

Queen Mary University of London

Code of Practice for
Research Degree Programmes
2026-27

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes	4
1. Introduction and scope	4
2. Framework for governance and quality assurance of research degrees	4
3. Research environment	6
4. Selection and admission of students	6
5. Enrolment and registration	7
6. Induction	8
7. Attendance	9
8. Roles & Responsibilities	11
8.1. Director of Graduate Studies responsibility for supervision arrangements	11
8.2. The Supervisory Team	11
8.3. Supervision meetings and the Supervision Log	12
8.4. Responsibilities of supervisors	13
8.5. Responsibilities of students	15
8.6. Responsibilities of Directors of Graduate Studies	17
9. Progression and review	19
10. Transfer to writing up status	20
11. Termination of registration	21
12. Interruption of study	21
13. Extension of registration	23
14. Disability and Dyslexia Service	24
15. Research training and skills development	25
16. Paid employment	26
17. Internships and placements	26
18. Research Ethics and Research Integrity	27
19. Intellectual Property	28
20. Collaborative arrangements	28
21. Feedback mechanisms	28
22. Examinations and awards	28

23. Alternate Thesis Formats	31
23.2. Consistency of Thesis Format	31
23.3. Approval	31
23.4. Practice-Based Theses.....	32
23.5. Journal-Format Theses.....	34
24. Complaints and appeals	36

Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes

1. Introduction and scope

- 1.1. This Code of Practice (the Code) provides a framework of procedures and practices to support research students and their supervisors. It outlines the commitment made between Queen Mary University of London and research students for the provision of programmes leading to the award of a research degree (such as MPhil, PhD, MD (Res), EngD) and professional doctorates. This edition of the Code of Practice takes precedence over previous versions.
- 1.2. Compliance with the Code of Practice is mandatory. The Code should be read in conjunction with the Academic Regulations for Research Degree Programmes and with related procedures approved by Senate or its delegated authority. In any issues of interpretation of the Code, the Academic Regulations always take precedence.
- 1.3. The Code takes into account the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) Advice and Guidance on Research Degrees, in particular the Expectations and Core Practices of the Quality Code.
- 1.4. This document aims to meet the Quality Code's Guiding Principle 1 for research degrees that "provision of information is clear and accessible to research students and staff". This includes the availability of specific regulations and codes of practice for research degrees that are clear, regularly reviewed and accessible to research students and staff, including examiners.

2. Framework for governance and quality assurance of research degrees

- 2.1. This section sets out the responsibilities for research degree programmes at Queen Mary. It identifies the roles and committees involved in making decisions about research degree programmes and those responsible for assuring the quality of the provision to research students and the academic standards of research degrees.
- 2.2. **The Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation)** is responsible for providing strategic leadership on, and the delivery of, the research and innovation elements of the Queen Mary Strategy 2030. The Vice-Principal's remit includes postgraduate research. The Vice-Principal is the Executive Chair of the Queen Mary Doctoral College. The Vice-Principal represents postgraduate research at the Queen Mary Senior Executive Team. The Queen Mary Senior Executive Team, chaired by the Principal, is the academic senior management team. It advises the Principal on the management of day-to-day business as well as the university's long-term future and is responsible for the development and implementation of the Queen Mary Strategy 2030.
- 2.3. **The Deputy VP for Research & Innovation Culture** is responsible for providing strategic leadership on postgraduate research and all research student matters. The Deputy VP is appointed for a three-year term of office, with the possibility of extension. The Deputy VP is a member of the Research and Innovation Board, chaired by the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation).

- 2.4. **The Deputy VP for Research & Innovation Culture** is the Director of Centre for Early Career Researchers responsible for the operational activities of the Doctoral College, and reports to the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation). The Director is supported by the Doctoral College Team and the Research Degrees Office. The Doctoral College oversees strategy, training, and the student experience for research degrees. The Doctoral College works with the Research Degrees Office to assure the quality of research degree programmes and the examination of Queen Mary research students. The Doctoral College also works in partnership with academic schools and institutes, the Queen Mary Students' Union and Professional Services departments. The Centre for Early Career Researchers advises on this work and reports regularly to the Vice-Principal's Research Advisory Group.
- 2.5. There are three academic faculties: Humanities and Social Sciences; Science and Engineering; and the School of Medicine and Dentistry. There are also many interdisciplinary institutes spanning the faculties and disciplines. Academic departments are called Schools in the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering, and Institutes in the School of Medicine and Dentistry. The academic Schools and Institutes providing research degree programmes are organised within the three faculties. Each Faculty has a Dean for Research, responsible for the oversight and co-ordination of research activity in their respective Faculty. The Dean for Research delegates authority for postgraduate research to the Deputy Dean for Research (Postgraduate Research). The delegation cannot be transferred further to another individual. The Deputy Dean has specific responsibility for research degree students and programmes in their Faculty and provides training and advice to academic staff.
- 2.6. The Deputy Deans work closely with the Deputy VP for Research & Innovation Culture and are key members of the Centre for Early Career Researchers and the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board
- 2.7. Senate is the committee with primary responsibility for oversight of the academic activity of Queen Mary including, amongst other things, academic standards, academic freedom and research. For information about Senate see
<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/governance-and-legal-services/governance/senate>
The Dean and the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) attend the Senate.
- 2.8. **The Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB)** has delegated authority from Senate via the Research and Innovation Board to approve the appointment of examiners and the award of research degrees following the completion of the procedures for these processes, and applications for the interruption of studies and extension of registration. The Board also considers research degrees policies and processes, proposals for new research degree programmes, and reviews annually the Academic Regulations for research degrees and this Code of Practice. The Board is chaired by the Deputy VP for Research & Innovation Culture, supported by staff in the Research Degrees Office. The members are the Faculty Deputy Deans for Postgraduate Research and a second representative from each Faculty from amongst the Directors of Graduate Studies. The Head of the Doctoral College is in attendance for the part of the meeting considering policies and processes.

