



Academic Regulations 4:

Research Degrees

2026-2027

Incorporating:

MA/MSc by Research

Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Doctor of Philosophy by prior publication/portfolio

This document is available in hard copy and on the University intranet and internet sites. Please contact the Information Centres (in each campus library) or the Kingston Students' Union' Advice Centre if you have any difficulty in obtaining a copy that you can read, or find any aspect of these regulations difficult to understand.

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Section 1

Regulations for the award of Masters by Research

These regulations should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Regulations and General Regulations, all of which apply. See the Postgraduate Researcher Handbook for further guidance.

Standard of the award

1. An MA or MSc by Research candidate will have achieved a minimum of 180 credits at M level by critically investigating and evaluating an appropriate topic, and presenting and defending a dissertation to the satisfaction of the examiners.

Entry requirements for applicants

2. The normal minimum requirement for admission to the MA or MSc by Research is a first or second class honours degree, or equivalent, in a subject appropriate to the proposed programme of study.
3. Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to provide evidence of an English language qualification at an appropriate level.

Non-standard entrants

4. Exceptionally, an applicant without these minimum qualifications may be considered for entry. For example, the Head of School and potential First Supervisor may consider for admission an applicant with relevant professional qualifications and experience, where these provide sufficient evidence of potential to complete the degree programme satisfactorily. In such cases, justification must be provided and the application for registration approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee.

Programme of research

5. A programme of research may be in any field of study, provided that the programme: is capable of leading to scholarly research, which may include appropriate creative work, and can be assessed by the presentation of a dissertation and an oral examination.
6. A programme of research will have an identified First Supervisor plus at least one other supervisor. Normally, the supervisors will work with the applicant to prepare the initial outline of the proposed programme of research.

Externally funded research

7. Where the proposed programme is part of an externally funded project, there must be appropriate safeguards to ensure that the terms of the contract will not prevent the fulfilment of the objectives of the proposed research programme.

Approval to register

8. Students will be registered for the MA/MSc by Research when:
 - the proposed programme of research has been approved by the appropriate Faculty Research Degrees Committee
 - any exceptional arrangements have been approved by the University Research Degrees Committee
 - the student has completed the enrolment process

Registration

Interruptions and breaks from study

9. If students are prevented from continuing their study by illness or other mitigating circumstances a formal request for the registration to be interrupted must be submitted for approval by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The period of interruption may be for up to one year. If mitigation applies a formal request for up to one further year may be submitted for approval by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. Students requiring an interruption of more than two years will be withdrawn and may re-apply with Advanced Standing when they are ready to return to their studies.

Period of registration

9. Students registered for an MA/MSc by Research should normally have completed their programme of study and have presented their dissertation for examination within one year if they are studying full-time or two years if they are studying part-time
10. In exceptional circumstances, a student's period of registration may be extended once for a maximum period of four months for full time students OR 8 months for part time students if the application for an extension is made to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee before the registration period has expired.

Interruptions and breaks from study

11. If students are prevented from continuing their study by illness or other mitigating circumstances a formal request for the registration to be interrupted must be submitted for approval by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The period of interruption may be for up to one year. If mitigation applies a formal request for up to one further year may be submitted for approval by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. Students requiring an interruption of more than two years will be withdrawn

and may re-apply with Advanced Standing when they are ready to return to their studies.

Termination of registration

12. A student's registration may be terminated under the University's General Student Regulations. More information can be found at paragraph 52 of the General Student Regulations.
13. The procedure set out in paragraphs 28 to 33 of the General Student Regulations relating to academic engagement and progress will be followed. However, the authority to give notice and withdraw your registration due to a lack of academic engagement or progress lies with the University Research Degree Committee (URDC), who may delegate this authority, rather than with the Academic Registrar or an Assessment Board.

Researcher development and training

14. The University expects all research students to undertake an agreed programme of development and research training. The initial programme will be discussed by the First Supervisor and the student and submitted to the FRDC for approval as part of the application for registration.

Assessment process

15. The assessment of a candidate for an MA/MSc by Research has two elements: production of a dissertation, and the defence of the dissertation in an oral examination
16. The arrangements for the assessment of a candidate will be submitted to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee for approval, including the title of the dissertation and the names of the internal and external examiners
17. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will submit the approved examination arrangements including CVs of the proposed internal and external examiners to the Chair of the University Research Degrees Committee for ratification.
18. The dissertation and the oral examination will be in English unless otherwise approved by the University Research Degrees Committee.
19. Once the examination arrangements have been approved, candidates must have no contact with their external examiner.
20. Recommendations made by the examination team will be ratified by the University Research Degrees Committee in its capacity as Examination Board.

Assessment panel

21. Each candidate must be examined by an assessment panel of two examiners, comprising one external examiner and one internal examiner.

Where the candidate is a member of Kingston University staff two externals must be appointed in addition to an internal.

22. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will submit details of the proposed internal and external examiners to the University Research Degrees Committee for approval.
23. At least one of the examiners must have experience of examining research degree candidates at a comparable level.
24. Candidates' supervisors cannot be appointed as examiners.
25. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will appoint an independent Chair.

