



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Research Degree Regulations

September 2012

For further information on any of the regulations contained in this handbook, please contact staff in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement:
General Email: ResearchDegrees@qmu.ac.uk

RESEARCH DEGREE REGULATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2012

Please note that regulations are subject to change. Always refer to the most recent version of the regulations. This can be found on the University's Quality website at: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/rs/default.htm>

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INTRODUCTION

This Handbook contains the regulations relating to all PhDs undertaken by research at Queen Margaret University. Professional Doctorate regulations are published separately¹. PhD research students and their supervisors are required to read these regulations, and also the *Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors*, the most recent version of which is available on the QMU Quality website:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/rs/default.htm> (Regulations)

http://www.qmu.ac.uk/post_research/graduate_school/code.htm (Code of Practice)

Students should also refer to the *Student Diary*, which provides links to other important regulations, policies and procedures, including the *Student Code of Conduct*. The *Student Diary* is available from:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/ph/default.htm>

Where questions of procedure arise, and especially in the case of any appeal, students and supervisors will be deemed to have read the regulations and all relevant institutional Codes of Practice and Handbooks.

GENERAL REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Under these regulations, where a University officer is named by their title, they may act through their properly appointed nominee.

Committee Structure and Remits

The Research Strategy Committee is the standing committee of Senate with overall responsibility for the academic quality of research degrees at Queen Margaret University. The Research Strategy Committee makes recommendations to Senate on the regulatory framework for research degree programmes and related matters. It also promotes best practice in admission, supervision and examination of research students.

The Research Strategy Committee delegates matters concerning individual students to the Research Degrees Panel and the School Academic Boards. Broadly, the Research Degrees Panel is concerned with the end of the student's programme, while the School Academic Boards is responsible for most decisions up to that point

The Research Degrees Panel oversees:

- verification of examination arrangements
- viva outcomes
- confirmation of award
- permission to exceed thesis word limit
- restriction on publication of theses
- permission to submit early (abbreviation of the period of study)
- extension to submission deadline
- extension to time limit for amendments
- consideration of exceptional viva arrangements, for example held off campus
- consideration of transfer from other institutions and award of credit as a result thereof

¹ For further information, email ResearchDegrees@qmu.ac.uk

The Research Degrees Panel also makes recommendations on de-registration, which are recommended to and considered separately by RSC.

School Academic Boards are responsible for:

- approval of requests for exemption from Research Skills Training
- approval of outline proposals
- approval of extension to submission deadline for outline proposals
- approval of supervisory teams
- approval of suspensions of study
- approval of changes from part-time to full-time or vice versa
- approval of change from campus based to non-resident status or vice versa
- notifications of withdrawal
- approval of probationary assessment outcomes
- approval of requests for extension to the normal probationary assessment deadline
- consideration of annual progress report summaries and acting on progress issues

Equal Opportunities

Queen Margaret University is committed to equality of opportunity and believes in a culture of diversity and inclusion. Each application received by the University is considered carefully on its own merits. The University seeks to open access to a wide range of students, subject to the essential principle that there is a reasonable expectation of completion within the normal duration of registration.

Students with Disabilities

Information for students with disabilities, including contact details for the Student Disability Advisor, is given in the *Student Diary*. It is recommended that a student makes contact with the Academic Disabled Students Co-ordinator for their area as early in their programme of study as possible.

School-based Facilities

Every research student is a member of one of the University's two multi-disciplinary Schools. The School will provide the facilities listed below as the minimum standard arrangements for each research student:

- dedicated study-space
- desk
- shelf space
- lockable storage (one lockable cupboard per student)
- access to computer network
- electronic mail address
- facilities for receiving paper mail
- stationery supplies
- access to photocopier
- access to telephone

Full-time students will normally have their own dedicated desk and computer terminal; part-time students may need to 'hot desk'.

Fees

Full details regarding the payment and amount of fees applicable for a particular session can be found in the *Fees and Charges* leaflet published annually by Registry. This information is also available from: http://www.qmu.ac.uk/registry/fees_charges.htm

It should be noted that fee levels are reviewed on an annual basis, and may be subject to increase during the period of study. It is therefore possible that, by the time a research student reaches the continuation or examination stage, the continuation or examination fee will have increased since initial matriculation.

There are four categories of research student in relation to fees: fee-paying, fee-paying with support from an independent sponsor, studentship and staff.

- **Fee-paying and fee-paying with support**

Fee-paying research students pay tuition fees (and bench fees where applicable) annually for the prescribed period of study, plus any continuation fee, and the examination fee. If an independent sponsor has agreed to support study (e.g. an employer, a government or other funding body) arrangements can be made to invoice the sponsor directly.

It is a condition of registration that students accept liability for their fees. Even if the fees are to be paid by a sponsor such as an embassy or employer, it is the student's personal responsibility to ensure that they are paid and to provide evidence of funding at matriculation. Where any student has failed to provide written confirmation of funding within 28 days of the start of their programme of study, he or she will be deemed to be personally liable for the payment of the fees, and an invoice will be issued to the student accordingly.

- **Studentship**

Research students on a studentship have their tuition and bench fees waived, but are liable for any continuation fee and for the examination fee.

- **Staff**

Fees may be waived for current members of staff registered for a part-time research degree. This requires to be agreed by the Dean of School or Director of service or equivalent.

Collaborating Establishments

The University shall encourage co-operation with relevant establishments and organisations (Collaborating Establishments) for the purposes of research.

Less formal collaboration shall normally involve access by the student to the facilities and other resources of the Collaborating Establishment. Supervision and other facilities will be provided by Queen Margaret University, but the Collaborating Establishment may provide a nominated advisor, or even a second supervisor, as part of the supervisory team. Examples would be where a student was conducting fieldwork outside the UK, or was registered on a non-resident basis. In such cases, a letter from the collaborating establishment should be provided, outlining the facilities that will be made available to the student.

More formal collaborations may involve joint supervision, intellectual property considerations or joint funding. Examples might include situations where a studentship is attached to a joint funding application, or collaboration with an NHS research programme. In such cases, a Collaborative Agreement must be drawn up in which the performance obligations and responsibilities of each party are explicitly stated. The agreement shall set out the terms and conditions of collaboration, covering areas such as financial provisions, reporting, intellectual property, publication of results, and liability / indemnity. Guidance regarding agreements of this kind is available from the Research and Knowledge Exchange Unit.

The contribution of the Collaborating Establishment must be duly acknowledged in the candidate's thesis.

Ethics

The University's regulations include a section on ethics relating to research. For the most recent version of the regulations, procedures and guidelines on ethics, please contact the Secretary to the Research Ethics Panel, in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement, or see the Quality website:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/rs/default.htm#ethics>

No research may proceed without formal ethical approval. Applications for ethical approval are reviewed initially by the Head of Division or nominee with three possible outcomes: a) approval by the Head of Division or nominee; b) referral to the QMU Research Ethics Panel; c) Referral to an external ethics committee.

Data Protection Act

Data protection at QMU includes two broad elements: the University's holding and using student data, and the use of personal data by staff and students. It is essential that all students are familiar with the University's *Data Protection Policy and Guidelines*. These are to be read and followed by all students and are available on the QMU website:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/foi/dp.htm>

In particular, the *Data Protection Policy* requires that researchers take steps to ensure the strict confidentiality of all data relating to study participants.

The Information Governance website is a further important source of advice. This is available on the Research and Knowledge Exchange Unit (RKEU) Intranet page and can be accessed at:

<http://intranet.qmu.ac.uk/sites/ResearchSupport/InfGov/default.aspx>

Health and Safety

Health and Safety information is given in the *Student Diary*. It is extremely important that students observe the University's Health and Safety policy and any health and safety precautions which may be prescribed. It is also important that students are sensitive to issues of risk in the Health and Safety context.

Intellectual Property Rights

All intellectual property created by a student whilst undertaking a research degree is assigned to and owned by the University, together with an unlimited licence for the University to use any related background intellectual property which a research student may own and which becomes incorporated in the intellectual property arising from the activity. Exceptions may apply where a sponsor is involved, and in such cases guidance must be sought from the Research and Knowledge Exchange Unit.

Students may wish to publish the results of their research during or after their research degree programme. There is no restriction on publication, unless any commercial interests are involved. Students should always consult their supervisory team first to agree attribution of authorship.

Further details are available from the University's Intellectual Property Policy and Regulations (contact ResearchDegrees@qmu.ac.uk for information).

Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism and Fraud

The University's regulations on *Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism* are available in full from the *Assessment Regulations* for taught programmes. These can be found at:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm#regs>

Plagiarism, collusion, falsification of data and other forms of academic dishonesty are considered fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Whilst the principles described in the general *Assessment Regulations* apply to all students, the procedures for reporting and evaluation for a suspected offence differ slightly in the case of research students.

A high standard of referencing is expected from all research degree students and Directors of Studies should seek to correct any examples of poor academic practice found in students' written work.

Research degrees differ from taught degrees in that much of the student's work is not assessed formally. It is possible that a Director of Studies may have concerns about possible plagiarism in work submitted to the supervisory team. In extreme cases, doubts may arise about the veracity of data.

Where academic misconduct is suspected in formal assessed work, the assessors should first discuss the concerns with the Director of Studies. Serious cases should be referred to the Dean of School, in accordance with the *QMU Code of Discipline*. Staff in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement should be contacted for advice.

The Director of Studies shall decide whether there is a prima facie case established for plagiarism or research malpractice and, on that basis, the appropriate route for handling the case. If it is judged that there is academic misbehaviour or academic misconduct, then the case will be referred to the Dean of School under the *QMU Code of Discipline*. The Director of Studies will be responsible for the submission of evidential material to the Dean of School and for informing the student or students involved and any referring staff member of the decision to move to the Disciplinary process. The Code of Discipline is available in full from:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm#pol>

Such offences on the part of academic staff would be dealt with by disciplinary procedures described in staff guidance available from HR.

Complaints Procedures

The University has established procedures for the making and hearing of complaints and grievances. Students are encouraged to seek resolution of such matters informally first, if at all possible, with their Dean of School. Staff in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement can also offer advice. The full complaints procedure is available from:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm#pol>

UK Borders Agency (UKBA) Regulations

The University is bound by the regulations of the UKBA, including visa requirements for international students. The University will comply in all cases with UKBA requirements, such as may be amended from time to time. Relevant advice will be provided to international applicants and students, as appropriate and within the remit of University officers.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

1 Criteria for Research Degrees

- 1.1 To be eligible for a research degree a student must undertake a research programme leading to the submission and successful defence of a thesis showing evidence that the candidate has met the criteria below.
- 1.2 Where the research involves creative work or other form of practice-based research, the work must be accompanied by a written thesis placing the material in its theoretical context. Both the thesis and the creative work must be judged by the examiners to meet the criteria below.
- 1.3 The respective criteria for the awards of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) are set out below. The MPhil is offered as an exit award in lieu of PhD only, as set out further under paragraph 9.7.9, and applications to undertake an MPhil only will not be accepted. While it is recognised that students will require guidance and supervision during the course of their studies, by the end of the degree students must demonstrate:

Mphil	PhD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge that integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of the subject of study, including a critical awareness of current issues and developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical and detailed knowledge at the forefront of the specialist area of study, with the ability to provide an overview of the field. • Knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work which makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to identify and conceptualise new and abstract theoretical or practice-based problems and issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to develop creative and original responses to theoretical or practice-based problems and issues.
<p>The ability to operate as an independent researcher (under guidance):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a range of specialised skills and techniques which are at or informed by forefront developments within the subject. • Plan and execute a significant project of research or development. • Practice in a wide variety of professional contexts. • Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative. • Make a contribution to change and development. 	<p>The ability to operate as a fully independent researcher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use and enhance a range of complex skills and techniques at the forefront of developments within the subject. • Design and execute research or development projects to deal with new problems and issues. • Practice in the context of new problems and circumstances. • Exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative. • Challenge established ideas and show initiative in shaping change and development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to communicate effectively with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to communicate at the standard of published academic work.

- 1.4 In all cases, the thesis must have a coherent structure understandable by a scholar in the same general field with regard to aims, background, methods and conclusions; must be satisfactory in its literary presentation and must conform to the regulations in respect of format and binding (see Section 10).

2 Application and Acceptance

2.1 Topics of research

Programmes of research may be proposed in fields of study which are within the strategic areas of research specified by the University. Programmes of research may also be proposed in other areas within the expertise of designated supervisors. Programmes may be proposed in which the candidate's own creative work forms, as a point of origin or reference, a significant part of the intellectual enquiry (see Regulation 9.2.2). Acceptance of any proposed programme is subject to the requirement that it is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment by appropriate examiners. All proposed research programmes shall be considered for research degree registration on their academic merits. The concerns and interests of any associated funding body may be taken into account as secondary factors.

2.2 Entry qualifications

An applicant for registration for a research degree shall normally hold, or anticipate gaining, a good Honours degree (2:1 or better) from a United Kingdom higher education institution, or a degree from an overseas institution accepted by the Dean and Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee (taking expert advice from Recruitment and Admissions) as an equivalent. Applicants without an Honours degree may only be considered if they can demonstrate equivalent professional experience in a relevant field. In considering such applications, the Dean of School may ask for additional evidence (such as a portfolio or essay) demonstrating that the professional experience is at the requisite level. (See also the general University regulations on Recognition of Prior Learning.)

2.3 English requirements

All overseas students must provide evidence of their English language ability. A minimum score of IELTS 6.5 or equivalent, with no element of performance lower than IELTS 6.0, is the entrance requirement². Completion of a Masters degree delivered in English may count as evidence of English language ability. All applications will be considered on an individual basis.

2.4 Making an application

Application forms are available from and should be returned to the Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement (GQE). Electronic applications are preferable and should be submitted in MS Word rather than PDF format.

² English language requirements may be subject to change. Current requirements are published at: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/qm/AZindex.htm> (Admissions Regulations)

2.5 Decision making on applications

- 2.5.1 The Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee forwards completed application forms to the Dean of the relevant School. Wherever possible, each suitable applicant is invited for interview by a group of staff as determined by the Dean, including at least one member with relevant subject expertise. Where it is not possible to interview the applicant in person, a telephone interview should be arranged. It is the responsibility of the Dean of School to ensure that the applicant has appropriate entry requirements and is suited to pursuing a research degree, and that an appropriate Director of Studies is available. A recommendation by the Dean of School for acceptance of the applicant and for appointment of the Director of Studies is then submitted to the Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee, and a letter offering a place is sent to the applicant.
- 2.5.2 No applicant may be accepted without confirmation that a suitably qualified supervisory team can be put in place (see Section 7). Equally, the Dean of School must confirm that appropriate facilities and resources are available to support the proposed research.
- 2.5.3 No applicant may be accepted on a non-resident basis without confirmation from the Dean of School (see Section 3).
- 2.5.4 In sending offer letters to applicants, GQE staff must ensure that students are informed of all fees for which they may be liable and of the expected time commitment involved in the degree programme. Part-time students should plan to devote half the amount of time a full-time student would need to complete their studies. On receipt of written confirmation from the applicant accepting the offer, an information pack will be sent to them, including notification of the date on which they will report to the University to begin their programme of study.

It is the responsibility of GQE staff to ensure that all references have been supplied, to obtain copies of degree certificates and evidence of English language scores, and to administer criminal record checks where applicable.

- 2.5.5 GQE staff, with support from Recruitment and Admissions staff, are also responsible for advice to international students on visa requirements and for checking that students are in possession of an appropriate visa at the point of admission

2.6 Start dates

New research students normally begin their programmes of study at the beginning of the academic year in September, when an Induction Day for them is held. An alternative start date is the second week of Semester 2 in January but research students wishing to begin their programme of study at that time of the year must secure the permission of the Dean of School. Students may start at a time other than the beginning of the academic year only if suitable arrangements for research skills training can be put in place, or if the student intends to apply for exemption from the course (see Section 8).

2.7 Staff

Members of staff of the University wishing to register for a part-time research degree must first discuss this with their line manager through Performance Enhancement Review. If it is agreed that appropriate study time can be set aside within the staff

member's workload, he or she may submit a formal application through their Dean of School, or equivalent for non-academic staff, to the Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee. It is expected that members of staff who are accepted for a part-time research degree programme will have some study time protected, although much of the work will need to be done out with normal working hours.

All applicants must be interviewed by the Dean of relevant School and a staff member with subject expertise. The decision making process above must be followed. Members of staff may begin their studies at any time, but arrangements for attendance at (or exemption from) research skills training must be in place.

2.8 Studentships

Applications for QMU studentships will be considered by a panel to ensure consistency of decision-making.

2.9 General precepts

Where not otherwise stated, the general precepts of the QMU admission regulations apply.

