part-time)	9 months
PhD by Public Works (Part-time)	6 months
DProf by Public Works (Part-time)	6 months

35. You must submit a report for the review, which will be considered by a review panel. Further details are set out in guidance.
36. Reviews will determine
- Whether you are demonstrating the necessary skills and abilities to undertake the research programme
 - In the case of MPhil/PhD degrees, the viability of your proposed research project
 - The adequacy and sustainability of the supervision arrangements proposed for you

- d. The appropriateness of the facilities available to you for your research, whether at the University or with a partner institution, and that the resourcing requirements of your research project can be met.
37. The outcomes of the review are:
- a. Confirmation of your registration status as a postgraduate researcher, and agreement of your registration plan
 - b. Referral back for further work and reassessment, your resubmission to take place within two months.
38. If you do not pass the review on referral, your registration will be ended and you will no longer be able to complete your postgraduate research with us.

Review Stage 2

39. You may apply at certain points in your study to transfer between a level 7 research degree and its linked level 8 research degree. As a guideline, we expect full-time students to undertake this process at 18 months, and part-time students at 36 months:
- ArtsM → ArtsD
 - ArtsM → PhD
 - MPhil → PhD
 - MProf → DProf
40. To support your application for stage 2 review, you should prepare a submission comprising:
- a. a significant body of work explaining the status of the research material to date, in a coherent format and at the standard required for a level 8 award (see paragraph 55 below). This must demonstrate clearly a developing body of research work and an adequate understanding, knowledge, and justification of appropriate research design and methods. AND
 - b. a critical evaluation of research progress to date and a clear explanation of future research to be done, its expected contribution to knowledge and/or new insights, and a programme of work for completing the project to the required standard.
41. For professional doctorate programmes your stage 2 review will be assessed in line with the programme specification.
42. Your application will be considered by a review panel, which will include an independent member. The outcomes of that panel will be either:
- a. A recommendation that you proceed to your target award; or
 - b. That you be referred back for further work and reassessment, with resubmission within
 - i. 2 months if only minor changes are needed; or
 - ii. up to 6 months where more significant work is required
43. If after resubmission the panel judges that you have not met the standard required for transfer, you will be permitted to continue registration for the level 7 award or may be required to withdraw.
44. The review panel will also consider any ethical issues relating to the work, including ensuring that all ethical approvals required have been completed.

Specific provision for ArtsM to ArtsD transfer

45. For transfer from ArtsM to ArtsD the transfer portfolio (see paragraph 40 above) should comprise:
- a. A significant body of artistic work (which may be a series of in-progress works) undertaken during your registration accompanied by exposition material(s) that articulate and evidence this work at the standard required for a level 8 award (see paragraph 55 below). Together these should demonstrate a rigorous approach to artistic practice, a good understanding of the research context, appropriate research design and methods. The exposition may be in text form or in aural, visual, digital or other performative modes. AND
 - b. A clear explanation of research undertaken and future research to be done. This may be presented in written form or by other means and must clarify the independent and original contribution to artistic practice and/or interpretation/understanding that is likely to emerge.
46. Your work for the ArtsM may suggest that your research is more theoretical than practical: in this case you may apply instead to transfer to the PhD degree. Your application will be considered in line with paragraphs 42 to 44 above.

Specific provisions: MProf to DProf transfer

47. [This paragraph applies only to MProf/DProf students first registered before January 2022]. When you have successfully completed the preparatory research training phase you must submit a proposed programme of research. This replaces the transfer portfolio referred to in paragraph 40 above. This will be considered by a Programme Approval Panel, which is the equivalent of the transfer panel. The outcome of that panel will be either:
- a. Approval of the programme, and recommendation that your registration be amended to DProf
 - b. Approval of the programme, and recommendation that your registration be amended to DProf, subject to minor revisions to the proposed programme within a set period of time
 - c. To refer back the proposal for further work and resubmission at a specified time. If the proposed programme is not then approved you may continue in registration for the MProf degree.

Specific provisions: DBA degree

48. When you have successfully completed the preparatory research training phase you must submit a proposed programme of research. This replaces the transfer portfolio referred to in paragraph 40 above. This will be considered by a Programme Approval Panel, which is the equivalent of the transfer panel. The outcome of that panel will be either:
- a. Approval of the programme
 - b. That you be referred back for further work and reassessment, with resubmission within
 - i. 2 months if only minor changes are needed; or
 - ii. up to 6 months where more significant work is required
 - c. If the proposed programme is not approved after referral under paragraph 48.b above your registration will be cancelled.

Assessment

49. In order to be awarded the qualification for which you are registered you must pass all of the required assessments and fulfil any other specific conditions.
50. [This paragraph applies only to MProf/DProf students first registered before January 2022]. Where your programme contains taught elements for which credits are awarded, you will be assessed in those elements within the relevant taught programme regulations.
51. [This paragraph applies only to MProf/DProf students first registered before January 2022]. You may not undertake the final assessment for your award until you have successfully completed all prior assessments required by the programme.
52. You must follow our expectations for research integrity in your assessment, including:
 - a. The need to gain ethics approval for your research
 - b. To meet all the requirements expected of ethical research and ethical academic practice
53. Your submission must be in line with the guidelines for postgraduate research study for your particular degree.
54. To be awarded a master's degree you must demonstrate:
 - a. a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of your academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
 - b. a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to your own research or advanced scholarship
 - c. originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in your discipline
 - d. conceptual understanding that enables you:
 - i. to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - ii. to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses
55. To be awarded a doctoral degree you must demonstrate:
 - a. the creation and interpretation of substantial new contributions to knowledge and/or practice through original research of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, field or sector, and merit wider dissemination
 - b. a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of one or more academic disciplines
 - c. the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a research project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, field or practice, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen emerging considerations
 - d. a detailed understanding of contemporary complexity and of research approaches relevant to the focus and context of the research and most likely to produce new knowledge contributions to thinking and practice