- 2.9. At School/Institute level, the Head of School/Director of Institute is responsible for the quality of the student experience. Each School/Institute has a designated individual who takes responsibility for research and research student matters, typically a Director of Research. The responsibilities of the Director of Research for research student matters and decision-making are usually delegated to a School/Institute Directors of Graduate Studies. A School/Institute may appoint a Deputy Director of Graduate Studies to lead on a specific aspect of research degree matters, who reports to the Director of Graduate Studies. Delegated responsibilities cannot be transferred further to another individual without the approval of the Head of School/Institute.
- 2.10. Each School and Institute has identified members of Professional Services staff who are available to advise and support research students, and to support their School/Institute Director of Graduate Studies and their deputies.
- 2.11. Research Degrees Office is responsible for the regulations for research degrees, studentship stipend payments and operational processes, including enrolment, management of student records and the examination and award process, are handled by the Research Degrees Office in conjunction with the Deputy VP for Research & Innovation Culture, the Faculty Deputy Deans for Postgraduate Research, and the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation). Policy documents, guidelines and other information can be found on the Research Degrees Office webpages.
- 2.12. Research studies programmes that involve collaboration with other institutions or organisations are governed by any additional requirements set out in the agreements for such collaborative provision.

3. Research environment

- 3.1. Schools/Institutes are responsible for providing their students with a sufficiently supportive and active research environment. Schools/Institutes wishing to accept research students must satisfy the following criteria:
- [a] at least five research-active staff (academic staff and Principal Investigators).
 - [b] a target of a 4-year thesis submission rate (and equivalent for part-time students) in line with the Queen Mary Strategy.
- 3.2. New research studies programmes should be initiated and developed within Schools/Institutes that fulfil the above criteria.
- 3.3. The Faculty Deputy Deans for Postgraduate Research work with the Deputy Dean for Research & Innovation, their Faculty Dean for Research and School/Institute Directors of Graduate Studies within their Faculty to ensure the provision and enhancement of an appropriate research environment for research students.

4. Selection and admission of students

- 4.1. Applications for admission to Queen Mary are considered in line with the Admissions policies. General and programme-specific requirements for entry to Queen Mary are approved by the Senate, or its delegated authority. Entry requirements may be adjusted

as Queen Mary deems it appropriate; it shall be published annually by the start of the relevant admissions cycle.

5. Enrolment and registration

- 5.1. A student is required to enrol with Queen Mary at the start of their research degree programme and to register for the research studies programme. Research degree students may, with the agreement of their School or Institute, enrol at any one of the defined entry points during the year. The main enrolment points are in September, January and April. Exceptionally a student may enrol at other defined dates through the year at the request of their School/Institute. In such cases a student would be permitted to enrol on the first working day of a particular month (excluding August, September and October when new students are expected to enrol at the beginning of Semester 1 in mid-September) with the approval of their School/Institute, the Admissions Office and the Research Degrees Office. The situations in which an exception might be made include: restrictions on external funding start and end dates; Clinical Research Fellows release dates from clinical duties to study in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry; and delayed decisions about immigration permission so long as the applicant had applied to Queen Mary and for their visa in sufficient time to allow these to be processed before the programme start date.
- 5.2. Exceptionally, a student may be permitted to enrol as an associate student and undertake a period of guided study and/or research, normally for a period of up to six months (and not exceeding twelve months) with specified conditions to be met for admission to the research studies programme. This period does not count towards the minimum registration period required for award. Where the conditions of admission to the research studies programme are not met, the student is normally required to terminate their studies at the end of the period of registration as an associate student.
- 5.3. Students are required to re-enrol each academic year for the duration of the programme of studies (including during the period of writing-up of the thesis and examination) regardless of the mode of attendance and until their degree is awarded. Failure to re-enrol results in termination of registration. Research students are directed to review Queen Mary regulations and policies at the point of enrolment.
- 5.4. The minimum and maximum registration periods are specified in the Academic Regulations, under the category 'Teaching, learning and assessment', on the policies webpage.
- 5.5. Following submission of the thesis for examination a student continues to be enrolled fully on their programme of study until the degree is awarded or registration is terminated. The period of enrolment under examination is usually seven months, assuming an outcome of minor corrections and approval of the corrected thesis by the examiner(s). This period would be longer for outcomes requiring a longer period to make corrections.

6. Induction

6.1. Responsibility for student induction is shared between the School/Institute and the Doctoral College. Both the Doctoral College and Schools/Institutes should provide induction to their students.

The Doctoral College induction will cover:

- [a] introduction to the overarching governance of research degree programmes at Queen Mary.
- [b] introduction to the Doctoral College and its activities and support for students.
- [c] introduction to the general structure of research degree programmes and arrangements for the monitoring of progression.
- [d] introduction to the support available from the Research Degrees Office.
- [e] introduction to research and professional/technical support services.
- [f] details about opportunities and requirements for research and transferable skills development, and the training provided by the Researcher Development Team in the Queen Mary Academy.
- [g] expectations on attendance, hours of work and holiday arrangements.
- [h] arrangements in the event of inadequate progress.
- [i] who to contact in the event of a problem or complaint.
- [j] introduction to policies and procedures on research integrity and ethics, plagiarism and research misconduct, and training; and
- [k] advice on Queen Mary services including central library and computing services, and support services such as Advice and Counselling, and the Careers Service.