2.10 Disability

Applications from all students will be assessed on the basis of academic suitability. Discussions about the support requirements of students will be separate from that consideration. Applicants are encouraged to indicate any disabilities on the application form. Where a disabled candidate can meet the academic entry requirements, the relevant Academic Disabled Students Co-ordinator must be consulted. The standard process for determining special support needs must be followed before making an offer.

3 **Residence, Leave of Absence and Holidays**

3.1 Residence

3.1.1 Full-time students should normally be resident within reach of Edinburgh except during holiday time. This is to allow adequate contact with the supervisory team and participation in the research culture of the School.

3.1.2 Where a part-time student is not resident within reach of Edinburgh, and does not intend to move, the Dean of School must consider the following factors before making an offer:

- a. Whether suitable arrangements can be made to provide research skills training
- b. Whether suitable arrangements can be made for frequent supervisory contact by email, video conferencing, telephone or a combination of these
- c. The availability of any necessary facilities for the support of research locally
- d. The availability of appropriate academic support locally
- e. The availability of distance learning support from QMU.

Deans of School should consider part-time non-resident applications on a case by case basis. All applications for admission as a non-resident student must be approved by the Dean. Changes from campus based to non-resident status that arise once a student has been admitted will be referred to the School Academic Board for decision. As far as possible, non-resident students should be encouraged

to visit QMU for three weeks each year to allow face-to-face supervisory meetings and participation in the research culture of the School and the University.

3.2 Leave of absence

- 3.2.1 In the case of members of staff registered for a research degree who are planning to be absent for a sabbatical period, suitable arrangements for continuing supervision must be agreed with their Dean of School.
- 3.2.2 Applications for leave of absence for purposes such as fieldwork and extended visits to archives must be approved by a research student's Dean of School, with the support of the Director of Studies.
- 3.2.3 For all students, Directors of Studies are required to notify staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement of any such absence in advance of the absence occurring. International students on tier four UKBA visas are additionally bound by the University's regulations for sponsorship, which are communicated separately.

3.3 Student holidays

- 3.3.1 Bursary students are entitled to a maximum of six weeks' holiday per year, including public holidays. Dates for holidays should be agreed with the Director of Studies. Other students may take holidays at their own discretion and subject to meeting the usual requirements of study and any visa restrictions.

4 Admission, Matriculation and Payment of Fees

- 4.1 All research students, whether full-time or part-time, must be matriculated students of the University. They must matriculate following the University's standard matriculation procedures.
- 4.2 The Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee will notify the Student Records Office of prospective students to be expected for initial matriculation. Initial matriculation will take place as part of a new research student's induction.
- 4.3 At initial matriculation a student will register for a PhD. Continued registration is conditional on the student meeting the progression requirements outlined in Section 6.
- 4.4 All students must re-matriculate annually, usually in September.
- 4.5 Research students may not be concurrently registered for any other research degree.
- 4.6 Following matriculation, research students will be invoiced for fees due where applicable. Fee liability is determined by the Student Records Office, and invoices will be raised and sent by the Finance Office.
- 4.7 Full details regarding the payment and amount of fees can be found in the *Fees and Charges* leaflet published annually by Student Records. Students will be liable for tuition fees for each year of study within the prescribed period (see Section 5). If a student does not submit by the end of the prescribed period, he or she will be classed as a continuing student. Continuing students are liable only for the continuation fee. The University reserves the right to review fees on an annual basis. Students in certain Divisions may be liable for bench fees.

4.8 Students will be charged the examination fee following receipt of the thesis for examination. A second examination fee will be charged should the student require a second oral examination.

4.9 Research students must be matriculated and must not be in debt to the University in order to be eligible to graduate.

5 Registration

5.1 A research student may register on a full-time or a part-time basis. Full-time status reflects a commitment to study for approximately 35 hours per week. Part-time status is considered to be the equivalent of half full-time and therefore reflects a commitment to study for approximately 18 hours per week. Such an amount of work is considered to be a pre-requisite for reaching the standard of the degree. Students who devote less time to their study may find that progress is inadequate, which can lead to de-registration.

5.2 A full-time student should normally reach the standard for PhD within a prescribed period of study of three years and a part-time student within a prescribed period of six years. Full-time students should normally submit their theses at the end of the third year for examination, or at the latest after one further grace (continuation) year. A continuation fee must be paid for this fourth year of study. Part-time students will normally submit their theses at the end of the sixth year for examination, or at the latest after two further grace (continuation) years. Continuation fees must be paid for each of these seventh and eighth years of study

5.4 Credit for study at other institutions or relevant research experience

5.4.1 Credit for previous study may be given by the Research Degrees Panel for students wishing to transfer their registration for postgraduate research from another higher education institution. Similar credit may also be given to prospective students with relevant research experience in industrial laboratories or other organisations including those supporting creative practice. Maximum credit in both cases will normally be as follows: full-time PhD 12 months; part-time PhD 24 months. However, the Research Degrees Panel will consider each case on its own merits.

5.4.2 The Research Degrees Panel may give more extended credit for previous research to applicants who wish to transfer their postgraduate registration to Queen Margaret University in cases where their Director of Studies is joining the University as a member of academic staff.

5.4.3 To apply for credit, students must submit an outline research degree proposal, indicating the full plan of work and how much has been achieved already. Where the previous research was undertaken in collaboration with others, students must demonstrate that there are no objections or concerns in relation to ownership of intellectual property.

5.4.4 At the point of submitting the proposal, the student must clearly indicate the amount of credit that is sought (length in months) and this must be supported with a statement from the prospective QMU Director of Studies prior to consideration by the Research Degrees Panel.

- 5.4.5 Credit will not be given for research for which the student has already been granted an award, e.g. research undertaken as part of a Master of Philosophy or Master of Research.

5.5 Abbreviation of the prescribed period of study

Where there is evidence that the research is proceeding exceptionally well, the Research Degrees Panel may approve an abbreviation of the prescribed period of study. Early submission of the PhD thesis may be permitted up to the following maxima: full-time 6 months; part-time 12 months.

5.6 Periods of study

The table below summarises the standard periods of study for the PhD degree. The length of time an individual student is registered for may be varied by applications for suspension or extension (see Section 6).

	Minimum <i>if awarded credit for previous study</i>	Minimum <i>if abbreviated on grounds of good progress</i>	Prescribed (usual) period	Maximum
	<i>(reg 5.4)</i>	<i>(reg 5.5)</i>	<i>(reg 5.2)</i>	<i>(reg 5.2)</i>
PhD				
FT	24 months	30 months	36 months	48 months
PT	48 months	60 months	72 months	96 months

6 **Progress**

- 6.1 Research students register initially for a PhD. Continued registration is conditional upon satisfactory completion of the progress requirements below. A student whose progress is unsatisfactory may be deregistered.
- 6.2 Approximately three months after matriculation (for full-time students), and no later than four months after matriculation, an outline proposal must be submitted to the School Academic Board for approval. Part-time students must submit the outline proposal within approximately six months, and no later than eight months after matriculation. Students may apply to the School Academic Board for permission to delay the proposal only where exceptional circumstances apply. The role of the School Academic Board, acting on advice from the Dean, is to confirm that the necessary facilities and resources can be put in place to support the project and to confirm the supervisory team. Supervisory teams must meet the criteria laid down in Section 7.
- 6.3 Failure to submit a proposal within the maximum timescale will result in de-registration on grounds of seriously inadequate progress, except where extenuating circumstances apply.
- 6.4 The probationary assessment will take place approximately eight months after initial matriculation for full-time students, or 16 months for part-time students. Students may apply to the School Academic Board for permission to delay the assessment, but may not delay beyond 14 months full-time or 28 months part-time. Where a student is

unable to meet this deadline due to extenuating circumstances, a suspension of studies should be applied for.

- 6.5 The probationary assessment takes the form of a full research proposal, describing and justifying the research project. This proposal must include the topic, the main research question, the specific aims, a review of relevant literature, and the general methodology. The proposal will be reviewed by a panel of assessors to provide independent feedback. The panel will be composed of two or three academics (not members of the supervisory team) with experience of research and PhD supervision.
- 6.6 The word limit for the probationary assessment is 5000. The 5000 word limit may be exceeded by up to 10% without penalty. The word limit excludes appendices, tables and references. Submissions over the word limit will not be accepted.
- 6.7 Failure to undertake a probationary assessment within the maximum timescale will result in de-registration on grounds of seriously inadequate progress, except where extenuating circumstances apply.
- 6.8 The student will meet with a panel of assessors to discuss the probationary assessment. The assessors will have the opportunity to ask the student questions about the probationary assessment and chosen methodology. The student will also have the opportunity to discuss progress made in the first year and any issues that have arisen.
- 6.9 The assessors will write a joint report for consideration and, if appropriate, approval by the School Academic Board. This report should comment on whether:
 - the student is suitable to undertake research leading to the successful award of the relevant degree
 - the student is making satisfactory progress
 - any additional research training might be appropriate
 - the necessary research facilities are available.

