

## CORE REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES BY THESIS OR COMPOSITION

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Medicine (MD), Master of Philosophy (MPhil),  
Master of Letters (MLitt), Master of Education (MEd),  
Master of Jurisprudence (MJur), Master of Music (MMus), Master of Theology (MTh),  
Master of Science (MSc), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Professional Practice (MProf)**

### PRE-CONDITIONS OF AWARD OF A RESEARCH DEGREE BY THESIS OR COMPOSITION

1. To qualify for the award of a research degree of the University, a student must, subject to these Core Regulations:

- (a) be approved by the department concerned as a candidate for the degree;
- (b) engage in advanced study under the direction of teachers appointed as their supervisors;
- (c) undertake research in a subject approved by the Education Committee. The results of their research and study must be satisfactorily presented in a thesis (except as provided in 2 below) and they must undergo such oral and other examinations as may be prescribed in accordance with the regulations;
- (d) satisfy the examiners in a thesis or in such other assessment requirements as prescribed, for the degree for which they are registered.

2. Candidates in the Department of Music may be permitted to undertake advanced study in musical composition. Such candidates must present, in lieu of a thesis, a folio of compositions, which may include the use of electro acoustic material. All other regulations applying to candidates proceeding by thesis will apply to candidates in the Department of Music undertaking advanced study in musical composition and all other regulations applying to theses will also apply to composition folios.

**3. The degree shall not normally be awarded until after the completion of the required period of supervised study.**

### ADMISSION

4. Applicants must be graduates of this or another approved University or possess some other qualification approved by the Education Committee. Normally an upper second class Honours degree or equivalent in a subject relevant to the proposed course of study is required. Applicants for the Doctor of Medicine must be a medical practitioner with a qualification which is recognised for registration by the General Medical Council for the United Kingdom. All applicants must first discuss their proposals for research with a teacher in the University and must provide evidence of adequate training and ability to undertake a course of advanced study in the subject proposed. Any application for approval as a candidate for the degree must be submitted to the Academic Office. It must include a statement of the applicant's qualifications, together with any documents required to substantiate them.

5. Students admitted to a research degree programme not already matriculated in the University must matriculate during the Michaelmas Term. As a matriculation requirement students whose first language is not English must have shown evidence of their proficiency in the English language. Applicants will normally be approved for periods of supervised study relating to their chosen degree as follows:

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Full-time study</b>	<b>Part-time study</b>
Doctor of Philosophy	36 months / 3 years	72 months / 6 years
Doctor of Medicine	24 months / 2 years	48 months / 4 years
Master of Philosophy	24 months / 2 years	48 months / 4 years
Master of Letters	24 months / 2 years	48 months / 4 years
Master of Music	24 months / 2 years	48 months / 4 years
Master of Education	24 months / 2 years	48 months / 4 years
Master of Jurisprudence	12 months / 1 year	24 months / 2 years
Master of Theology	12 months / 1 year	24 months / 2 years
Master of Science	12 months / 1 year	24 months / 2 years
Master of Arts	12 months / 1 year	24 months / 2 years
Master of Professional Practice	12 months / 1 year	24 months / 2 years

Note: the part-time mode of study for the degree of Doctor of Medicine is only available to staff candidates.

Departments may, in certain instances, recommend longer periods of supervised study to reflect the requirements of, for example, research councils. Shorter periods of supervised study than those outlined above will not normally be appropriate.

6. A research degree programme title specifying “with Placement” will include a period where the researcher uses research/practical skills developed during the PhD to work in an organisation beyond the academy or on a topic beyond their field of study. These programmes are only available to UKRI funded students. This may take place in the UK or abroad to give postgraduate researchers additional learning, training, and development opportunities. Such placement opportunities:

- (a) Will include a placement of up to the equivalent of 6 months full-time (or shorter period as determined by the relevant funding provider) approved by the Department or Doctoral Training Partnership/Centre as appropriate;
- (b) Will last for a minimum of 8 weeks or comply with the terms and conditions of the training grant funder where appropriate;
- (c) May only take place following successful outcome of the Formal 9-month Progression Review;
- (d) Will be accompanied by a placement report reflecting on the placement (max 2000 words) that the student will provide to their supervisor and Director of Postgraduate Research/ Doctoral Training Partnership and which they may include as an appendix within their thesis;
- (e) Will be completed more than 6 months before the end of supervised studies.