Exceptional arrangements

26. All exceptional assessment arrangements must be approved by the University Research Degrees Committee. Examples of such exceptional arrangements include the submission of the dissertation in a language other than English; an assessment method other than an oral examination and dissertation.
27. All changes to the approved assessment arrangements must be agreed by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and ratified by the University Research Degrees Committee.

Submission of the dissertation

28. The dissertation must be submitted in the required format, normally before the period of registration has expired.
29. A copy of any dissertation submitted as part of a successful award of a research degree must be lodged with the University Library. An application for a dissertation to remain confidential (normally for two years) must be made to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and ratified by the University Research Degrees Committee at the time the examination arrangements are submitted for approval.
30. Normally, a dissertation submitted for a research award should not contain any material that has been previously submitted for an award at an institute of Higher Education either in the UK or overseas. When submitting the dissertation, the candidate must confirm, by completing a Declaration form, that no part of the dissertation has been submitted for a comparable academic award except in cases detailed below.
31. In cases where a dissertation contains a proportion of material that has been submitted for a previous award, the nature and proportion of work must be clearly stated in the Declaration form and appropriate reference made in the dissertation. In these cases, the University Research Degrees Committee shall have the authority to decide whether or not to approve the submission of the dissertation for examination. The Committee must be satisfied that there is sufficient new material in the dissertation to warrant consideration for the award.

Preliminary assessment of the dissertation

32. Each examiner shall consider the dissertation independently and produce an independent preliminary report setting out their general views on the dissertation and areas to be explored in the oral examination. Preliminary reports will not normally be made available to the student until after the assessment process is complete and an award has been made.

The preliminary report will indicate one of the following:

- the oral examination should be held
- the oral examination should be postponed until the candidate has resubmitted the dissertation for reassessment after corrections.

In this case, the examiners will be asked to provide a jointly agreed report listing the corrections required

Note that a candidate cannot be failed without having had an oral examination unless exceptional arrangements have been approved.

33. If there is no initial agreement that the oral examination should proceed, the examiners will be asked to meet with the Independent Chair to determine which of the two outcomes should be recommended. A report of the meeting should be written by the Independent Chair and confirmed by the examiners.

Oral examination

34. The oral examination may be held in person at the University, online or hybrid with the external examiner online. Approval to hold the examination in person but not at the University must be obtained from the University Research Degrees Committee.
35. All examiners must participate in the oral examination.

Examiner Recommendations

36. Following the oral examination, the examiners will be asked to provide a joint recommendation to the URDC (in its capacity as Examination Board) indicating one of the following:

37. **Award**
- the candidate has reached the required standard and should be **awarded** the MA/MSc by Research
38. **Amendments**
- the candidate must complete **minor amendments**, normally within one month, to the satisfaction of the examiners in order to allow the award of MA/MSc by Research

38. **Resubmission** [note that this option is only available if the candidate has not already resubmitted]
- the candidate has not yet reached the required standard for the degree but should be permitted one further assessment opportunity. This can be defined as:
 - o re-submission of the dissertation and its defence in a second oral examination (normally within four months.)
 - o re-submission of the dissertation only (normally within four months.)
 - o undertaking a second oral examination with no significant change to the dissertation
39. **Fail**
- the candidate has **failed** to reach the standard for the degree and should not be offered an opportunity for reassessment

Assessment of Amended or Resubmitted Dissertation

40. Amendments and resubmissions will be assessed against the specified list of requirements in the examiner/s' report. Examiners may not, at this stage, make additional requirements.
41. In total the candidate may normally have two assessment attempts.
42. Following the completion of the reassessment, the examiners' recommendations will be one of the following:
- that the candidate has reached the required standard and may be **awarded** the degree of MA/MSc by Research
 - that the candidate has reached the required standard and may be awarded the degree of MA/MSc by Research subject to **amendments** to the dissertation by a specified date (normally within one month)
 - that the candidate has **failed** to reach the standard for the degree and can be permitted no further opportunity for reassessment.

Disagreement between examiners

43. If, at any stage, the examiners are unable to reach a consensus view, the University Research Degrees Committee may:
- where there are more than two examiners, accept the recommendation of the majority of the examiners, provided it includes at least one external examiner
 - require the appointment of an additional examiner to conduct the relevant stages of the assessment process and make an independent recommendation to the University Research Degrees Committee

Section 2

Regulations for the award of Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

These regulations should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Regulations and General Regulations, all of which apply. See the Postgraduate Researcher Handbook for further guidance.

The standard of the award

1. An MPhil candidate will have achieved a minimum of 360 credits at M level by:
 - satisfactorily completing an agreed programme of research training
 - critically investigating and evaluating an appropriate topic
 - presenting and defending a thesis to the satisfaction of the examiners

Entry requirements for applicants

2. The normal minimum requirement for admission to the MPhil is a first or second class honours degree or equivalent in a subject appropriate to the proposed programme of study.
3. Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to provide evidence of an English Language qualification at an appropriate level.