This report will also be provided to the student to assist their development.

The report may make one of four recommendations:

- (a) That the student be confirmed as a PhD student
- (b) That the student be required to resubmit with minor amendments
- (c) That the student be required to resubmit with major amendments
- (d) That the student be de-registered.

Issues regarding supervision or facilities will be highlighted to the Dean of School through the assessors' report.

- 6.9.1 In the event of (d) above (de-registration), the report must be passed to the Research Degrees Panel for initial consideration and recommendation to the Research Strategy Committee. The Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee will inform the student in writing of the decision of the Panel. The student may appeal (see regulation 6.11.9 below).
- 6.9.2 In the event of (c) above (major amendments), the student will be invited to meet with the chair of the panel of assessors to discuss his or her performance and how any concerns could be addressed.

- 6.9.3 The form of resubmission will be indicated in the assessors' report, but normally this will consist of a revised full proposal.

The deadline for resubmission will be detailed in the assessors' report. Typically, this will be between six to eight weeks. Where a student is unable to meet this deadline due to extenuating circumstances, a suspension of studies should be applied for. Failure to re-submit a proposal within the maximum timescale defined by the assessors may result in de-registration on grounds of seriously inadequate progress, except where extenuating circumstances apply.

- 6.9.4 Occasionally, and most usually where there are major amendments, a second meeting with the panel may be requested by the assessors, in which case, this will be detailed in the assessors' report. Typically, no further meeting with the panel will be required, where amendments are minor.

- 6.9.5 Following consideration of the resubmission, the assessors will write a second report, making one of the following recommendations:

- (a) That the student be confirmed as a PhD student
- (b) That the student be required to resubmit for a second and final time
- (c) That the student be de-registered (see 6.9.1 above).

- 6.9.6 In the event of (c) above (de-registration), the report must be passed to the Research Degrees Panel for initial consideration and recommendation to the Research Strategy Committee. The Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee will inform the student in writing of the decision of the Panel. The student may appeal (see regulation 6.11.9 below).

- 6.9.7 In the event of (b) above, regulations 6.9.2, 6.9.3 and 6.9.4 will apply.

- 6.9.8 A student who fails to pass the probationary assessment within two years of initial matriculation (full-time) or four years (part-time) will be de-registered.

- 6.9.9 Students have the right of appeal against any of the above decisions. Appeals must be addressed in writing to the University Secretary, and must be submitted within 21 days of receipt of the official decision. The general appeals process applies as set out in Section 11. Permissible grounds of appeal are:

- (a) substantial information which for good reason was not available to the assessors;
- (b) alleged improper conduct of any part of the assessment process.

For more information see regulation 6.11.9

- 6.10 After probation, annual reports on the progress of all PhD and MPhil students must be submitted separately by the student and Director of Studies to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement. This is a requirement even for students and Directors of Studies with no issues to report. GQE staff will provide a full set of reports to the Dean of School. It is the responsibility of the Dean of School to follow up any issues raised by the reports and ensure, together with GQE staff, that students and Directors are briefed on the outcome. A summary report will be presented to the School Academic Board each year. This report will detail key themes emerging. Issues raised by individual students or Directors will come to the Board only where it is within the Board's remit to take decisions. This approach maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

6.11 De-registration and withdrawal

6.11.1 All students are required to pursue their programmes of study with due diligence. If a student wilfully and/or persistently neglects his or her academic work, or in the case of seriously inadequate progress being highlighted in the probationary period or in the annual reports, the student's registration may be terminated.

6.11.2 De-registration may be pursued by the University under any of the following circumstances:

- (a) the student is not in contact with his/her supervisory team;
- (b) the student has not matriculated;
- (c) the student is making seriously inadequate progress, as determined by the supervisory team and/or the terms of the Research Degree Regulations;
- (d) the student fails to submit the final thesis within the prescribed period of registration;
- (e) the student fails to comply with conditions set by the Research Strategy Committee, Dean or Supervisory Team.

6.11.3 **Lack of contact.** When a student has not been in contact³ with the supervisory team for six weeks (full-time) or three months (part-time), or if a student does not contact their supervisory team when required to do so by that team and at the frequency required by that team, the Director of Studies will write formally to the student requesting an explanation. If no adequate explanation or reply is made by the student within 10 working days of the date of the written request, the Director of Studies will refer the case to the Dean of School. The Dean of School will ask the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement to write to the student, giving him or her one month from the date of the written request to reply in writing. If, in the Dean of School's opinion, no reasonable explanation is provided, the Dean of School may recommend to the Research Degrees Panel that the student's registration be terminated.

6.11.4 **Failure to matriculate.** Students must matriculate every year in accordance with Queen Margaret University regulations. When a student has not matriculated, and has not provided an explanation for not so doing, the Director of Studies will write formally to the student requesting an explanation. If no adequate explanation or reply is made by the student within 10 working days of the date of the written request, the Director of Studies will refer the case to the Dean of School. The Dean of School will ask the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement to write to the student, giving him or her one month from the date of the written request to reply in writing. If no satisfactory explanation is provided, the Dean of School may recommend to the Research Degrees Panel that the student's registration be terminated.

6.11.5 **Seriously inadequate progress.** A student who does not submit the outline proposal or the written part of the probationary assessment within the time period prescribed above (regulations 6.2 and 6.4) will have their registration terminated. A student who, in the opinion of their supervisory team, is not making adequate progress towards submission of a satisfactory proposal or the probationary assessment may have their registration terminated at any point during the probationary period. Similarly, a student who fails to pass the probationary assessment within the time period

³ Contact can refer to a face-to-face meeting or email communication that demonstrates progress and engagement with studies

prescribed above (regulation 6.9.8) will have their registration terminated. Where a student has failed to submit the outline proposal or probationary assessment, the Director of Studies will write formally to the student requesting an explanation. If no reasonable explanation or reply is made by the student within 10 working days of the date of the written request, the Director of Studies will refer the case to the Dean of School. Where the student is failing, in the opinion of the supervisory team to make adequate progress during the probationary period, and the matter has been raised with the student without resolution, the Director of Studies shall consult with the supervisory team and submit to the Dean of School a report documenting the supervisory team's concerns. The Dean of School will ask the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement to write to the student, giving him or her one month from the date of the written correspondence to reply in writing. If, in the Dean of School's opinion, no reasonable explanation is provided, the Dean of School may recommend to the Research Degrees Panel that the student's registration be terminated.

- 6.11.6 Post probation, if a Director of Studies is concerned about a student's lack of progress, this should be highlighted in the annual progress report. Following an adverse report, the Dean of School may recommend an immediate meeting with the student under 6.11.7 below. Normally, however, the Dean of School will recommend action to address the points at issue. The Director of Studies and student should meet to agree an action plan and targets to allow the student to improve his or her performance.

Concerns about progress may arise mid-year, out with the annual progress report cycle. Issues should be discussed with the student first, explaining the consequences of failure to improve. The Director of Studies should consult with the full supervisory team to agree whether an extraordinary report should be made to the Dean of School.

- 6.11.7 If the concerns referred to under 6.11.6 are extremely serious and urgent, are of a health and safety nature, or if the student has failed to meet agreed targets for improvement (as set under 6.11.6 above), the Dean of School will meet with the student to discuss whether the project can continue. Where students are based overseas, alternative arrangements for this meeting will be applied.

This meeting may result in one of three outcomes:

- (i) the student continues in registration;
- (ii) the student continues in registration conditionally on the attainment of certain agreed targets; or
- (iii) a recommendation is made to the Research Degrees Panel that the student's registration be terminated.

De-registration under this regulation (6.11.7) may be recommended providing (a) the full supervisory team has been consulted and (b) the student has had an opportunity to respond to the concerns raised. Should de-registration be recommended, the procedure set out in regulation 6.11.5 shall be followed.

- 6.11.8 **Failure to submit the final thesis** The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will alert the student that their period of registration is about to elapse. If no thesis is submitted within four years (full-time) or eight years (part-time), and no application for extension or suspension has been received and approved the student's registration will be terminated automatically.