Students who fail to satisfactorily complete “with Placement” programme to the satisfaction of the Director of Postgraduate Studies/Director of the Doctoral Training Partnership (or are unable to complete a placement for other reasons) will transfer (back) to the standard PhD programme of study. Where possible any programme change that reduces the period of supervised study should occur prior to the intended date of the placement to avoid recovery of funding charges already incurred.

7. Applicants for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy may be approved for a split-site mode of study, whereby a substantial portion of supervised study will be spent at a location outside of the UK, subject to certain conditions additional to the standard entry requirements. Applicants who propose to undertake their research on a split-site basis must specify the period(s) when they will be based in Durham, the period(s) when they will be based elsewhere, and the location at which they will be based when not studying in Durham. The minimum period of study spent away from Durham will normally be 12 months. Applicants must demonstrate that they will have appropriate access for the duration of their studies to the resources and research facilities required to successfully undertake their programme of research. The split-site mode of study is only available to full-time Overseas or EU applicants. Students will not normally be permitted to transfer into a split-site mode of study.

#### INTEGRATED PRE-SESSIONAL PROGRAMME

8. Any programme of study may begin with a period of intensive English Language study, normally of 4, 8 or 12 weeks duration, as part of an integrated programme of study. Students undertaking this pre-sessional provision as part of an integrated programme of study will be required, at the end of the 4, 8 or 12 week period, to meet the agreed English Language progression requirements as defined for their main academic programme and published within the Learning and Teaching Handbook. Any student who does not meet this requirement will be required to withdraw. A student who meets the progression requirements at threshold level may be required to undertake a further period of English Language instruction as outlined in paragraph 18.

#### STAFF CANDIDATES

9. The following may apply to be permitted to register for a higher degree as Staff Candidates:

- (a) Full-time members of staff of the University.
- (b) Full-time members of staff of the recognised Colleges of the University or of Ushaw College engaged in academic work in the University.
- (c) Full-time academic staff from the Validation Institutions teaching on the validated programmes.

- (d) Part-time members of the staff of the University provided they are employed on a contract to undertake duties which, when averaged over twenty-two weeks, are in excess of the six hours a week including preparation time.

Note: For this purpose a one-hour lecture counts as a total of four hours, a one-hour tutorial or seminar as two hours and one hour's demonstrating or marking as one hour.

Those approved as Staff Candidates will be registered as part-time students. Staff Candidates are not permitted to study on a full-time basis. Full-time students are not permitted to be registered as Staff Candidates.

## RESIDENCE

10. **Students must gain admission to a College or Society of the University.**

## PROGRESS AND ATTENDANCE

11. Each programme shall last for the period of study required for the award. **All students are required to fulfil their academic commitments as provided in paragraph 1 of Section V of the University General Regulations. Failure to do so will render a student liable to be required to withdraw from the University under the provisions of that section.**

12. **The appropriate Board of Studies may permit the interruption of a student's programme of study for a period to be specified by the Committee in each instance. This period may not be more than 12 months in any one instance, and extensions to a 12 month suspension of study will not normally be granted. A student will only be permitted to suspend for more than 24 months consecutively in exceptional circumstances. Students who wish to suspend studies beyond this point will be required to withdraw, and advised to re-apply to the University (if they so wish) when they are in a position to do so.**

13. During any period of study, students shall maintain such contact with the principal supervisor or his/her nominee, and provide the supervisor or his/her nominee with such evidence of progress, as he/she may require.