Non-standard entrants

4. Exceptionally, an applicant without these minimum qualifications may be considered for entry. For example, the Head of School and First Supervisor may consider an applicant with relevant professional qualifications and experience where these provide sufficient evidence of potential to complete the degree programme satisfactorily. In such cases, justification must be provided and the application for registration approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee.

The programme of research

5. A programme of research may be in any field of study provided that the programme is capable of leading to scholarly research, which may include appropriate creative work, and can be assessed by the presentation of a thesis and an oral examination.
6. A programme of research will have an identified First Supervisor. There will be at least one and normally not more than two additional supervisors, who will be nominated as part of the application for provisional registration. Normally, they will work with the applicant to prepare the initial outline of the proposed programme of research.

Collaboration

7. The University encourages collaboration with outside institutions and organisations. Where a research student is working in a collaborative arrangement, evidence must be appended to the application for provisional registration giving details of the nature of the arrangement. In cases where Kingston University requires additional physical or staffing resources to support a programme of research, suitable collaborative arrangements may be proposed, and will require the approval of the University Research Degrees Committee.

Note: Advice on formal collaborations is available from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team.

Externally funded research

8. Where the proposed programme is part of an externally funded project, there must be appropriate safeguards to ensure that the terms of the contract will not prevent the fulfilment of the objectives of the proposed research programme.

Group projects

9. Where the proposed programme is part of a larger group project, there must be clear evidence to show how the individual programme is distinct and separate in its aims and objectives from both the overall project and any other research programmes in the same field of study.

Registration

10. Students will be registered for the MPhil when:
 - the application to register, including an outline programme of research has been approved by the appropriate Faculty Research Degrees Committee
 - any exceptional arrangements have been approved by the University Research Degrees Committee
 - the enrolment process has been completed
11. Registration is re-confirmed annually and is dependent on the student:
 - maintaining satisfactory progress on the programme of research
 - being in good financial standing with the University
12. Students wishing to change their mode of study or supervisory arrangements must apply to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The required completion date will be amended pro rata.

Normal period of registration

13. Students registered for a MPhil should normally have presented their thesis for examination within two years from initial registration if they are studying full-time OR four years from initial registration if they are studying part-time

Maximum period of registration

14. The deadline for presenting the MPhil thesis for examination is three years from initial registration if studying full-time OR six years from initial registration if studying part-time. Exemptions may be applied for on the basis on mitigation.

Minimum period of registration

15. The minimum period of registration is one year for full-time students OR two years for part-time students

Interruptions and breaks from study

16. If students are prevented from continuing their study by illness or other mitigating circumstances a formal request for the registration to be interrupted must be submitted for approval by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The period of interruption may be for up to one year. If mitigation applies a formal request for up to one further year may be submitted for approval by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. Students requiring an interruption of more than two years will be withdrawn and may re-apply with Advanced Standing when they are ready to return to their studies.

Extensions

17. In exceptional circumstances, a student's period of registration may be extended once for a maximum period of one year for full time students OR two years for part time students, if the application for an extension is made to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee before the maximum registration period has expired.

Termination of registration

18. A student's registration may be terminated under the University's General Student Regulations. More information can be found at paragraph 51 of the General Student Regulations.
19. The procedure set out in paragraphs 29 to 35 of the General Student Regulations relating to academic engagement and progress will be followed. However, the authority to give notice and withdraw your registration due to a lack of academic engagement or progress lies with the University Research Degree Committee (URDC), who may delegate this authority, rather than with the Academic Registrar or an Assessment Board.

Normal period of registration

20. Students registered for a MPhil should normally have presented their thesis for examination within two years from initial registration if they are studying full-time OR four years from initial registration if they are studying part-time

Maximum period of registration

21. The deadline for presenting the MPhil thesis for examination is three years from initial registration if studying full-time OR six years from initial registration if studying part-time. Exemptions may be applied for on the basis on mitigation.

Minimum period of registration

22. The minimum period of registration is one year for full time students OR two years for part time students

Researcher development and training

24. The University expects all research students to undertake an agreed programme of development and research training. The initial programme will be discussed by the First Supervisor and the student and submitted to the FRDC for approval as part of the application for registration.
25. The First Supervisor will review the development needs of each research student during the annual monitoring process.
26. Students are required by Faculties to compile a record of all research development and training undertaken.
27. Failure to complete the agreed development and training programme will result in registration being reviewed by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The review may result in a recommendation to the University Research Degrees Committee for the registration to be terminated.
28. As part of a student's training, prior to the submission of the assessment arrangements for approval, students must be given the opportunity to undergo a practice oral examination with an independent assessor and provided with informal feedback on their performance.