6.11.9 In all cases, students will have the right of appeal. Appeals must be lodged in writing within 21 days of the de-registration decision being communicated to the candidate by written correspondence and should be on the basis of the following grounds i.e. that:

- *Additional information* is available that was not, and could not, reasonably have been made available to the Research Degrees Panel at the time it made its original recommendation to the Research Strategy Committee and which had it been available could have led the Panel to making a different decision
- There was a *material irregularity* in the procedures of the Research Degrees Panel

Appeals will be heard by the Deputy Principal within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal in accordance with Section 11 of these Regulations. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the student may refer to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman, as set out in Section 11 of these Regulations.

6.11.10 Where a student wishes voluntarily to withdraw from his or her programme of study, this must be indicated on the appropriate form to the Dean of School. The student must inform his or her Director of Studies of the decision to withdraw. Whenever possible, the student should meet with the Dean of School before making any firm decision.

6.12 Change of mode of study

6.12.1 Applications for a change of mode of study from full-time to part-time status or vice versa may only be made for good cause and normally within the prescribed period of study. This application must be made by the student to the School Academic Board on the appropriate form, counter-signed by the Director of Studies. It is not normally possible to change mode of study retrospectively.

6.12.2 Following a change of mode of study from full-time to part-time status or vice versa, the minimum and maximum periods of study will be re-calculated. The Secretary to the School Academic Board will inform the Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee of the change of status. The Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee will calculate the new periods of study and inform the student and Director of Studies.

6.13 Suspension

6.13.1 Where a research student is prevented from making due progress by ill-health or other significant cause, the student may, with the support of the Director of Studies, ask the School Academic Board to suspend the student's registration for a period between one and twelve months in the first instance. If applicable, the payment of a candidate's studentship is temporarily halted during any suspension. A request for suspension on medical grounds must be supported by a letter from the student's doctor that supports the length of the full suspension period. The maximum total period of suspension is normally two years. No fees are payable during any full year of continuous suspension.

6.13.2 The Director of Studies will contact the student before the end of the period of suspension to confirm the student's return date. GQE staff will be responsible for reminding the Director of Studies of this obligation. If the student does not return within one month of the agreed return date, without extenuating circumstances accepted by the School Academic Board, procedures for deregistration due to lack of contact will be followed as in 6.11.3 above.

6.14 Extension

Only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Research Degrees Panel agree to an application for extension of the period of study of a student beyond the maximum period. This application must be made, on the appropriate form, by the student with the support of the Director of Studies.

6.15 Exclusion from studies

All students are required to observe the University's Regulations and Codes of Conduct and Practice. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any student on the grounds of a breach of rules and regulations or abuse of Codes of Conduct and Practice. Such cases are considered under the procedures described in the section on Discipline on the Quality website. Outcomes include the possibility of expulsion from the University.

7 Supervision

- 7.1 Each research degree student has a supervisory team, consisting of a Director of Studies (the principal supervisor), at least one Second Supervisor, and potentially one or more (normally external) advisors. The Director of Studies must be a current member of academic staff of the University. Normally, at least one Second Supervisor must also be a current member of University staff. Supervisory teams are suggested by the Director of Studies, having consulted with the Dean of School, and approved by the School Academic Board at the same time as the outline proposal. An interim supervisory team should be appointed within three weeks of the student's initial registration to provide support while the outline proposal is prepared. The composition of this team must be agreed with the Dean and communicated to GQE.
- 7.2 The frequency of supervisory meetings between the Director of Studies and a full-time student should be not less than monthly throughout the prescribed period of study; and not less than bi-monthly for part-time students. In the early months, the frequency of meetings should be greater. For continuing students (i.e. those who have not submitted their thesis within the prescribed period of study), it is expected that supervisory meetings will be required less frequently. Where students are based at a distance or conducting fieldwork abroad equivalent discussions must be held by telephone or email.
- 7.3 Meetings of the full supervisory team with the student will normally be arranged by the Director of Studies at least every four months for full-time students and twice yearly for part-time students, for review purposes. Advisers do not need to attend supervisory team meetings although they may be invited as required.
- 7.4 Records must be kept of all meetings. The Supervisory team must determine the format of the record and agree who is responsible for preparing this. All members of the team must agree to the content of the record and especially any action points.
- 7.5 The Director of Studies must hold a Doctorate or have equivalent research experience and will normally be an active researcher. Normally, the Director of Studies will be a specialist in the research topic, with second supervisor(s) appointed for their knowledge of related topics or methodologies. Advisers may be external to the University, especially where they provide a link with a Collaborating Establishment.

- 7.6 The Director of Studies must normally have been a member of a previous supervisory team for at least one successful research degree or professional doctorate candidate. Where a staff member without completions wishes to supervise a project in which he or she has specialist knowledge, he or she will normally be appointed as Second Supervisor, with a more experienced researcher acting as Director of Studies.
- 7.7 The Director of Studies is formally responsible to the Dean of School for a student's progress with their programme of study. The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring all administrative aspects of the student's progress are conducted appropriately and in particular for ensuring adherence to these regulations.
- 7.8 The role of a Second Supervisor is normally to provide advice in relation to his or her areas of expertise. (See also regulation 7.6 above). The Second Supervisor must fulfil the responsibilities of the Director of Studies in the event of any short-term absence (i.e. up to three months).
- 7.9 No Second Supervisor should act as a temporary Director of Studies for more than three months without a new Director of Studies being appointed.
- 7.10 When a Second Supervisor has been absent for longer than three months, an application for the appointment of a replacement must be made.
- 7.11 Alternative supervisory arrangements must be formalised in advance of any planned long-term leave (such as maternity or research leave) taken by a Director of Studies or Second Supervisor.
- 7.12 A supervisor who has been replaced due to his or her absence will not be automatically reinstated on his or her return. The case for return to the supervisory team has to be made to the Dean of School.
- 7.13 A member of staff must not normally be involved with the supervision of more than six research degree and professional doctorate candidates at any one time. Exceptions may be made where a member of staff holds a primarily research focused contract.
- 7.14 Any proposal for a change in supervision arrangements shall be made, on the appropriate form, to the School Academic Board.
- 7.15 If a student is experiencing difficulties with the supervisory relationship they may contact the School Theme Lead for advice, unless the Theme Lead is a member of the supervisory team. Normally it would be hoped that problems could be resolved between the student and the supervisory team.
- 7.16 In the case of problems which cannot be resolved jointly by the student and the supervisory team, and especially where the Theme Lead is a member of the supervisory team, either the student or the supervisor involved may ask the Dean of School to recommend a change of supervisor. Where the Dean of School is the supervisor concerned, the Convener of the Research Degrees Panel should be approached to recommend the change. The Convener of the Research Degrees Panel should also be approached if problems seem to be beyond the capacity of the School to resolve.

8 Research Training

- 8.1 The University runs a Research Skills Training Course for research students. All new research students must attend the generic training and are required to complete the

assessment in order to progress. Students may apply for exemption from this training by submitting evidence of previous certificated or experiential learning to the School Academic Board. A full record of exemptions will be held by the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement.

- 8.2 The Research Skills Training course may not cover all training needs. Directors of Studies must discuss each student's individual training needs and take steps to access suitable additional training if required, either from modules available within the University or from outside if necessary. Any resource considerations must be discussed with the Dean of School.
- 8.3 Deans of School must ensure that students are studying topics and using research methods which can primarily be supervised and supported within the existing expertise base of QMU.

9 Examination Regulations

- 9.1 The Research Degrees Panel shall ensure that all examinations are conducted in accordance with the University's regulations as set out below. In the event of significant deviation from these regulations, the Research Degrees Panel may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

9.2 Structure of assessment

- 9.2.1 The key function of the examination is to establish that both the candidate and the thesis reach the standard required for the degree, with respect to the criteria listed in Section 1.3. Another function of the examination is to demonstrate the candidate's authorship of the thesis (and creative work where applicable) and understanding of the field of study. The examination of a thesis submitted for a research degree normally has two principal stages: the preliminary assessment of the thesis, followed by its defence at an oral examination. For the purposes of these regulations, the term 'thesis' should be taken to refer to any substantive piece of written work submitted as part of the final assessment of the PhD, whether it be an academic thesis, a critical commentary on accompanying creative material or a portfolio.
- 9.2.2 In the case of practice-based research, the creative work and accompanying thesis should be assessed as a whole. The creative work and thesis should each represent roughly half the amount of effort put in by the student over the course of the degree. Where the work takes the form of a live performance or similar activity, the examiners should view the work at that time, even if this is considerably before the final submission of the thesis.
- 9.3 All research students must pay an examination fee, which is charged at the time of the appointment of examiners, before submission of the thesis for examination. A second fee is charged for any second oral examination (see 9.7.9 (d)).