14. **Students undertaking full-time study may accept paid teaching, demonstrating and other research work in the University if the time given thereto, including time required for preparation, does not exceed six hours per week.** Durham Doctoral Teaching Fellows, who have protected time set aside for teaching as part of their programme of study, may exceed these hours in line with the stated conditions of their role. All students are required to comply with any additional requirements of any sponsor of their programme of study and, where relevant, with the requirement of any visa which they hold.

15. Students wishing to spend a period away from Durham for the purposes of their programme of study or for other good reason must obtain permission from the appropriate Board of Studies. When the nature of the research requires that work be undertaken at an institution outside Durham, the Board of Studies may appoint an additional supervisor.

16. **Candidates registered on programmes lasting more than one full-time year will be subject to a formal Progression Review approximately 9/21 months (full-time/part-time) after the beginning of their research programme. Doctoral candidates who, upon review, do not demonstrate the potential for doctoral-level study will be required to transfer to a master's-level programme, and will normally be required to undergo a second review. Master's candidates who, upon review, do not demonstrate the potential for master's-level study will normally be required to undergo a second review. Those candidates who fail to demonstrate the potential for doctoral- or master's-level study at the second attempt will either be required to withdraw from the University, or may be permitted to write up and submit their work for the award of a Master's, or Master of Science, by Research, if appropriate. Candidates registered on research programmes of one full-time year's duration will not be subject to a formal Progression Review.**

17. Throughout their approved periods of study, all candidates must submit written reports on their progress as and when requested by their supervisors. Candidates and supervisors are also required to submit annual reports until a thesis is successfully examined, or the candidate's registration lapses.

18. Doctoral candidates may, in addition to the preparation of a thesis, be required to study and be assessed in taught modules to a maximum value of 120 credits, with no more than 30 credits at levels 1 – 3. Candidates who fail to satisfy the examiners in these modules will normally be required to be re-examined at the next normal occasion. Candidates who fail to satisfy the examiners at a second attempt will normally be required to withdraw from the University.

19. If it should appear during the first term of his/her programme that a student's attainment in the English language is not fully adequate for his/her study, the student may be required by the appropriate Board of Studies to undertake, at his/her own expense, an approved course of instruction in the English language or to withdraw. At the end of such a course the Committee will then either satisfy itself that the student has become competent to proceed with his/her study or require that his/her registration be terminated. If the student is deemed competent to proceed, the Board of Studies shall determine in each individual case whether any of the period spent in receiving English language instruction may be counted towards the requirements for the programme for which he/she is registered.

#### PROGRAMME REGULATIONS

20. Each programme shall normally last from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 1<sup>st</sup> January or 1<sup>st</sup> April for the period specified in regulation 6 above. Extensions to the period specified in regulation 6, or start dates other than those specified here, may be requested by concession.

21. All students are encouraged to complete the writing up of their thesis within their period of supervised study. Candidates who have not completed the writing up of their thesis by this point, may be permitted a period of continuation of up to:

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Maximum Period of continuation</b>
Doctor of Philosophy	12 months
Doctor of Medicine	12 months
Master of Philosophy	9 months
Master of Letters	9 months
Master of Music	9 months
Master of Education	9 months
Master of Jurisprudence	6 months
Master of Theology	6 months
Master of Science	6 months
Master of Arts	6 months
Master of Professional Practice	6 months

22. **Any further period of continuation will only be permitted by concession. Candidates who do not submit by the end of their period of supervised study, or by the end of their agreed period of continuation, will be required to withdraw from the University.**

#### ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

23. The word limits for research degrees exclude the bibliography, appendices, tables, diagrams and photographs, but include footnotes and endnotes.