Monitoring of progress

Annual monitoring of progress

29. It is a condition of continued registration that a satisfactory progress report is received annually.
30. The main purposes of the monitoring will be to ensure that:
 - the research is progressing at a satisfactory pace
 - the planned personal training programme is being, or has been, completed

- any required changes to the supervisory arrangements, the student's mode of attendance or the nature of the proposed research programme, including the title, are identified and submitted for approval
 - to provide formal feedback to students on their progress and give them an opportunity to highlight any difficulties experienced.
31. Students will be required to submit supporting documentation to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will consider the evidence and recommend one of the following to the University Research Degrees Committee:
- that the student's registration should continue
 - that the student's registration may continue subject to some modifications or additional work to be completed by an agreed date and approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee
 - that the student is not progressing satisfactorily and the enrolment should be terminated
32. Exceptionally, a student who is registered for a MPhil, but has not been assessed for the award, may apply for admission to a PhD. This application should normally be made before half of the registration period for the MPhil has expired and should follow the same process as required for the initial confirmation of registration of PhD students.

Assessment process

Note that in total the candidate may normally have two assessment attempts. The first examination outcome may be a full resubmission, major amendments or minor amendments; the second may be major amendments or minor amendments. Exceptionally, a third attempt of minor amendments may be permitted.

33. The assessment of a candidate for an MPhil has two elements
- the thesis or its equivalent, including other approved examinable material
 - its defence in an oral examination.
34. The arrangements for the assessment of a candidate will be submitted to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee for approval, including:
- the final title of the thesis
 - the names of the internal and external examiners
 - the form of the submission
35. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will submit the approved examination arrangements including the CVs of the proposed internal and external examiners to the Chair of the University Research Degrees Committee for ratification.
36. The thesis and the oral examination will be in English unless otherwise approved by the University Research Degrees Committee.

37. Once the examination arrangements have been approved, candidates must have no contact with any of their external examiners.
38. Recommendations made by the examination team will be ratified by the University Research Degrees Committee in its capacity as Examination Board.

Assessment panel

39. Each candidate must be examined by an assessment panel of at least two, and, normally, not more than three examiners.
40. There must be at least one external examiner and one internal examiner. Where the candidate is a member of Kingston University staff two externals must be appointed in addition to an internal.
41. At least one of the examiners must have experience of examining research degree candidates at a comparable level.
42. Candidates' supervisors cannot be appointed as examiners.
43. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will appoint an Independent Chair.

Exceptional arrangements

44. All exceptional assessment arrangements must be approved by the University Research Degrees Committee, for example, the submission of the thesis in a language other than English OR an assessment method other than an oral examination
45. All changes to approved assessment arrangements must be agreed by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and ratified by the University Research Degrees Committee.

Submission of the thesis

46. The thesis must be submitted in the required format, normally before the candidate's period of registration has expired
47. Any thesis submitted as part of a successful award of a research degree will be lodged with the University Library. An application for a thesis to remain confidential (normally for a period of two years) must be made to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and ratified by the University Research Degrees Committee when the examination arrangements are submitted.

Note: Certain types of submission, eg. of artefacts or creative work, may be retained by the University in another environment, if appropriate.

48. Normally, a thesis submitted for a research award should not contain any material that has been previously submitted for an award at an institute of Higher Education either in the UK or overseas. When submitting the thesis,

the candidate must confirm, by completing a Declaration form, that no part of the thesis has been submitted for a comparable academic award except in cases detailed below.

49. In cases where a thesis contains a proportion of material that has been submitted for a previous award, the nature and proportion of work must be clearly stated in the Declaration form and appropriate reference made in the thesis. In these cases, the University Research Degrees Committee shall have the authority to decide whether to approve the submission of the thesis for examination. The Committee must be satisfied that there is sufficient new material in the thesis to warrant consideration for the award.

Preliminary assessment of the thesis

50. Each examiner shall consider the thesis independently and produce an independent preliminary report setting out their general views on the thesis and areas to be explored in the oral examination. Preliminary reports will not normally be made available to the student until after the assessment process is complete and an award has been made.

The preliminary report will indicate one of the following:

- the oral examination should be held
- the oral examination should be postponed until the candidate has resubmitted the thesis for reassessment after corrections

In this case, the examiners will be asked to provide a full report detailing the requirements for resubmission.

Note that a candidate cannot be failed without having had an oral examination unless exceptional arrangements have been approved.

51. If there is no initial agreement that the oral examination should proceed, the examiners will be asked to meet with the Independent Chair to determine which of the two outcomes should be recommended. A report of the meeting should be written by the Independent Chair and confirmed by the examiners.

Oral examination

52. The oral examination may be held in person at the University, online or hybrid with the external examiner online. Approval to hold the examination in person but not at the University must be obtained from the University Research Degrees Committee.
53. All examiners must participate in the oral examination.