6.2. Schools and Institutes must also provide appropriate and complementary induction activities for research degree students, including:

- [a] introduction to the structure and research portfolio of the School/Institute.
- [b] introduction to research and professional/technical support services in the School/Institute.
- [c] introduction to the School/Institute structure of the research studies programme and arrangements for supervision and the monitoring of progression.
- [d] wider academic opportunities (seminars, journal clubs, research networks) including opportunities for meeting other research students and staff and opportunities to present research to peers.
- [e] teaching opportunities.
- [f] skills training available within and outside the School/Institute.
- [g] mechanisms for providing feedback to the School/Institute, including opportunities for representation on relevant committees such as Staff Student Liaison Committees.
- [h] health and safety procedures.
- [i] advice on personal safety and security.
- [j] how to raise concerns and/or make a complaint within the School/Institute.

6.3. It is the School/Institute's responsibility to provide a handbook or guidance notes for research students and to review the handbook each year to ensure that it reflects any changes in regulations or policies relating to research degrees. Information related to induction must be included in the handbook for research students.

6.4. Students will have an initial meeting with their primary supervisor as soon as possible following the beginning of their programme. This meeting will cover:

- [a] the nature of the supervisory relationship and composition of the supervisory team, including responsibilities and expectations.
- [b] discussion of the research topic proposed, initial routes of enquiry and objectives.
- [c] identification of initial training needs and formulation of a training plan.
- [d] recording supervision meetings using the Supervision Log on MySIS; and
- [e] how the student's progress will be assessed.

7. Attendance

7.1. Full-time students are expected to undertake a full study week of 35 hours on their research studies.

7.2. Part-time students should reach an agreement with their supervisors at the start of their registration as to the proportion of time they will spend on their research degree programme to enable them to submit within the prescribed period. The Academic Regulations for Research Degrees state that the workload of a part-time student is deemed to be 50% of that of a full-time student. It is recognised that the time a part-time student may spend on their studies may vary according to the course of the programme. Any arrangement agreed should not compromise submission time within the prescribed maximum period of registration.

7.3. A student is expected to continue in the same mode of study for which they originally registered (full-time or part-time study). Requests from students to transfer between full-time and part-time status are approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. The request should usually be to make a permanent change to mode of study.

7.4. It is expected that, usually, students beginning their studies within the 2022-23 academic year will be resident in the UK for most of their research studies, before transferring to writing-up status. This will enable students to attend regular supervision meetings in person with their supervisory team, attend doctoral training and research activities as required by their School/Institute, and to use the research facilities provided by Queen Mary. This will ensure that the student receives the support, mentoring, training and access to research resources and facilities required to complete their research successfully. Exceptions to these requirements include activities that are an essential part of a student's studies e.g. fieldwork, study visits or conference attendance, and the location of study once a student has transferred to writing-up status. Other exceptions must be agreed by the student and their supervisor with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. For students who enrolled during the Covid pandemic and have not yet transferred to writing-up status, study location should be considered on an individual basis and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

- 7.5. Exceptionally, students may be permitted to undertake most of their studies at a research organisation external to Queen Mary, as part of a formal agreement or contract, with joint supervision provided by staff at Queen Mary and the partner research organisation.
- 7.6. All students should agree their holiday periods with their primary supervisor. For full-time students the annual holiday entitlement is 30 working days plus the eight UK public holidays and the four Queen Mary closure days. Holiday entitlement is pro rata for part-time students and for part-of a year. Students working in collaboration with non-academic partners are expected to bear in mind their obligations to those partners in planning leave. Excessive absences must be reported to the Head of School/Institute and the Director of Graduate Studies via normal progress report procedures.
- 7.7. Students may not be absent without permission from their supervisor. In cases of illness or injury, the student should inform their supervisor(s) and the School/Institute of absence from studies. On the eighth day of the student's sickness (including non-working days) the student should supply a doctor's certificate for any further absence and provide this to the School/Institute research student administrator. Where a student is expected to be absent for more than one month, whether consecutively or cumulatively, the student must apply to interrupt their studies (see 74-83 below).
- 7.8. If a student is experiencing difficulties in their general attendance or their submission of work does not meet the School/Institute requirements, this should be discussed with the supervisory team, and the Director of Graduate Studies if appropriate, to see what support might be offered to the student to resolve any study difficulties.
- 7.9. Students who consistently miss supervision meetings and/or other School/Institute activities that they are expected to attend, and/or do not submit work or miss deadlines as agreed with their supervisory team, may have their registration with Queen Mary by the School/Institute terminated. Queen Mary may terminate the registration of a student who fails to meet the progression requirements for the research studies programme or where their general attendance or submission of work and/or completion of required activities fails to meet the stated requirements.
- 7.10. International students with student immigration permission sponsored by Queen Mary may be at risk of having their visa curtailed if they do not engage regularly and consistently with their research studies programme. The Advice and Counselling Service provides support to international students on immigration matters. Please see <https://www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/international> for further information.

Programme length	Thesis submission deadline from initial date of enrolment
Four years full-time	3 years 364 days
Five years full-time	4 years 364 days
Seven years part-time	6 years 364 days

8. Roles & Responsibilities

8.1. Director of Graduate Studies responsibility for supervision arrangements

- 8.1.1. The School/Institute's Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for establishing supervision arrangements for each student that conform to this Code and may be required to report on these arrangements to the Faculty Deputy Dean for Research.