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Maximum word length</b>	
Doctor of Philosophy	100,000	
Doctor of Medicine	100,000	
Master of Philosophy	70,000	
Master of Letters	70,000	
Master of Music	70,000	
Master of Education	70,000	
Master of Jurisprudence	50,000	
Master of Theology	50,000	
Master of Science	50,000	
Master of Arts	50,000	
Master of Professional Practice	30,000 + 5,000 professional evidence	
	<b>Commentary Length</b>	<b>Composition Length</b>
Doctor of Philosophy by Composition	20,000	90 minutes
Master of Music by Composition	12,000	60 minutes

	<b>Commentary Length</b>	<b>Performance Length</b>
Doctor of Philosophy by Performance	50,000	70 minutes of music
Master of Music by Performance	30,000	60 minutes of music
	<b>Critical Dissertation</b>	<b>Creative Portfolio (Maximum)</b>
Doctor of Philosophy by Creative Writing	50,000 words	either 50,000 words of prose or 50 pages of poetry (max. 2,000 lines).
Master of Letters by Creative Writing	35,000 words	either 35,000 words of prose or 35 pages of poetry (max. 1,400 lines).
	<b>Critical Dissertation</b>	<b>Portfolio of Artefacts</b>
Doctor of Philosophy by Creative Portfolio	60,000 words	substantial physical, visual, audio, digital or textual artefacts approved by the relevant Board of Studies

Note: Permission to exceed these word limits must be obtained from the appropriate academic department in advance of submission.

24. All theses submitted must be clear, concise, well-written and orderly in arrangement. They must also include a list of books and other sources used in their preparation.

25. **The assessment criteria for research degrees are as follows:**

(a) Doctor of Philosophy (All Faculties) / Doctor of Medicine (Faculty of Social Sciences and Health)

By Thesis:

Candidates are required to demonstrate the ability to conduct original investigations, to test or explore ideas / hypotheses (whether their own or those of others), and to understand the relationship of the theme of their investigations to a wider field of knowledge. The thesis should include an original and significant contribution to knowledge, for example through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, or a new analysis of older views. It should also include substantial matter worthy of publication, though it need not be submitted in a form suitable for publication.

By Composition (Faculty of Arts and Humanities):

The folio of works submitted by candidates in the Department of Music should demonstrate a distinctive practice articulated with advanced technical competence, worthy of public dissemination. It should constitute an original contribution to knowledge in the field of contemporary composition. The commentary should discuss the folio of works in an appropriate creative and cultural context and delineate the manner in which the research is embodied in the practice.

By Performance (Faculty of Arts and Humanities):

Doctoral level performance candidates in the Department of Music undertake a research project in performance practice, leading to a recital and a dissertation. The recital of works presented by candidates should encapsulate the outcomes of a performance research project, demonstrating advanced technical competence, coherence and originality in invention, and be worthy as a professional public performance. The performance should include a well-crafted programme that articulates the research findings. The accompanying PhD thesis should be an in-depth investigation of the project, including performance practice issues relating to the performance or repertoire involved more widely, demonstrating full understanding of current musicological discourse. It should also include substantial matter worthy of publication, though it need not be submitted in a form suitable for publication.

By Creative Writing: (Faculty of Arts and Humanities)

The creative portfolio submitted by Creative Writing candidates in the Department of English should demonstrate advanced technical competence in its chosen form, a highly developed understanding of structural and/or formal possibilities, sustained stylistic flair, show coherence and originality in invention, and be worthy of publication. Candidates are required to demonstrate in the critical dissertation the ability to conduct original investigations, to test or explore ideas / hypotheses (whether their own or those of others), and to understand the relationship of the theme of their

investigations to a wider field of knowledge. The dissertation should include an original and significant contribution to knowledge, for example through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, or a new analysis of older views. It should also include substantial matter worthy of publication, though it need not be submitted in a form suitable for publication.