Examiner Recommendations

54. Following the oral examination, the examiners shall be asked to provide a joint recommendation indicating one of the following:

55. **Award**

- the candidate has reached the required standard and should be **awarded** the MPhil

56. **Amendments**

- the candidate must complete **minor amendments**, normally within three months, to the satisfaction of the examiners in order to allow the award of the MPhil. In this instance the examiners must supply a jointly agreed list of amendments
- the candidate must complete **major amendments**, normally within six months, to the satisfaction of the examiners in order to allow the award of the MPhil. In this instance the examiners must supply a jointly agreed list of amendments

57. **Resubmission** [note that this option is only available if the candidate has not already resubmitted]

- the candidate has not yet to reach the required standard but should be permitted one further assessment opportunity. In this instance, the examiners must supply a full and jointly agreed report outlining the defects of the thesis and the nature of the corrections to be made. Reassessment may take one of the following forms: resubmission of the revised thesis and its defence in a second oral examination (normally within one year)
 - resubmission of the revised thesis (normally within one year) with a further oral examination. After examining the revised thesis, submitting preliminary reports and meeting with the Independent Chair, examiners may, exceptionally, determine that a second oral examination is no longer necessary if the outcome will be pass or minor amendments.
 - a second oral examination without significant change to the thesis (normally within one year)

58. **Fail**

- the candidate has **failed** to reach the standard for MPhil and should not be offered an opportunity for reassessment.

Assessment of amendments or resubmission

59. Amendments and resubmissions will be assessed against the specified list of requirements in the examiner/s' report. Examiners may not, at this stage, make additional requirements.
60. In total, the candidate may normally have two assessment attempts. The first examination outcome may be a full resubmission, major amendments or minor amendments; the second may be major amendments or minor amendments. Exceptionally, a third attempt of minor amendments may be permitted.
61. A candidate may be given the outcome of resubmission on one occasion only.
62. Once the candidate has submitted their corrected thesis, those examiners designated as being responsible for reviewing the thesis will be required to

make a judgment as to whether the requirements have been completed to their satisfaction.

63. Examiners will be asked to choose between one of the following the outcomes listed in paragraphs 55-58, as long as the number of assessment attempts is in line with paragraph 59, and with the following exceptions:
- Outcomes for the assessment of a resubmission: all options minus a further resubmission
 - Outcomes for the assessment of major amendments: all options available
 - Outcomes for the assessment of minor amendments: resubmission and major amendments are not permitted, but further minor amendments are permitted

Disagreement between examiners

64. If, at any stage, the examiners are unable to reach a consensus view, the University Research Degrees Committee may:
- where there are more than two examiners, accept the recommendation of the majority of the examiners, provided it includes at least one external examiner
 - require the appointment of an additional examiner to conduct the relevant stages of the assessment process and make an independent recommendation to the University Research Degrees Committee

Section 3

Regulations for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

These regulations should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Regulations and General Regulations, all of which apply. See the Postgraduate Researcher Handbook for further guidance.

The standard of the award

1. A PhD candidate will have:
 - satisfactorily completed an agreed programme of research training
 - critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic, resulting in a substantial independent and original contribution to knowledge, commensurate with the normal period of registration
 - presented and defended a thesis to the satisfaction of the examiners

Entry requirements for applicants

2. The normal minimum requirement for admission to the PhD is either a postgraduate Masters degree in a discipline that is appropriate to the proposed research programme or a first or upper second class honours degree or equivalent in a subject appropriate to the proposed programme of study. Admission will initially be to the MPhil programme and may be upgraded to PhD following successful assessment at the upgrade stage.
3. Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to provide evidence of an approved English Language qualification at an appropriate level (see university website for details).

Non-standard entrants

4. Exceptionally, an applicant without these minimum qualifications may be considered for entry. For example, the Head of School and First Supervisor may consider an applicant with relevant professional qualifications and experience where these provide sufficient evidence of potential to complete the degree programme satisfactorily. In such cases, justification must be provided and the application for registration approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee.

Direct entry to the PhD/Admission with advanced standing

5. Students who are registered for a PhD at another comparable institution may apply for admission with advanced standing. Advanced standing may grant direct entry to the PhD without initial registration on the MPhil programme. To be eligible for consideration by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee, the applicant must be prepared to register at Kingston University for at least one year (or two years, if part-time) prior to the date of the final submission of the thesis. Admission may be subject to the completion of an agreed programme of development and training.

The programme of research

6. A programme of research may be in any field of study provided that the programme is capable of leading to scholarly research, which may include appropriate creative work and can be assessed by the presentation of a thesis and an oral examination.
7. A programme of research will have an identified First Supervisor. There will be at least one, and normally not more than two additional supervisors, who will be nominated as part of the application for provisional registration. Normally, the First Supervisor will work with the applicant to prepare the initial outline of the proposed programme of research.

Collaboration

8. The University encourages collaboration with outside institutions and organisations. Where a research student is working in a collaborative arrangement, evidence must be appended to the application for provisional registration giving details of the nature of the arrangement. In cases where Kingston University requires additional physical or staffing resources to support a programme of research, suitable collaborative arrangements may be proposed and will require the approval of the University Research Degrees Committee.

Note: Advice on collaborative arrangements is available from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team.

Externally funded research

9. Where the proposed programme is part of an externally funded project, there must be appropriate safeguards to ensure that the terms of the contract will not prevent the fulfilment of the objectives of the proposed research programme.