8.2. The Supervisory Team

- 8.2.1. Each research student will have an identified primary supervisor who is their main point of contact with the School/Institute and must be a member of academic staff at Queen Mary (whether Teaching & Research, Teaching & Scholarship, or Teaching & Professional Practice), as part of their supervisory team.
- 8.2.2. Each supervisory team must normally include at least two members of academic staff from Queen Mary, of which either the primary or secondary supervisor or both must be research-active. The primary and second supervisors' contract periods will normally extend to cover at least the expected duration of the student's research programme. Additional members of the supervisory team can include members of post-doctoral research staff, industrial partners or other external collaborators. The division of roles and responsibilities between members of the supervisory team will be clearly set out and agreed with the student at the start of the research programme, and when any changes are made to the team.
- 8.2.3. Barts Health NHS Trust staff who hold a current honorary contract with Queen Mary at the level of Senior Lecturer, Reader or Professor, and who meet the other supervisor requirements set out in this Code, may act as a primary or secondary supervisor subject to approval by the institute Director of Graduate Studies or the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Research. A primary supervisor who holds an honorary Queen Mary contract must be partnered with a second supervisor who is a member of Queen Mary staff (not an honorary contract holder) and who meets all the supervisor requirements in this Code.
- 8.2.4. If the primary supervisor identified for a student has not previously been part of a successful supervisory team (supervising a student to a timely completion) then co-supervision arrangements must be put in place, and the second academic supervisor must have experience of supervising a research student through to timely completion. Together the co-supervisors will jointly undertake to ensure that the responsibilities of supervisors are met. Only one supervisor can be designated as the primary supervisor.
- 8.2.5. The second supervisor may be appointed from the members of research active staff at another UK University or Research Institute if this is specifically required by the studentship funding scheme or other collaborative agreement between Queen Mary and the research organisation. External second supervisors must be able to provide evidence that they have completed PhD supervisor training and meet the supervisor criteria required within their own institution and agree to follow Queen Mary policies. In these instances, another Queen Mary member of staff, who meets the supervisor requirements,

must be appointed as an additional supervisor. Supervisory arrangements where an external second supervisor is proposed must be approved by the School/Institute DGS.

- 8.2.6. Supervisors will normally have a maximum of 8 research students for whom they act as primary supervisor. Allocation of supervisory responsibilities will take into account other duties and professional commitments. Supervisors should have sufficient time for adequate contact with each of their research students to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- 8.2.7. If the primary supervisor leaves Queen Mary the School/Institute must appoint a suitable replacement, normally the existing second supervisor. A departing primary supervisor may continue as an external member of the student's supervisory team, but in all cases a replacement primary supervisor must be appointed to act as the main point of contact with Queen Mary as well as a new second supervisor if appropriate.
- 8.2.8. Temporary arrangements will be made by the Director of Graduate Studies to cover periods of prolonged absence on the part of supervisors (for example, parental or sick or unpaid leave). During periods of research leave (sabbatical or otherwise), it is the normal expectation that supervisors continue in their role. Supervisors should discuss this matter with their Head of School/Institute as part of the approval process for their leave application, and inform their Director of Graduate Studies in good time if leave has been granted. In very exceptional circumstances, where adequate supervision would not be possible during research leave and the other member(s) of the team are unable to take a leading role in supervision, the Director of Graduate Studies will make temporary alternative arrangements. Their nature will also take into account the length of the leave.
- 8.2.9. Any problems with the operation of the supervisory team or the supervisory relationship in general should be reported to the Director of Graduate Studies in the first instance. If the student does not wish to discuss the matter with the Director of Graduate Studies, the student may report the matter to the Head of School/Institute or the Faculty Deputy Dean for Research.

8.3. Supervision meetings and the Supervision Log

- 8.3.1. a supervision meeting is defined as a sustained conversation between supervisor(s) and a student about the student's research and research training. The nature of different disciplines means that supervisory practice will take a variety of forms. Supervision may include, for example, one-to-one meetings, telephone conversations, or video-link/online meetings. Opportunities may also be available for research students and supervisors to meet informally. Research group meetings, lab meetings, and email conversations do not constitute supervision meetings.
- 8.3.2. There should be a minimum of ten supervisory meetings per academic year for full-time students (pro rata for part-time students), held at regular intervals up to submission of the thesis for examination. This is normally equivalent to one meeting per month for full-time students and one meeting every two months for part-time students, taking into account holiday periods. Supervision meetings may be held with any member of the supervisory

team. Meetings should normally take place in person, but may take place via other means if all participants are in agreement.

8.3.3. Keeping a record of supervisions, which students and supervisors may refer to quickly and easily, is key to successful supervision. Under the requirements of the UK Quality Assurance Agency, and for international students, UK Visas and Immigration, Queen Mary must also be able to demonstrate that students are receiving sufficient supervision and that they are engaged in their studies. To fulfil these responsibilities, students and supervisors must use the online Supervision Log, accessed through MySIS. Students must record supervision reports on the log. It is the responsibility of both students and supervisors to ensure that supervisions are recorded on the log at:

<https://mysis.qmul.ac.uk> in the Research Student Data area (guidance notes are available in MySIS).

8.3.4. Full-time research students should enter a minimum of ten reports on the Supervision Log per academic year, at regular monthly intervals, reflecting the supervisory meetings. Part-time students should enter a minimum of five reports on the log per academic year. Reports should also be recorded on the Supervision Log during a period of making corrections to the thesis identified by the examiners. Failure to use the log in line with the requirements in the Code may be taken as evidence of lack of engagement with studies when reviewing a student's academic progress and continued registration on their programme.

8.4. Responsibilities of supervisors

8.4.1. Primary supervisors will:

- [a] be sufficiently knowledgeable in the student's area of research and the research ethics and ethical matters specific to this area to provide advice for the duration of the student's studies, including a period of revision when a student has been required to make corrections to their thesis after the examination;
- [b] arrange the first meeting with the student as soon as possible following initial enrolment on the programme, and thereafter meet the student according to a mutually-agreed schedule, to monitor progress and review the programme for future work;
- [c] respond to student reports on supervision meetings with the primary supervisor through the Supervision Log, ideally within one week of the student logging a report. This responsibility is shared with other members of the supervisory team. Any member of the supervisory team may respond to a report;
- [d] advise the student to be aware of, and that they should comply with, Queen Mary policies on health and safety applying to their research, and provide information on any School/Institute policies and guidance;
- [e] give advice on scheduling work and longer-term planning towards timely submission of the research thesis and completion, and to provide advice and help when difficulties occur;