**By Creative Portfolio: (Faculty of Social Sciences and Health)**

The portfolio submitted by candidates seeking a PhD in the named discipline by this route should demonstrate advanced technical competence in chosen form represented by the portfolio and its elements, a highly developed understanding of structural and/or formal possibilities, sustained stylistic flair, show coherence and originality in invention, and be worthy of professional dissemination through publication, performance, exhibition, or other means appropriate to the portfolio's form. The portfolio may take a number of forms, including, but not limited to, an exhibition; an audio, visual, or audio-visual recording; a dramatic performance; or a digital production, as well as, optionally, accompanying text that is integrated into the portfolio. In the critical dissertation, candidates are required to demonstrate the ability to conduct original investigations, to test or explore ideas / hypotheses (whether their own or those of others), and to understand the relationship of the theme of their investigations to a wider field of knowledge. Taken as a whole (i.e. the creative portfolio plus the critical dissertation), the PhD should demonstrate an original and significant contribution to knowledge, for example through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, a new mode of expression, or a new analysis of older views. It should also include substantial matter worthy of publication or other form of public dissemination, though it need not be submitted in a form suitable for publication or public presentation.

(b) Master of Philosophy (Faculty of Business, Faculty of Science and Faculty of Social Sciences and Health) / Master of Letters (Faculty of Arts and Humanities) / Master of Education (Faculty of Social Sciences and Health)

Candidates are required to demonstrate some originality and discrimination in the conduct of their investigation and to show that they appreciate the relationship of their theme to a wider field of knowledge. Their thesis should include a contribution to knowledge worthy of publication, although the thesis itself need not be in a form suitable for publication.

(c) Master of Letters (MLitt) by Creative Writing (Faculty of Arts and Humanities)

The creative portfolio submitted by Creative Writing candidates in the Department of English should demonstrate advanced technical competence in its chosen form, a developed understanding of structural and/or formal possibilities, stylistic flair, show coherence and originality in invention, and be approaching a standard worthy of publication. Candidates are required to demonstrate in the critical dissertation some originality and discrimination in the conduct of their investigation and to show that they appreciate the relationship of their theme to a wider field of knowledge. Their dissertation should include a contribution to knowledge worthy of publication, although the thesis itself need not be in a form suitable for publication.

(d) Master of Music (Faculty of Arts and Humanities)

**By Thesis:**

Candidates are required to demonstrate some originality and discrimination in the conduct of their investigation, and to show that they appreciate the relationship of their theme to a wider field of knowledge. Their thesis should include a contribution to knowledge worthy of publication, although the thesis itself need not be in a form suitable for publication.

**By Composition:**

The folio of works should demonstrate technical competence in the use of a range of musical resources, show coherence and originality in invention, and be worthy of public performance. The accompanying commentary should explain the structure of the works and the technical procedures employed.

**By Performance:**

Candidates are required to demonstrate some originality and discrimination in the conduct of their investigation, and to show that they appreciate the relationship of their topic in performance practice to a wider field of knowledge. Their thesis should include a contribution to knowledge worthy of

publication, although the thesis itself need not be in a form suitable for publication. Their recital should be worthy of public performance, providing a cohesive demonstration of the underlying research in performance practice.

(e) Master of Science (Faculty of Business, Faculty of Science or Faculty of Social Sciences and Health) / Master of Arts (Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Faculty of Business or Faculty of Social Sciences and Health) / Master of Jurisprudence (Faculty of Social Sciences and Health) / Master of Theology (Faculty of Arts and Humanities)

Candidates are required to demonstrate that they possess advanced knowledge of the subject of the thesis, including a satisfactory knowledge of the literature on the subject. Candidates are expected to display critical discrimination and, where appropriate, a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the opinion of others. It is expected that candidates should demonstrate work at the current limits of understanding of the subject, but it is not necessary, however, that the thesis should constitute an original contribution to knowledge or be worthy of publication.

(f) Master of Professional Practice (All Faculties)

Candidates are required to demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the subject of the thesis including a satisfactory knowledge of the literature on the subject. Candidates will have demonstrated an ability to interpret evidence and apply theoretical and conceptual knowledge to complex policy, management and operational issues. It is expected that candidates should demonstrate work at the current limits of understanding of the subject with a critical reflection on professional practice. In addition to the thesis, students will submit 'professional evidence'; an additional piece of assessment (maximum 5,000 words) that demonstrates how the research in the thesis can inform professional practice. The exact nature of this professional evidence may vary and will be determined by the department but may include, for example, a portfolio of evidence or reflective diary. Although the thesis need not constitute an original contribution to knowledge or be worthy of publication, it is expected that it should present novel practical solutions to work-based problems or dilemmas identified by the research.