9.4 Preparation for submission of the thesis

- 9.4.1 The decision to submit the thesis for examination is the candidate's alone, but only exceptionally should a thesis be submitted without the agreement of the supervisor.
- 9.4.2 No part of a thesis may have been included in a submission for any other degree or qualification without the permission of the Research Degrees Panel.

9.4.3 It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the thesis conforms to the regulations on format and binding in Section 10 below. (See also Regulation 9.6.2.)

9.5 Appointment of examiners and arrangements

9.5.1 It is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to nominate examiners to the Research Degrees Panel for Senate approval, by completing the Examination Arrangements form. This form should be submitted to the Panel well before the expected date of submission to allow time for scrutiny and approval.

9.5.2 In nominating examiners, the Director of Studies will consult the Dean of School and the candidate, and take into consideration any views they may express.

9.5.3 Normally the Dean of School will approach examiners to confirm their willingness to act in this capacity, although this task may be delegated to the Head of Division. The examiners should confirm their willingness in principle before the Examination Arrangements form is submitted to the Research Degrees Panel.

9.5.4 The Director of Studies must avoid all known conflicts of interest in nominating examiners, including cases where an external examiner has acted frequently for the School in the past. No member of the candidate's current or previous supervisory team (including any formal advisors), research collaborators or anyone with a close association with the candidate's research, may act as an examiner. Research Strategy Committee, before approving their appointment, requires nominated examiners to declare any other potential conflict(s) of interest.

9.5.5 The candidate must have no contact with the external examiner(s) between the nomination of examiners and the oral examination. This rule is waived however, in the case of practice-based research, should it be necessary for the examiner to view a live event as part of the assessment process. In this case, the examiners must attend the live event and independently write a detailed report afterwards. There must be no discussion or conversation with the candidate at that stage and the relationship between the candidate and examiners must remain formal.

9.5.6 There must be a minimum of two examiners, including one external and one internal, with normally not more than three examiners.

9.5.7 Internal examiners will normally be members of staff of the University, but may on occasion be previous members of staff who have left not more than three years before, or members of Collaborating Establishments.

9.5.8 No previous member of staff of the University may act as an external examiner within three years of leaving.

9.5.9 Examiners must hold a PhD or equivalent qualification or experience. External examiners must be independent, and must normally be experienced in examining at the relevant level. They must also be experienced in the specialist topic. Internal examiners need not be specialists in the topic but must have experience of the general field of research. No candidate for a research degree shall normally be appointed as an examiner.

9.5.10 The internal examiner will normally act as chair. However, where the internal examiner has no previous experience of examining at the relevant level (either within QMU or elsewhere), the Convener of the Research Degrees Panel – or a delegated

member of the Panel – shall identify a suitably experienced examiner to act as neutral non-voting chair of the oral examination.

9.5.11 Candidates submitting theses on multidisciplinary topics may have two external examiners, drawn from the contributing disciplines.

9.5.12 Candidates who are members of staff of the University (other than research assistants) must have two external examiners, and the internal examiner must not be the candidate's Head of Division or Dean of School.

9.5.13 Where it is not possible to identify a suitable internal examiner, two external examiners may be appointed. The Convenor of the Research Degrees Panel, or a delegated member of the Panel, shall identify a suitably experienced examiner to act as neutral non-voting chair of the oral examination.

9.6 Submission of the thesis for examination

9.6.1 One copy of the thesis (see regulation 10.6.2) and any additional material (see regulation 10.7) must be provided for each examiner, with an extra copy for a chair (if required), before the expiry of the registration period. A further electronic copy should be submitted by email. These should be submitted, along with the Candidate's signed Declaration form, to the Secretary to the Research Degrees Panel for distribution to the examiners. No copies should normally be submitted before the Research Degrees Panel has approved the examination arrangements.

9.6.2 The Candidate's Declaration form signed by the candidate must accompany the submission of the examination copies of the thesis. This form certifies that the work is the candidate's own and that no part has been previously included in a degree submission. Full bibliographic details should also be given of any publication by the candidate, including joint publications, which has been derived from or included in the thesis. The form also contains a checklist to be completed, indicating word length, and compliance with the requirements for format and binding listed in Section 10 below. If the thesis exceeds the upper word limit it will not be accepted for examination and will be returned to the candidate by the Secretary to the Research Degrees Panel.

9.6.3 All members of the supervisory team should sign the Declaration Form to confirm that the work is the candidate's own. On the form the supervisors should indicate whether they:

- (a) Believe the thesis is worthy for consideration for the award of Doctorate;
- (b) Do not believe the thesis is worthy of consideration, or hold reservations about its quality.

9.6.4 In the event of (b) the student will be given the option to delay submission and make further revisions (assuming there remains sufficient time in the student's period of maximum registration). Should the student prefer to submit the thesis without revision, he or she must sign the declaration form to confirm this.

9.6.5 The student must also complete a Candidate's Declaration Form before submitting creative work for examination and the process above should be followed.

9.6.6 Acceptance of the thesis for submission does not guarantee a successful outcome in examination.

9.7 Examination of the thesis

- 9.7.1 An oral examination is obligatory for all candidates, save in exceptional cases where the Research Degrees Panel has previously agreed an alternative form of examination, for a valid cause such as disability. Inadequate knowledge of the language in which the thesis is presented shall not constitute a valid cause.
- 9.7.2 The Secretary to the Research Degrees Panel is responsible for arranging the date of the oral examination, which must normally be held between six and twelve weeks from receipt of the thesis by the examiners. Exceptionally, examinations may be held outwith this timeframe, subject to agreement from the Research Degrees Panel. The oral examination will be held at Queen Margaret University. Exceptionally the Research Degrees Panel may give permission for the oral to be held elsewhere.
- 9.7.3 After submission of the thesis candidates may request postponement of the oral examination for good reason likely to have an adverse effect on their performance. These reasons may include recent bereavement, personal or family illness, or serious domestic problems. Such requests require approval from the Research Degrees Panel.
- 9.7.4 After reading the thesis, examiners are required to complete a Preliminary Assessment form, in which they are asked to comment on the intellectual, scholarly and literary quality of the thesis, and to identify areas on which they would wish to question the candidate in the oral examination.
- 9.7.5 The preliminary reports must be independent and confidential. The reports must be received by the Secretary to the Research Degrees Panel no later than two days in advance of the date agreed for the oral examination. A copy of each examiner's report is made available to the other examiner(s), to facilitate preliminary discussion, before the oral examination, but only after all reports have been received.
- 9.7.6 In the event that the examiners judge the thesis is too poor academically to be worthy of examination, the oral examination will still be held, to allow the student the chance to discuss the thesis with the examiners.
- 9.7.7 The Director of Studies or another member of the supervisory team may attend the oral examination, with the prior agreement of the candidate and of the examiners. The Director of Studies may only speak when addressed by the examiners on matters of clarification, and must not intervene in the evaluative process. A further function of the attendance of the Director of Studies is to be present to hear any comments by the examiners on necessary amendments.
- 9.7.8 During the oral examination, the examiners may explore the candidate's understanding of the general field of study and research methodology as well as of the specific topic of the thesis.
- 9.7.9 The examiners are required to complete and sign a joint final report at the end of the oral examination, and to indicate which of the options below they recommend to the Research Degrees Panel:
- a. the candidate to be awarded the degree
 - b. the candidate to be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments, to be completed within two months
 - c. the candidate to be awarded the degree subject to major amendments, to be completed within six months

- d. the candidate to be permitted to resubmit a substantially amended version of the thesis for re-examination, within twelve months. A second oral examination is normally obligatory.
- e. the candidate to be awarded the alternative degree of MPhil in lieu of PhD. The examiners may require suitable amendments to be made, within a maximum of six months. This award may only be made if the examiners are satisfied the candidate has met the criteria for the award of MPhil but is not able to meet the criteria for the award of PhD.
- f. the candidate to be neither awarded the degree, nor permitted to resubmit, nor awarded an alternative degree.

In the case of practice-based research, amendments may be stipulated to the thesis but not the creative work.

9.7.10 The comments in the final report by the examiners should provide a sufficient basis to enable the Research Degrees Panel to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen from Regulation 9.7.9 is appropriate. All parts of the form must be completed.

9.7.11 The final report by the examiners is confidential to the Research Degrees Panel, Research Strategy Committee, Senate and the student.