- [f] request written work as appropriate according to an agreed timetable, and provide honest and constructive criticism, either orally or in writing. Written work should normally be returned according to a mutually agreed timetable, and students should be advised at the time of submission if other responsibilities will prevent this being achieved;
- [g] assist the student in identifying research and other training needs at the beginning of the research programme, and in reviewing these needs over the course of the programme's duration. This assessment and review should be done by completing the Development Needs Analysis (DNA) with the student at the start of their research studies. The DNA should be reviewed before every annual progression meeting. To download the plan click [here: Development Needs Analysis - Doctoral College](#).
- [h] provide supervision and arrange access to facilities during a period of revision when a student has been required to make corrections to their thesis after the examination;
- [i] be sufficiently knowledgeable of the research ethics and ethical matters specific to the student's area of research to be able to advise the student on Queen Mary policies on research integrity and training, including whether the student should obtain research ethics approval and, if necessary, to do so before the project begins, a Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS) or undertake a risk assessment before the research in question is undertaken. Information about Queen Mary research policies is available from the Queen Mary policy zone and the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee.
- [j] advise the student on discussing work or sharing any data with third parties (bearing in mind the need to maintain confidentiality), and introduce them to other scholars in the field;
- [k] monitor the student's progress and inform them if it is not satisfactory, and report issues on student progress to the Director of Graduate Studies if appropriate;
- [l] inform the School/Institute Director of Graduate Studies, the Research Degrees Office, and any funding body if the student ceases to attend regularly, or fails to progress over a prolonged period;
- [m] approve examination entry on MySIS and submission of the thesis for examination which requires the supervisor to sign the thesis submission form;
- [n] nominate through MySIS potential internal and external examiners for the student's final examination and arrange a mutually convenient date and place for the oral examination;
- [o] respect and adhere to the Queen Mary Charter "Our Community" and the Dignity at Work and Study policies, behaving honestly and with integrity at all times.

8.4.2. If the primary supervisor changes, part way through a student's studies or in the later stages of writing the thesis, the responsibilities of the new primary supervisor may be different to those required earlier in the student's research studies. The role of the new primary supervisor will be considered in relation to the stage of the student's research studies and the contribution of the second supervisor and the supervisory team, as a whole. The role of the primary supervisor may change from leading advice on research studies to guiding the student through the writing and examination process and other

members of the supervisory team will provide the subject expertise, or the departing primary supervisor may continue as an external member of the student's supervisory team. If the revised supervisory team considers that the stage of the student's studies requires research specialist knowledge and this is not available within Queen Mary, the Director of Graduate Studies may be asked to consider if input from an external with research specialist knowledge of the student's research field may be arranged. The division of roles and responsibilities between members of the supervisory team will be clearly set out and agreed with the student when any changes are made to the team.

8.4.3. The second supervisor is an integral and essential part of the supervisory team. Their precise role and input will be different for each student, and is dependent on circumstances surrounding the project, the student and the relationship with the first supervisor. The general expectations of the second supervisor are that they:

- [a] act in an advisory role to both the student and, if required, the first supervisor;
- [b] may have oversight of the research programme with respect to the progression and development of the student (particularly where the first supervisor may not have substantial supervision experience);
- [c] act as a point of contact for the student on academic and pastoral issues;
- [d] may complement the expertise of the first supervisor in driving the research project forward; and
- [e] provide continuity of supervision in the event of the first supervisor leaving Queen Mary or being absent.

8.4.4. All new supervisors must undertake the training for this role provided by the Doctoral College. All supervisors must undertake 'refresher' training, which may be provided at Faculty or School/Institute level, every two years. Attendance at supervisor training is recorded on HR staff records and is monitored by Schools and Institutes and the Doctoral College.

8.5. Responsibilities of students

8.5.1. Students will:

- [a] work diligently on the programme of research and aim to complete the programme and submit the thesis within the agreed time frame. For example:

Programme length Thesis submission deadline from initial date of enrolment

Four years full-time 3 years 364 days

Five years full-time 4 years 364 days

Seven years part-time 6 years 364 days

Students who have changed their mode of study from full-time to part-time (and vice versa), interrupted their studies, or have been granted an extension to their period of registration will have a different thesis submission deadline to the guide above. Each

student's thesis submission deadline is shown in their MySIS details page. Please contact the Research Degrees Office with any queries about the thesis submission deadline.

To submit their thesis for examination a student must submit an electronic copy of their thesis to the Research Degrees Office in the approved format (a digital (PDF) file) by email to researchdegrees@qmul.ac.uk. The email submitting the thesis with the thesis submission form must be received in the RDO by 23:59 hours on the thesis submission deadline.

- [b] take overall responsibility for their research and the work produced;
- [c] carry out research in compliance with Queen Mary and School/Institute health and safety policies;
- [d] take a pro-active role in discussing with the supervisory team the type of guidance and comment that is most helpful at different points in the progress of the research;
- [e] agree a schedule of meetings with the supervisory team, and attend these promptly;
- [f] full-time research students must submit a minimum of ten reports on the Supervision Log per academic year. Part-time students must submit a minimum of five reports on the log per academic year. Reports should cover topics discussed at supervisory meetings and include any relevant training undertaken/courses attended;
- [g] submit written material as required to a timetable agreed with the supervisor for comment and discussion, and respond honestly and constructively to comments and suggestions (although this does not alter the student's overall responsibility for the work);
- [h] attend any programme(s) of researcher development and research skills training, taught classes and research seminars as agreed with the supervisory team, or required by the School/Institute and the student's funding body;
- [i] record evidence of engagement with research and skills training on the Skills Points System. Students who complete 210 points of training by the submission of their thesis for examination will receive the Queen Mary Diploma in Researcher Development (see <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/phd-students/training/skills-points-system/>);
- [j] conform to all Queen Mary policies on research integrity, and associated processes and training, including applying for ethical approval for their research where necessary or a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Information about Queen Mary research policies is available from the Queen Mary policy zone; Please use the CPD web portal to self-enrol on the Research Integrity Essentials - E-learning course, managed by the Doctoral College.
- [k] inform the supervisory team of any problems or difficulties when they arise;
- [l] submit reports for assessment and other work to inform decisions about their progress as required;