Submission of Assessed Work

26. A student who is unable due to illness or other good cause to submit their thesis for assessment by the required date may apply to the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee) for an extension of that date, to be determined by the Committee in the light of the known circumstances.

27. Candidates for research degrees may submit their thesis at any time after the beginning of the final quarter of the final year of their course. Candidates who have completed their thesis to the stage when it is ready for presentation may, by concession, be permitted to submit their thesis for examination earlier than the beginning of the final quarter of the final year of their course provided they have completed the minimum period of study as specified below.

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Minimum period of full-time study</b>	<b>Minimum period of part-time study</b>
Doctor of Philosophy	24 months / 2 years	48 months / 4 years
Doctor of Medicine	24 months / 2 years	48 months / 4 years
Master of Philosophy	18 months / 1.5 years	36 months / 3 years
Master of Letters	18 months / 1.5 years	36 months / 3 years
Master of Music	18 months / 1.5 years	36 months / 3 years
Master of Education	18 months / 1.5 years	36 months / 3 years
Master of Jurisprudence	9 months	18 months / 1.5 years
Master of Theology	9 months	18 months / 1.5 years
Master of Science	9 months	18 months / 1.5 years
Master of Arts	9 months	18 months / 1.5 years
Master of Professional Practice	9 months	18 months / 1.5 years

Note: Candidates permitted to submit their thesis early under the above provisions shall be liable to pay the annual tuition fee on a termly basis until and including the term in which their thesis is submitted.

28. Theses must be submitted in accordance with the 'Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees'. The appropriate forms which must accompany the submission of a thesis must be obtained from the Academic Office.

29. **Those approved as Staff Candidates are required to have both examiners as external examiners and not members of staff of this University.**

#### Oral Examination

30. **Candidates for the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Medicine, Master of Philosophy, Master of Letters, Master of Music or Master of Education shall be examined orally on their thesis and on subjects relevant to it.** In exceptional circumstances the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee) may, on sufficient grounds submitted by the examiners, dispense the candidate from the oral examination. The requirement for candidates to present themselves for oral examination for the degree of Master of Theology, Master of Jurisprudence, Master of Science or Master of Arts is at the discretion of the examiners.

#### Re-examination

31. **Candidates who have not satisfied the examiners for the degree at the first examination may be permitted by the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee), on the recommendation of the examiners, to submit their thesis or folio in a revised form on one occasion only. Such candidates will be required to submit their thesis or folio in a revised form within one calendar year. If the examiners find the revised thesis or folio acceptable no further oral examination is required. If the examiners do not find the revised thesis or folio acceptable a second oral examination must be held for any candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Medicine, Master of Philosophy, Master of Letters, Master of Music or Master of Education.**

32. Candidates who at the first examination submit a satisfactory thesis or folio but fail to satisfy the examiners in an oral examination may be permitted by the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee), on the recommendation of the examiners, to submit themselves for a second oral examination or a written examination within six months.

33. A candidate who has failed to satisfy the examiners that he/she has achieved the standard required for the degree for which he/she is registered but who, in the opinion of the examiners, has reached the standard required for the award of an appropriate alternative degree may be permitted by the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee), on the recommendation of the examiners, to proceed to that degree. Candidates permitted to proceed to an alternative degree shall arrange for their thesis to be bound for presentation for the appropriate degree in accordance with the 'Rules for the form of Compositions and the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees' before a pass list may be issued.

#### RIGHT OF APPEAL

34. In accordance with the Academic Appeals Regulations contained in Section VII of the General Regulations in the University Calendar, a student registered for a research degree of the University may appeal against academic decisions relating to his/her candidature.