9.7.12 Examiners are also required to provide typed feedback for the candidate, including a formal statement of any necessary amendments, as an attachment to the final report. The full report and feedback should be supplied to the Secretary to the Research Degrees Panel within three days of the examination. It is essential that the amendments listed are complete and clear. Guidance must be appropriately specific, preferably identifying where the amendments should be inserted. The student is required to make only the amendments specified in the final report and examiners may not introduce new issues later – see regulation 9.8.1 below.

9.7.13 The final report will indicate which examiner(s) will be responsible for verifying that all and only the prescribed amendments have been satisfactorily completed. Major amendments are normally verified by the external as well as by the internal examiner.

9.7.14 Where the examiners are not able to be unanimous in their final recommendations, separate final reports will be completed and signed. In this circumstance, the Research Degrees Panel may:

- a. accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority includes at least one external examiner)
- b. accept the recommendation of the external examiner
- c. require the appointment of new examiners to conduct an independent examination, including an oral examination.

9.7.15 The Research Degrees Panel may very exceptionally approve an extension to the time period for amendments. Applications must be made well in advance of the deadline, and must be supported by the Director of Studies and the Dean of School.

9.8 Submission of amended or revised thesis

9.8.1 Where a candidate has been required to submit an amended thesis under 9.7.9 (b) or (c) above, the amendments will be checked by the examiner(s) within four weeks of receipt. The examiner(s) may only check against the amendments specified following the oral examination and may not introduce new points of issue. If the amendments have been satisfactorily completed, the candidate will be awarded the degree.

9.8.2 If the examiner(s) are not satisfied the amendments have been satisfactorily completed the candidate will be so informed and given the opportunity to make the required amendments within a period of 2 weeks. If after this the thesis does not incorporate the required amendments both examiners must view the amended thesis and discuss it. Where the amendments have been partially completed, the examiners will consider whether the thesis, as it stands, is worthy of a PhD. Should the examiners be unable to reach agreement, regulation 9.7.14 applies. A candidate knowingly fails to make a required amendment at his or her own risk. The examiners may make one of the following recommendations:

- a. the candidate to be awarded the degree
- b. the candidate to be awarded the alternative degree of MPhil in lieu of PhD. The examiners may require suitable amendments to be made, within a maximum of two months. This award may only be made if the examiners are satisfied the candidate has met the criteria for the award of MPhil but is not able to meet the criteria for the award of PhD.
- c. the candidate to be neither awarded the degree, nor awarded an alternative degree.

9.8.3 Normally, a thesis may be re-submitted for formal examination (regulation 9.7.9d) only once, and no candidate may be examined more than twice for a given degree. The appointment of the original examiners normally remains in force for any second examination. Should any of the original examiners be unavailable, a revised examination team must be approved by the Research Degrees Panel and Senate as in section 9.5 above. The process of re-examination follows the pattern of a first examination, except that a restricted set of final recommendations is available, as follows:

- a. the candidate to be awarded the degree
- b. the candidate to be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments, to be completed within two months
- c. the candidate to be awarded the alternative degree of MPhil in lieu of PhD. The examiners may require suitable amendments to be made, within a maximum of six months. This award may only be made if the examiners are satisfied the candidate has met the criteria for the award of MPhil but is not able to meet the criteria for the award of PhD.
- d. the candidate to be neither awarded the degree, nor awarded an alternative degree.

9.9 Award of the degree

9.9.1 The authority to award research degrees rests solely with Senate.

9.9.2 The Research Strategy Committee shall make a recommendation to Senate, based on the recommendation(s) and report(s) of the examiners, and following confirmation from the examiner(s) that any necessary corrections have been satisfactorily completed, that the degree be awarded.

9.9.3 When Senate has agreed that the degree should be awarded, the Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee communicates the decision to the graduand, advising that they may proceed to arrange for binding of the final version.

9.9.4 Following Senate agreement that the degree should be awarded, the Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee also notifies the Student Records Office that the

student is entitled to graduate. Further correspondence about the process of graduation is then the responsibility of the Student Records Office.

9.9.4 In the event of a recommendation from the Research Strategy Committee that no degree should be awarded, again the final decision rests with Senate. The Secretary to the Research Strategy Committee will communicate Senate's decision to the candidate.

9.9.5 Candidates may appeal against the outcome of their examination, on a limited number of grounds. These grounds and the process of appeal are described in Section 11 below.

9.10 Lodging the final version of the thesis

9.10.1 One electronic copy of the thesis, complying with the regulations in Section 10, should be submitted to the Secretary to the Research Degrees Panel.

9.10.2 A Thesis Deposit Agreement Form (supplied by GQE) must be completed and submitted at the same time as lodging the final thesis. This will confirm the agreement of the candidate that the thesis may be made available to readers through the open access electronic repository, may be photocopied, subject to the discretion of the Librarian, and may be lent to the British Library.

9.10.3 The copy of the thesis submitted for lodging in the Library shall remain the property of the University, with the copyright in the thesis being vested in the author.

9.11 Restriction of access

9.11.1 There is normally no restriction of access to a thesis for which a higher degree has been awarded. The Research Degrees Panel will only approve an application for confidentiality in order to enable a patent application to be lodged or to protect commercially or politically sensitive material. A thesis shall not be restricted in this way in order to protect research leads. While the normal maximum period of confidentiality is two years, in exceptional circumstances the Research Degrees Panel may approve a longer period.

9.11.2 Where the Research Degrees Panel has agreed that the confidential nature of the candidate's work is such as to preclude the thesis being made freely available in relevant libraries, the thesis shall, during the period of restriction, only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project.

10 Format and Binding

All theses for higher degrees awarded by Queen Margaret University must conform to the same format. Regulations in this section are designed to promote legibility, to meet the conventions of scholarly presentation, and to facilitate standard library cataloguing.

10.1 Except with the specific permission of the Research Degrees Panel, the thesis shall be presented in English.

10.2 Length

10.2.1 The text of the PhD thesis, excluding footnotes, references and appendices, normally falls within the following range: 70,000 to 100,000 words

Where the research involves creative writing, a portfolio of creative work, or the preparation of a scholarly edition, the critical commentary on the material under discussion would normally be within the range 30,000 to 40,000 words

The higher figures for theses and critical commentary included above represent maximum limits which must not be exceeded.

The lower figures are provided for guidance only. Thesis length will vary with the conventions of different subject areas. However, it is unlikely that a thesis significantly shorter than the figures indicated above will be of sufficient depth to achieve all the outcomes of the award.

The following sections should be excluded from the word count:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements
- Contents and list of tables and figures
- References and bibliography
- Appendices
- Footnotes

Tables and figures within the text are included in the word count, as are quotations from interviews. It is recognised that certain types of qualitative research will therefore require a higher word count. Permission to exceed the word limit may be sought from the Panel in advance of submission (see below).

10.2.2 Permission to exceed the maximum length of a thesis will only be granted by the Research Degrees Panel for exceptional reasons. Permission must be sought at the time the examination arrangements are submitted for approval, well before submission of the thesis. A thesis which is over the word limit, without permission, will not be accepted for examination.

10.2.3 Examiners should be able to understand the thesis from the full argument presented in the main body of the text. Appendices should contain only supporting data and ancillary material. Overlong appendices should be avoided.

10.3 Presentation

10.3.1 Theses must be in A4 format.

10.3.2 The thesis should normally be printed on white paper of not less than 80gsm. Double sided printing is acceptable.

10.3.3 Theses should be produced on a word processor and printed with laser quality printing. Copies may be produced through photocopying, but this reproduction must be of a satisfactory and consistent quality.

10.3.4 A font size of either 11 or 12 point must be used consistently throughout the thesis, except where otherwise specified below for footnotes and references. A slightly larger font size may be applied to headings. It is recommended that either Arial or Times New Roman font is used. Candidates are advised to avoid overuse of print enhancements such as bold, italic and underline.

10.3.5 Text must have at least 1.5 line-spacing, unless otherwise specified below.

10.3.6 The text should be justified, except for tables, diagrams, graphs etc.

10.3.7 The following page-margins should be set:

- 4cm left-hand binding margin (1.5")
- 2cm head margin (0.75")
- 2.5cm right-hand fore-edge margin (1")
- 4cm tail margin (1.5")

10.3.8 Pages must be numbered consecutively (using Arabic numerals) throughout the text, references and appendices. Preliminary pages should be numbered in roman numerals.

10.3.9 Alternative formats to the above (larger print, coloured paper, etc) may be requested by the examiners. This should be discussed in advance of submission.