Group projects

10. Where the proposed programme is part of a larger group project, there must be clear evidence to show how the individual programme is distinct and separate in its aims and objectives from both the overall project and any other research programmes in the same field of study.

Registration

11. Students will be registered for the MPhil/PhD when:
 - the application for registration, including an outline programme of research, has been approved by the appropriate Faculty Research Degrees Committee
 - any exceptional arrangements have been approved by the University Research Degrees Committee
 - the enrolment process has been completed

12. Students will initially be registered for the MPhil and will be upgraded to PhD registration once the upgrade process has been successfully completed. The period of registration on the MPhil is included in the timescale for PhD registration.
13. Registration is reconfirmed annually and is dependent on the student:
 - maintaining satisfactory progress on the programme of research
 - being in good financial standing with the University
14. Students wishing to change their mode of study or supervisory arrangements must apply to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. Their required completion date will be amended pro rata.

Normal period of registration

15. Students registered for a PhD should normally have presented their thesis for examination within three years from initial registration if they are studying full-time OR six years from initial registration if they are studying part-time. An additional Continuation period may be approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee for up to one year for full-time students and up to two years for part-time students.

Maximum period of registration

16. The deadline for presenting a thesis for examination is four years from initial registration if students are studying full-time OR eight years from initial registration if they are studying part-time. Exemptions may be applied for on the basis on mitigation.

Minimum period of registration

17. The minimum period of registration before presenting the thesis for examination is one year for full-time students OR two years for part-time students

Interruptions and breaks from study

18. If students are prevented from continuing their study by illness or other mitigating circumstances a formal request for the registration to be interrupted must be submitted for approval by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The period of interruption may be for up to one year. If mitigation applies a formal request for up to one further year may be submitted for approval by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. Students requiring an interruption of more than two years will be withdrawn and may re-apply with Advanced Standing when they are ready to return to their studies.

Extensions

19. In exceptional circumstances, the student's period of registration may be extended once, by up to a maximum period of one year for full time students OR two years for part time students, if the application for an

extension is made to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee before the maximum registration period has expired.

Termination of registration

20. A student's registration may be terminated under the University's General Student Regulations. More information can be found at **paragraph 58** of the General Student Regulations.
21. The procedure set out in **paragraphs 29 to 35 of the General Student Regulations** relating to academic engagement and progress will be followed. However, the authority to give notice and withdraw your registration due to a lack of academic engagement or progress lies with the University Research Degree Committee (URDC), who may delegate this authority, rather than with the Academic Registrar or an Assessment Board.

Researcher development and training

22. The University expects all research students to undertake an agreed programme of development and research training. The initial programme will be discussed by the First Supervisor and the student and submitted to the FRDC for approval as part of the application for registration. Possible exemptions from particular training elements will also be agreed at this time.
23. The First Supervisor will review the development needs of each research student during the annual monitoring process
24. Students are required by Faculties to compile a record of all development and research training undertaken.
25. Failure to complete the agreed development and training programme will result in registration being reviewed by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The review may result in a recommendation to the University Research Degrees Committee for the registration to be terminated.
26. As part of a student's training, prior to the submission of the assessment arrangements for approval, students must be given the opportunity to undergo a practice oral examination with an independent assessor and provided with informal feedback on their performance.

Monitoring of progress

Upgrade to PhD

27. As part of the registration process, students must be informed of the date they will be expected to start the upgrade from MPhil to PhD. Upgrade for full-time students should normally be made within 9-12 months of enrolment

28. Part-time students will subject to Annual Monitoring (see next section) for their first year and start the upgrade between 18-24 months from the date of initial enrolment.
29. The main purposes of the upgrade process are to ensure that: the personal programme of development and training is adequate to students' needs; the proposed research is at the requisite level and is likely to lead to a significant contribution to knowledge
30. Students will be required to submit supporting documentation to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and undergo an oral examination or assessed presentation. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will consider the evidence and recommend one of the following to the University Research Degrees Committee:
 - that the student's registration should be upgraded to PhD
 - that the student's registration may be upgraded to PhD subject to some modifications or additional work to be completed by an agreed date and approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee
 - that the supporting documentation does not provide evidence of planned research of the required standard for a PhD. In this case, the student may remain registered for the degree of MPhil.
 - that the student has not reached the standard required for MPhil and the enrolment should be terminated

Annual monitoring

31. It is a condition of continued registration that a satisfactory progress report is received annually.
32. The main purposes of the monitoring will be to ensure that:
 - the research is progressing at a satisfactory pace
 - the planned personal development and training programme is being, or has been, completed
 - any required changes to the supervisory arrangements, the student's mode of attendance or the nature of the proposed research programme, including the title, are identified and submitted for approval
 - students are provided with formal feedback on their progress
 - students have an opportunity to highlight any difficulties experienced
33. Students will be required to submit supporting documentation to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will consider the evidence and recommend one of the following to the University Research Degrees Committee:
 - that the student's registration should continue
 - that the student's registration may continue subject to some modifications or additional work to be completed by an agreed date and approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee

- that the supporting documentation does not provide evidence of planned research of the required standard for a PhD. In this case, the student's registration may be transferred to the degree of MPhil.
- that the student is not progressing satisfactorily and the enrolment should be terminated

Assessment process

34. The assessment of candidates for a PhD has two elements: the thesis or its equivalent, including other approved examinable material, and its defence in an oral examination
35. The arrangements for the assessment of a candidate will be submitted to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee for approval, including: the final title of the thesis; the names of the internal and external examiners (the assessment panel); the form of the submission; any application for a thesis to remain confidential
36. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will submit the approved examination arrangements including CVs of the proposed internal and external examiners to the Chair of the University Research Degrees Committee for ratification.
37. The thesis and the oral examination will be in English unless otherwise approved by the University Research Degrees Committee.
38. Once the examination arrangements have been approved, candidates must have no contact with any of their external examiners.
39. Recommendations made by the examination team will be ratified by the University Research Degrees Committee in its capacity as Examination Board.

Assessment panel

40. Each candidate must be examined by an assessment panel of at least two, and normally not more than three examiners.
41. There must be at least one external examiner and one internal examiner. Where the candidate is a current permanent member of Kingston University staff two externals must be appointed in addition to an internal.
42. At least one of the examiners must have experience of examining research degree candidates at a comparable level.
43. Candidates' supervisors cannot be appointed as examiners.
44. The Faculty Research Degrees Committee will appoint an Independent Chair.

Exceptional arrangements

45. All exceptional assessment arrangements must be approved by the University Research Degrees Committee. For example: the submission of the thesis in a language other than English; an assessment method other than an oral examination.
46. All changes to approved assessment arrangements must be agreed by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and ratified by the University Research Degrees Committee.

Submission of the thesis

47. The thesis must be submitted in the required format, normally before the candidate's period of registration has expired
48. Any thesis submitted as part of a successful award of a research degree will normally be lodged with the University Library. An application for a thesis to remain confidential must be made to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and University Research Degrees Committee when the examination arrangements are submitted. The period a thesis may remain confidential is normally two years.

Note: Certain types of submission, eg. of artefacts or creative work, may be retained by the University in another environment if appropriate.

49. Normally, a thesis submitted for a research award should not contain any material that has been previously submitted for an award at an institute of Higher Education either in the UK or overseas. When submitting the thesis, the candidate must confirm, by completing a Declaration form, that no part of the thesis has been submitted for a comparable academic award except in cases detailed below.
50. In cases where a thesis contains a proportion of material that has been submitted for a previous award, the nature and proportion of work must be clearly stated in the Declaration form and appropriate reference made in the thesis. In these cases, the University Research Degrees Committee shall have the authority to decide whether or not to approve the submission of the thesis for examination. The Committee must be satisfied that there is sufficient new material in the thesis to warrant consideration for the award.

Preliminary assessment of the thesis

51. Each examiner shall consider the thesis independently and produce an independent preliminary report setting out their general views on the thesis and areas to be explored in the oral examination. Preliminary reports will not normally be made available to the student until after the assessment process is complete and an award has been made.

The preliminary report will indicate one of the following:

- the oral examination should be held.

- the oral examination should be postponed until the candidate has resubmitted the thesis for reassessment after corrections.

In this case, the examiners will be asked to provide a full report detailing the requirements for resubmission.

Note that a candidate cannot be failed without having had an oral examination unless exceptional arrangements have been approved (see paragraph 45).

52. If there is no initial agreement that the oral examination should proceed, the examiners will be asked to meet with the Independent Chair to determine which of the two outcomes should be recommended. A report of the meeting should be written by the Independent Chair and confirmed by the examiners.
- 53.

Oral examination

54. The oral examination may be held in person at the University, online or hybrid. Approval to hold the examination in person but not at the University must be obtained from the University Research Degrees Committee.
55. All examiners must participate in the oral examination.

Examiner Recommendations

56. Following the oral examination, the examiners will be asked to provide a joint recommendation to the University Research Degrees Committee (in its capacity as Examination Board) indicating one of the following:
57. **Award**
- the candidate has reached the required standard and should be **awarded** the PhD
58. **Amendments**
- the candidate must complete **minor amendments**, normally within three months, to the satisfaction of the examiners in order to allow the award of the PhD. In this instance the examiners must supply a jointly agreed list of amendments.
 - the candidate must complete **major amendments**, normally within six months, to the satisfaction of the examiners in order to allow the award of the PhD. In this instance the examiners must supply a jointly agreed list of amendments.
59. **Resubmission** [Note that this option is only available if the candidate has not already resubmitted]
the candidate has not yet reached the required standard, and should be permitted one further assessment opportunity. In this instance, the examiners must supply a full and jointly agreed report outlining the defects of the thesis and the nature of the corrections to be made. Reassessment may take one of the following forms:

- resubmission of the revised thesis (normally within one year) and its defence in a second oral examination. After examining the revised thesis, submitting preliminary reports and meeting with the Independent Chair, examiners may, exceptionally, determine that a second oral examination is no longer necessary if the outcome is pass or pass with minor amendments.
- a second oral examination without significant change to the thesis (normally within one year)

60. **Award of MPhil**

- the candidate has failed to reach the standard required for the PhD but has reached the standard required for MPhil and should be **awarded the degree of MPhil**. In this instance the examiners shall supply a jointly agreed report which demonstrates why the thesis does not have the potential to reach PhD level and how the criteria for the MPhil degree are satisfied.