- [m] enrol as a student of Queen Mary at the beginning of the programme of study, and re-enrol subsequently at the start of each academic year until the degree is awarded;
- [n] monitor their @qmul.ac.uk email address issued to them at enrolment to ensure they are receiving all formal communications from Queen Mary. Official emails relating to periods of re-enrolment, progression or status transfers etc. will only be sent to this address, regardless of whether the student subsequently receives an additional departmental email address. It is the student's responsibility to set up forwarding from their official account to other addresses as needed / appropriate;
- [o] respect and adhere to the Queen Mary Charter "Our Community" and the Dignity at Work and Study policies, behaving honestly and with integrity at all times.
- [p] Effective 1st October 2025, all research students are required to complete the online Cybersecurity and GDPR Training course.
 - This training must be completed annually by all research students.
 - The module is accessible via the QMUL Continuing Professional Development (CPD) system.
 - Schools and institutes will have access to reporting tools to monitor and ensure student compliance.

8.6. Responsibilities of Directors of Graduate Studies

8.6.1. The Head of School/Director of Institute delegates responsibility for research student matters through the Director of Research usually to the Director(s) of Graduate Studies to carry out the following duties as appropriate:

Oversee and monitor provision within the School/Institute

- [a] Oversee the admissions process for research degrees. The DGS or designated lead for graduate admissions will ensure before recommending an offer that the topic identified is appropriate for a research degree, that the necessary research facilities and research training can be provided, and that appropriate supervision is in place for the expected duration of the programme. The DGS or other designated lead for research student admissions should approve all admissions offers.
- [b] Directors of Graduate Studies are responsible for all research students with primary registration in their School/Institute, including students on Master by Research programmes. In cases of co-supervision across schools, the DGS in the School/Institute in which the student is registered approves decisions, liaising with the DGS in the other School/Institute as appropriate.
- [c] Ensure that an appropriate primary and second supervisor or supervisory team is appointed for each student.

[d] Ensure that all research students are aware of pastoral care arrangements within the School/Institute.

(Directors of Graduate Studies are encouraged to attend the Queen Mary courses on Student Support, and Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing in PGRs: guidance for supervisors.)

[e] Ensure that all staff appointed as supervisors are appropriately trained for their role.

[f] Monitor levels of supervision and reports on the use made of the Supervision Log.

[g] Ensure that internal examiners with limited examination experience are appropriately trained for the role, on the request of the Faculty Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Research or the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board.

[h] Monitor issues arising from reports from research degree examiners and recommend appropriate action.

[i] Attend appropriate Faculty and School/Institute committees, for example the Graduate Studies Committee and/or Directors of Graduate Studies Forums, and disseminate information back to Schools/Institutes.

[j] Carry out an annual review of research degree programmes for their School/Institute, meeting with the Faculty Deputy Dean for Research.

Develop and review School/Institute policy on progression requirements

[k] Oversee the monitoring of student progress in accordance with the Academic Regulations and the Code of Practice.

[l] Liaise with the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board, via their Deputy Dean for Research, as appropriate, with regard to interruptions of study, extensions of thesis submission dates, nomination of examiners and examination outcomes, and withdrawal and de-registration from Queen Mary.

[m] Approve formal progress and status reviews on behalf of the School/Institute.

Develop and review School/Institute policy regarding student feedback and complaints

[n] Receive and deal with student complaints and problems in the first instance.

[o] Ensure suitable alternative supervision arrangements in the case of breakdown of relations between a supervisor and the student or where a change of supervisor is desirable. In case of absence or the departure of the primary supervisor or secondary supervisor, ensure that adequate arrangements are made for the student's continuing supervision.

[p] Ensure that appropriate student feedback mechanisms are in place within the School/Institute, for example research student representation on the Student Staff Liaison Committee and/or Research Committee and encourage engagement with, and review results of, student surveys.

[q] Ensure that each School/Institute has, as a minimum, at least one research student Course Representative to attend Student-Staff Liaison Committees or equivalent.

[r] Oversee and encourage student engagement with School/Institute research training programmes, and all other research and professional development training.

[s] Ensure that all students receive appropriate training before commencing any teaching.

[t] Encourage students to use the Skills Points System to record training and research activities.

[u] Ensure that supervisors are completing the Development Needs Analysis (DNA) at the start of their student's research studies and reviewing this annually with each of their students. The DNA should be discussed at annual progression review. Information is provided at Development Needs Analysis - Doctoral College.

9. Progression and review

9.1. The supervisor is responsible for regular reviews of student progress and will inform the student and Director of Graduate Studies if progress is not satisfactory.

9.2. The Academic Regulations for Research Degrees outline the parameters for each of the progression points and outcomes, including transfer to writing-up status. It is the responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies to ensure that students' progression is assessed in accordance with the Regulations and published procedures.

9.3. The requirements for progression are set by each School/Institute. These should usually include the submission of written work by the student, a training needs analysis review using the Development Needs Analysis (DNA), jointly prepared by the student and their supervisory team, completion of online training in research integrity and cybersecurity/GDPR in advance of the first year academic progression review (introduced in 2022-23 and 2025-25, respectively), a written report by the primary supervisor and/or supervisory team, and an oral examination. Other requirements for certain programmes may be specified in School/Institute guidance. Progression decisions are made by the Director of Graduate Studies following a report on the student's progress from a progression panel. Decisions are recorded on MySIS. Please use the CPD web portal to self-enrol on the Research Integrity Essentials - E-learning and Cybersecurity/GDPR courses.