10.4 Structure

10.4.1 Title page

The title page must give the following information, all centred and in 20 point:

- the full title of the thesis (in capitals)
- the forename and surname of the author (in capitals)
- the degree for which the thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment (in Sentence case)
- QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY (in capitals)
- the year of submission (for examination copy) or of award (for final version)

A model of the standard title page to be followed is given in Appendix 1 of these regulations.

10.4.2 Abstract

A one-page, single-spaced abstract of no more 300 words must be bound into the thesis. The abstract should provide a synopsis of the thesis describing the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the discipline.

Students must provide a list of keywords for cataloguing purposes.

10.4.3 Acknowledgements

Any assistance received shall be acknowledged in a single-spaced acknowledgement section. It is customary for the candidate's supervisors and School to be mentioned. Also included here should be a statement of any internal or external collaboration or advisory links. Any Collaborating Establishment that has been involved in the research must be duly acknowledged.

Where the research was part of a collaborative group project, this must be recorded in the acknowledgements. The candidate's individual contribution to the collaboration should be explicitly identified in the body of the thesis.

10.4.4 Contents

A contents list, and lists of any tables, diagrams, graphs and illustrations, should be provided, with page numbers identified and aligned right. The contents page(s) should be printed with 1.5 line-spacing.

10.4.5 Diagrams, tables, illustrations etc.

These should be numbered, labelled with a legend, and placed as near to the relevant text as feasible. Good quality colour photocopies of diagrams, illustrations and photographs may be used rather than the originals.

10.4.6 Footnotes

Where footnotes are used, these should be single-spaced in 10 point, and preferably placed at the foot of the relevant page.

10.4.7 Quotation and referencing in the text

Short quotations in the running text should be enclosed in inverted commas. Longer quotations should be separated from the running text, and indented, with single line-spacing. Any material consulted, especially including quotations, must be clearly and adequately referenced in the text.

10.4.8 References section

The thesis must include a full and adequate References section immediately after the main body of text, and before any appendices. Referencing must be done consistently, with adherence to a recognised style such as APA or Harvard. References should be printed with single line-spacing.

10.4.9 Appendices (see also Regulation 10.2.3)

The text of any appendices may be single-spaced.

10.5 Copies of published material

The candidate shall be permitted to publish material in advance of the thesis in discussion with the supervisory team. Reference shall be made in the thesis to any such work. Where material is jointly authored the student must clarify the extent of his or her role. Copies of published material should be provided and either bound in with the thesis or placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the thesis.

10.6 Binding

Candidates are responsible for the costs of production of all copies of the thesis, including the costs of binding.

10.6.1 An individual volume should not be more than 6.5cm thick. A thicker thesis should be sub-divided into two volumes.

10.6.2 For examination

Copies of the thesis submitted for examination should be in a “soft” temporary binding. All copies should be securely fixed by means of a glued spine, a spiral binding, or a comb binding, so that the pages remain secure when the volume is fully opened and pages cannot be added or removed.

The title page, printed on card, should serve as a front cover. A piece of card should also be placed at the end as a back cover. The covers may be laminated or protected with sheets of clear plastic.

Accompanying creative work may be provided as an appendix. The format in which it is presented will vary, but it must be in such a way as to be easily referenced and accessed by the examiners. Each item should be individually labelled, with relevant details including the candidate’s name.

10.6.3 Final version

One electronic copy of the thesis must be submitted for lodging in the Library’s open access electronic repository. This must be submitted as a single file and not split by chapter, section or similar. The electronic copy must be submitted before the student can graduate.

Additional supporting material (such as maps or images) should be provided separately. If any non-digital material accompanies the thesis this should be discussed with LRC staff, who will advise on the best format for submission.

10.6.4 Students may wish to order hard bound versions of the final thesis for their own records. Students order such copies at their own discretion and own expense. The following guidance is offered as advice to bookbinders:

- The thesis should be sewn and bound in strong, black cloth covers. The front and rear boards shall have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upright.
- The title page (10.4.1 above) should be the first page inside the covers. The covers should contain only the detail set out below.
- The lettering should be in gold, in a non-serif font with a type size of 24 point and in upper case capitals. The only exception to this is the lettering for PhD and MPhil, which should be printed exactly as they appear in this sentence. There should be no full-stops in or after either PhD or MPhil.
- The front board must bear the title of the work and the name of the author (forename and surname) only. It is not usual for the author’s other qualifications to be given.
- The spine should read vertically downwards, left to right in one line from the top to the foot of the spine: Forename and Surname (top), PhD or MPhil (middle), and Year of Award (foot). There should be a minimum of a 5cm space at the foot of the spine to allow catalogue-numbering by the Library. Where applicable, the volume number (in Arabic numerals) should be given after the Year of Award as in the following: Volume 1, Volume 2.

11 Appeals

- 11.1 The general precepts of the University Appeals Procedure apply to appeals against Research Degree decisions and these regulations should be read in conjunction with the Academic Appeals Procedure. Under these regulations, a University officer may act through his or her properly appointed nominee. The regulations herein relating to appeals shall have precedence over the Academic Appeals Procedure.
- 11.2 A student has the right to appeal against any decision that affects his or her progress. Appeals must be in writing (or in another permanent form) and should be submitted to the University Secretary within 21 days of receipt of the decision against which the student is appealing. An extension to this time limit will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances e.g. when, for reasons outside his or her control, a student did not receive timely notification of his or her result.
- 11.3 An unsatisfactory result does not in itself constitute a valid basis for an appeal. Those hearing the appeal will not attempt to re-assess the student, nor to appraise the professional judgement of those involved in making the decision.
- 11.4 The permissible grounds for appeal are as follows:
- (a) *additional information* is available that was not, and could not, reasonably have been made available at the time of the original decision and which had it been available could have led a different decision being made;
 - (b) there was a *material irregularity* in procedures.
- 11.5 If the basis of the student's appeal is information which could have been made known prior to the decision being made, the student must give a satisfactory reason for the information not being made available at that time.
- 11.6 A student's disagreement with the academic judgement of an assessor does not provide a valid ground for appeal.
- 11.7 Any student considering an appeal is encouraged to contact the Students' Union for advice and assistance.
- 11.8 Appeals must be in writing. The student's written statement should provide the following information in support of his/her appeal:
- name
 - up-to-date contact address for correspondence, including email address
 - decision or result being appealed
 - the grounds for appeal
 - supporting evidence
 - the remedy being sought
- 11.9 The University Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the Appeal within three working days of receipt, and pass the appeal to the Deputy Principal who will hear the appeal within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. This timescale may be extended where the Deputy Principal is absent from the University through leave or illness. The Deputy Principal will provide a copy of the response to the University Secretary.

- 11.10 Where a reconsideration of the student's case gives rise to a change in decision this must be ratified by the original decision making body, e.g. Research Degrees Panel, School Academic Board, or Dean of School.
- 11.11 The decision of the Deputy Principal is final and concludes the University's internal procedures.

Independent review

- 11.12 The University's internal procedures having been exhausted, a student may seek review of his/her complaint by an independent person, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman [SPSO].
- 11.13 The Ombudsman is independent and her staff will advise whether or not the complaint is one that they can investigate. Normally the student will have to tell the Ombudsman about his/her complaint within 12 months of first knowing about the problem about which they are complaining, although the Ombudsman may look at complaints outside this limit if she thinks there is good reason to do so.
- 11.14 There are some restrictions on what the Ombudsman can investigate. For example she cannot consider the subject matter of complaints about personnel matters or matters of academic judgement. However she may be able to investigate the manner in which the complaint was handled. If the complaint is appropriate to her office and is investigated, the Ombudsman's staff will send details of how this will be done.
- 11.15 The complaint should be submitted in writing to the Ombudsman, and should include any relevant documents including correspondence with the University and the University's response to the complaint. This can be sent to the Ombudsman without cost at the freepost address given below. A student may discuss the complaint with an Investigator at the SPSO before deciding to submit.
- 11.16 The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has an online complaint form accessible through the website although papers in support of the complaint would still have to be supplied to the Ombudsman by post or other means. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman can also supply paper complaint forms direct to complainants.
- 11.17 Further information may be accessed through the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman website or by calling her office for advice. Contact details are:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS

Freepost address
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Freepost EH641, Edinburgh, EH3 0BR

Phone 0800 377 7330
Fax 0800 377 7331
website www.scottishombudsman.org.uk
e-mail enquiries to ask@spsso.org.uk
Text: 0790 049 4372

[Appendix 1]

BUSINESS METHODS IN THE SCOTTISH TOURIST INDUSTRY

RUTH LOTHIAN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY

2012