61. **Amendments for MPhil**

- the candidate must complete **minor amendments**, normally within three months, to the satisfaction of the examiners in order to allow the award of the MPhil. In this instance the examiners must supply a jointly agreed list of amendments and a report which demonstrates why the thesis does not have the potential to reach PhD level.
- the candidate must complete **major amendments**, normally within six months, to the satisfaction of the examiners in order to allow the award of the MPhil. In this instance the examiners must supply a jointly agreed list of amendments and a report which demonstrates why the thesis does not have the potential to reach PhD level..

Resubmission for MPhil [Note that this option is only available if the candidate has not already resubmitted]

- the candidate has failed to reach the standard required for the PhD but should be allowed the possibility of resubmitting the thesis for the award of the MPhil (normally within one year). In this instance, the examiners must supply a full and jointly agreed report outlining the defects of the thesis and the nature of the corrections to be made, including why the thesis does not have the potential to reach PhD level.

62. **Fail**

- the candidate has **failed** to reach the standard for PhD or MPhil and should not be offered an opportunity for reassessment. The examiners must provide a full report explaining their decision.

Assessment of Amendments or Resubmission

63. Amendments and resubmissions will be assessed against the list of requirements in the examiner/s' report. Examiners may not, at this stage, make additional requirements.
64. In total the candidate may normally have two assessment attempts. The first examination outcome may be a full resubmission, major amendments or minor amendments; the second may be major amendments or minor amendments. Exceptionally, a third attempt of minor amendments may be permitted.

65. Candidates may be given the outcome of resubmission on one occasion only.
66. Once the candidate has submitted their corrected thesis, those examiners designated as being responsible for reviewing the thesis will be required to make a judgment as to whether the amendments or resubmission requirements have been completed to their satisfaction.
67. Examiners will be asked to choose between the outcomes listed in paragraphs 57-61, as long as the number of assessment attempts is in line with paragraph 63, and with the following exceptions:
 - Outcomes for the assessment of a **resubmission**: all options minus a further resubmission
 - Outcomes for the assessment of **major amendments**: all options available
Outcomes for the assessment of **minor amendments**: resubmission and major amendments are not permitted, but further minor amendments are permitted

Disagreement between examiners

68. If, at any stage, the examiners are unable to reach a consensus view, the University Research Degrees Committee may:
 - where there are more than two examiners, accept the recommendation of the majority of the examiners, provided it includes at least one external examiner
 - require the appointment of an additional examiner to conduct the relevant stages of the assessment process and make an independent recommendation to the University Research Degrees Committee

Section 4

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY BY PRIOR PUBLICATION / PORTFOLIO

1. External applicants and members of University staff beyond the probationary period may submit a portfolio of their published works, for consideration for the award of PhD.
2. Those who wish to undertake such a submission must be sponsored by a Head of School (or equivalent) related to their chosen discipline.
3. Applications will be considered initially by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee.
4. The Head of School (or equivalent) and FRDC shall appoint a permanent member of academic staff to act as nominal Supervisor.
5. The work submitted must, in aggregate, be comparable in quality and quantity to that expected to be embodied in a PhD thesis in the same discipline.
6. The bound portfolio of works must be prefaced by an introductory section that explains the unifying themes that run through the research and places the works in the context of existing work in the field and the applicant's research career. The introductory section should be approximately 10,000 words in length.
7. In cases where the works are jointly authored by the applicant and other persons, the introductory section should also describe the roles played by those joint authors and contain percentage estimates of the applicant's input into each jointly authored work.
8. Initial submission of the portfolio will be made to the URDC, which will convene a special sub-committee to determine whether there is a *prima facie* case for examination of the portfolio for the degree of PhD.
9. If approved by the sub-committee, final submission of the portfolio and examination arrangements will be made under the same regulations as for a PhD thesis.
10. The regulations governing examination of PhD theses shall apply to the examination of the PhD by Prior Publication/Portfolio. Refer to the PhD regulations under the heading 'Assessment Process', beginning paragraph 33, noting that changes may only be requested for the introductory section, not to work that has already been published.

APPENDIX 1**Policy/Regulation Detail Information**

Policy/Regulation owner	Director of Research Excellence & Head of Graduate Studies; and Head of Research Systems, Governance & Funding
Policy/Regulation Department owner	Academic Services - Research
Committee(s) responsible for review and approval	Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee to Academic Council
Version number	2026-2027.1
Periodic review frequency	Every six years
Last periodic review	2020-2021
Next periodic review	2026-2027