9.4. Progression is a formal process that permits a student to continue to the next stage/period of their research studies programme. A progression panel is set up to discuss and review progress with the student. The panel must include at least two people. The Chair of the

panel should have experience of being a Queen Mary primary supervisor who has taken their student successfully through one annual progression review event. At least one member of the progression panel should be independent of the student's supervisory team. Decisions on progression must be taken by members of the panel who are independent of the supervisory team. A student who fails to progress on the first assessment will be allowed a second attempt. Students may be deregistered if they have not achieved progression after two attempts.

- 9.5. Progression decisions are made by the Director of Graduate Studies following a panel's review of the student's progress. If the Director of Graduate Studies is a member of a student's academic progression panel making the recommendation about the student's progression outcome, they cannot make the final progression decision. The final decision must be made by another member of academic staff in the school/institute with responsibility for postgraduate research programmes, such as a Deputy Director of Graduate Studies or the Director of Research, who has not have been involved in the student's progression review.
- 9.6. Schools/Institutes also put in place arrangements for the regular monitoring and assessment of student progress. First year progression for a full-time student on a PhD, MPhil, MD(Res) or EngD programme takes place between 6 to 9 months after registration on the research studies programme. For a part-time student on a PhD, MPhil, MD(Res) or EngD programme this takes place between 12 to 18 months after registration on the research studies programme. For full-time students there should be a formal annual review of progress in each year of study following first year progression at 18-24 months and 30-36 months. For part-time students there should be a formal biennial review of progress at 36-48 months and 60-72 months (i.e. every two years). It is recommended that part-time students should complete an annual review in the intervening years. A progression review should be held in the third year (full-time) or sixth year (part-time) of study if the student is not in the process of transferring to writing up status. This review should consider the timing of transfer to writing up status and the sources of funding for fees if the student has an award that is coming to an end or has finished. The requirements for each research degree programme are specified in School/Institute guidance. Reports on progress are made to the Director of Graduate Studies to consider and approve.
- 9.7. Progression for students on Professional Doctorate programmes (DrPS, DPsych, DClin and DClinDent programmes) is assessed as outlined in School/Institute guidance.
- 9.8. The outcomes of formal progress reviews are recorded on MySIS by Schools and Institutes so that the student's central record is updated appropriately.

10. Transfer to writing up status

- 10.1. Transfer to writing up status is an academic progression point. In order to transfer to writing up status, a student is required to have completed all experimental work or collection of material related to their thesis, to have passed second year progression (or equivalent for part-time students) and, in the judgement of the supervisor, be in a position to submit the thesis within 12 months. Schools/Institutes may stipulate additional

requirements for approving transfer to writing up status. A student can apply to transfer to 'writing up' status only if they have completed the minimum period of study and not exceeded the maximum period of study. A student registered for MPhil/PhD can only be transferred to writing up status if they have completed the process of being assessed from MPhil to PhD registration status. The maximum period for 'writing up' is one calendar year regardless of the mode of attendance of the student. In exceptional circumstances the writing up period may be extended. The transfer to writing up application form is available through the student MySIS portal.

- 10.2. A student who submits their thesis for examination and has not applied for transfer to writing up shall be transferred to writing up status with effect from the date of submission of their thesis. A new 'examination' status is to be introduced for students who have submitted their thesis for examination.

11. Termination of registration

- 11.1. The Academic Regulations outline the reasons for which a student's registration may be terminated. Schools/Institutes may recommend that a student's registration be terminated on the grounds of insufficient academic progress. This recommendation may follow a formal progress review but may also be made at other points during the programme of study. A recommendation to terminate studies outside of the formal annual progression process should only be made after the student has been given two written warnings that they are at risk of de-registration unless specified objectives are met within a clear timeframe.
- 11.2. Recommendations for termination of registration on the grounds of insufficient academic progress outside of the formal annual progression process must be approved by the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board, on the recommendation of the Faculty Deputy Dean for Research (Postgraduate Research). A recommendation from the primary supervisor following progress monitoring is reported to the School/Institute Director of Graduate Studies for review, who if in agreement refers the recommendation to the Faculty Deputy Dean for Research (Postgraduate Research) and the Research Degrees Office for consideration before referral to the Board for final approval.
- 11.3. The formal procedures for de-registration, and for appeals against decisions to de-register a student, are outlined in the Academic Regulations and related policies/procedures. These are available on the Research Degrees Office website. Information about how to make an appeal is available at <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/governance-and-legal-services/student-appeals/>

12. Interruption of study

- 12.1. The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for receiving and considering student requests for interruption of studies. Requests should normally be supported by the supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies, and submitted to the Research Degrees Office to refer to the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board.