56. The criteria in paragraphs 54 and 55 above are based upon the expectations for masters degrees and doctoral degrees set out in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (see definition of *level* in paragraph 9 above.
57. The final assessment shall comprise your thesis and a *viva voce* (oral examination) conducted by an Assessment Panel upon your thesis or equivalent submission.
58. The decision to submit a thesis for viva is your own. Once you have submitted your thesis, you may not withdraw it. The examiners must conduct a viva.
59. The Assessment Panel **for a master's award** will recommend one of the following outcomes:
- a. That you be awarded the degree; or
 - b. That you be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the submitted work within a specified period of up to 6 months; or
 - c. That you be permitted to re-submit for the degree within 12 months and be re-examined, with or without a viva; or
 - d. In the case of re-examination,
 - i. Any of the options in paragraph 59.a, 59.b or 59.c (for a maximum of two resubmissions); OR
 - ii. that you not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined.
60. The Assessment Panel **for a doctoral award** will recommend one of the following outcomes:
- a. That you be awarded the degree; or
 - b. That you be awarded the degree subject to revisions which do not substantially change the findings being made to the submitted work within a specified period of up to 6 months; or
 - c. That you be permitted to re-submit for the degree within 12 months and be re-examined, with or without a viva; or
 - d. In the case of re-examination,
 - i. Any of the options in paragraph 60.a, 60.b or 60.c (for a maximum of two resubmissions); OR
 - ii. that you not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined; OR
 - iii. that you be awarded a degree at Master's level subject to the presentation of the submission amended to the satisfaction of the examiners.
61. The Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee has delegated authority from Academic Board to confirm or otherwise the outcome of the examination.
62. We set out separately specific procedures for the conduct of vivas.

Intellectual Property and Research Repository

63. Our policy on *Intellectual Property Rights: Students* sets out how you should ensure that you either own the copyright on your submitted work, or you have permission to include it in your thesis.
64. After completion of the assessment process, you must submit a final electronic copy of your submission, which we will place in our library and in our online research repository. You must give us an irrevocable, transferable, license to do this. We will not confirm the award of a degree until you have done this.
65. If the thesis contains confidential material, or for other reasons which we assess sufficient (for example, an intention to publish the thesis), we will restrict access to your thesis.

Appeals and Complaints

66. If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of your programme you should use the Student Complaints and Grievance Procedure.
67. You may appeal against decisions relating to the following progress or assessment:
 - a. A decision to end your registration (as set out in paragraph 21.b above)
 - b. A decision to end your registration arising from an annual progress review (as set out in paragraph 30 above)
 - c. A decision of a transfer panel (as set out in paragraph 42 above)
 - d. The outcome of an Assessment Panel (as set out in paragraphs 59 and 60 above)
68. You may appeal on one or more of the following grounds:
 - a. That there is evidence of a process failure of such a nature as to give reasonable grounds to consider that the outcome would have been different had the process failure not occurred
 - b. That the judgement was based on an incomplete assessment of your performance
 - c. That your performance was affected by factors which were not known to the panel, and could not reasonably have been made known to the panel
69. You must provide evidence to support your appeal. An appeal will not be considered if it is an unevicenced statement of disagreement with the decision made.
70. Your appeal must be submitted within one month of the date on which we notified you of the decision against which you are appealing.
71. Your appeal will be reviewed by a member of academic staff from another faculty (the independent reviewer). If it is clear to them that one or more of the grounds for appeal have been demonstrated, they will recommend a course of action to the Research Degrees Board. This may include:
 - a. A recommendation that the faculty or relevant panel review their decision, considering any new information
 - b. That you be given more time to prepare
 - c. In the case of an appeal against the result of a transfer panel or an Assessment Panel, that a new panel be convened to reconduct their assessment

72. If the independent reviewer in paragraph 71 above concludes that the case for appeal has not been met, you may ask that your appeal be considered by a formal panel. This Appeal Panel will:
- a. Be comprised of three members who have had no prior connection with your study or the decision against which you are appealing
 - b. Have before it your appeal and any supporting evidence, and a report from the independent investigator.
 - c. Be able to meet with you and with other connected with the matter.
73. The Appeal Panel will decide whether to uphold your appeal, and will give its reasons in writing.
74. If the Panel decides to uphold your appeal it will recommend a course of action to the Research Degrees Board. This may include:
- a. A recommendation that the faculty or relevant panel review their decision, considering any new information
 - b. That you be given more time to prepare
 - c. In the case of an appeal against the result of a transfer panel or an Assessment Panel, that a new panel be convened to reconduct their assessment
75. We will aim to tell you the outcome of your appeal within three months from receipt of your full appeal.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

76. If you are dissatisfied with the final outcome of our handling of your appeal, you may be able to ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (the OIA) to investigate. To do so you will need a Completion of Procedures letter: we will issue you with one when we have completed all internal steps (see paragraphs 69, 72 and 74 above).
77. If you wish to submit a complaint to the OIA you must do so within twelve months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter. You can find more information about the OIA's complaints scheme at their website: www.oiahe.org.uk.

29 July 2022