- 12.2. Interruptions may be requested at any point throughout the period of study and throughout the period of writing up. More than one application may be submitted during the research studies programme.
- 12.3. During an interruption of study, a student remains registered on their programme of study but ceases to be an enrolled student of Queen Mary. This has consequences for student status, funding, and immigration permission for international students. Depending on the reason for the interruption, studentship funding may be suspended during this period. Interruptions to the course of study may be permitted in accordance with the Interruptions Policy for a number of reasons such as illness, personal and family reasons, pregnancy or pregnancy-related illness, paternity leave, adoption leave, financial difficulties. The Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board may also grant interruptions for other reasons it considers acceptable. Placements and internships that contribute directly to a student's research studies and from which data/results will be used in the thesis, or which are a formal part of the programme requirements, are not eligible for an interruption of studies (and a change to the thesis submission deadline). Corroborating evidence must be provided to match the period of interruption being requested as set out in the guidance on the Research Degrees webpages. Interruptions will not be granted solely on the grounds of lack of progress.
- 12.4. Research degree students are permitted to interrupt their studies for whole months only and must resume their studies and re-enrol at the approved re-enrolment point. This does not apply to students enrolled on Professional Doctorate programmes. The interruption policy for students enrolled on taught programmes applies to Professional Doctorate students due to the modular programme structure.
- 12.5. Students may only interrupt for a minimum of one month at a time. Students are permitted to interrupt their research degree programme for up to one year in the first instance. The maximum permitted period of interruption is 24 months in total. Applications that would exceed the maximum total period of interruption will be granted only in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board and the Academic Registrar.
- 12.6. A student may interrupt their registration on the grounds of primary carer leave for up to one year per child. This may cover pregnancy and related illnesses, and/or caring responsibilities. Periods of interruption for primary carer leave shall not count towards the maximum of two years permitted for interruption, but in all other respects the standard interruption procedures shall apply. Secondary carers wishing to take an extended period of leave shall do so under the standard interruption procedures.
- 12.7. Students are liable for payment of tuition fees up to the date that they withdraw or interrupt their studies. Students are liable for payment of tuition fees from the date they resume their programme. For further guidance regarding fee liability please contact the Finance Office.
- 12.8. Any arrangements for contact between a student and their supervisory team during a period of interruption should be agreed in advance of the period of interruption, for example to keep in touch and to plan the return to study. During a period of interruption

students should not have access to laboratories or carry out fieldwork. They may not conduct major work towards completion of their studies while on interruption of studies and may not submit material for assessments, progression review or the thesis for examination. Supervisors are not required to hold supervision meetings or to comment on draft chapters of the thesis while a student is on interruption.

- 12.9. All requests for interruptions should be notified to the Research Degrees Office in advance of their commencement for referral to the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board to consider. Interruptions cannot normally be applied retrospectively. Students may be de-registered if they do not resume studies at the end of the approved period of interruption or are absent from their studies without requesting an interruption of study or an extension to an approved period of interruption. Queen Mary may require a student due to return from interruption to provide evidence of their fitness to study as set out in the policy “Enhancing Support for Students’ Fitness to Study”. If this evidence is not produced, or is found unsatisfactory, the student shall not be permitted to return. In such cases a student may be permitted to extend the interruption of study (where an interruption allowance remains), or else the student may be deregistered from the programme of study.
- 12.10. For further information please refer to the student guide on interrupting studies provided by the Advice and Counselling Service.

13. Extension of registration

- 13.1. The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for receiving and considering student requests for extension of study beyond the maximum registration period for students who have not submitted their thesis for examination. Requests should normally be supported by the supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies, and submitted to the Research Degrees Office to refer to the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board.
- 13.2. Extension of study beyond the maximum registration period is permitted in exceptional circumstances, normally due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the student’s control, which would make it extremely difficult to submit the thesis within the programme timeframe. If a student is not able to work on their research programme at all for a period of time it may be more appropriate to apply to interrupt studies.
- 13.3. Students may request an extension of their thesis submission deadline of up to one year. Extensions are normally granted in periods of whole months and on one occasion only. Extensions can normally only be authorised for students who are in their fourth year of study or have writing up status. They must normally be applied for at the latest three months before the programme end date. Applications that exceed the maximum permitted extension to the registration period of 12 months will be granted only in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board and the Academic Registrar.
- 13.4. Students must provide evidence of progress to date and the ability to submit within the requested time period.

13.5. All requests for extensions should be notified to the Research Degrees Office in advance of their commencement for referral to the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board.

14. Disability and Dyslexia Service

14.1. The Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) offers support for all students with disabilities, specific learning differences and mental health difficulties at Queen Mary.

14.2. The team offers advice, guidance and support in the following areas:

[a] Diagnostic pathway for students who may have a specific learning difference, e.g. dyslexia;

[b] Support in applying for funding through the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) scheme;

[c] Arranging DSA assessments of need;

[d] Accessing loaned equipment (e.g. digital voice recorders);

[e] Specialist one-to-one study skills tuition;

[f] Guidance and support in securing access to teaching materials, e.g. access to course materials in alternative formats;

[g] The provision of non-specialist human support, e.g. note-takers;

[h] Specialist mentoring support for students with mental health difficulties and conditions on the autistic spectrum;

[i] Advice about planning research and writing the thesis in the expected duration of the programme, including preparation for the viva;

[j] Examination Access Arrangements, e.g. additional time.

14.3. The DDS can advise students and their School/Institute on reasonable adjustments to studies. Students supported by the Disability and Dyslexia Service can expect to access the following reasonable adjustments:

[a] Examination Access Arrangements;

[b] Library concessions, e.g. a waiver on some library fines;

[c] A 'cover note' for students with specific learning differences, which advises academic colleagues on best practice when reviewing work produced by students with specific learning differences;

[d] Permission to record lectures;

[e] Advocacy when making requests to schools and faculties;

[f] A viva guideline cover note for SpLD/Autistic Spectrum Condition students, to provide suggested reasonable adjustments for their viva and guidance to examiners as to their approach.

14.4. Any agreed reasonable adjustments are provided throughout the study period including during the writing-up period.

14.5. An extension to the thesis submission deadline is not normally granted for a declared disability. Students are encouraged to meet with the DDS team early in their studies to discuss what support they might need and to put in place mechanisms to help with drafting the thesis well in advance of the final thesis submission some 3-4 years after enrolment at Queen Mary. Please refer to the above sections on interruption of study and extension of registration for examples of the type of situation that would require an interruption or an extension. In cases of late diagnosis of specific learning difficulties in the final year of study, the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board will consider requests on a case by case basis.

14.6. Students may submit a statement declaring their disability – along with any support they require access to - with their thesis at the time of submission. Statements can be obtained from the Disability and Dyslexia Service and will take the form of a “Student Support Summary” (these are generated through MySIS by the Disability and Dyslexia Service).

15. Research training and skills development

15.1. All students will have access to training in appropriate research methods and relevant researcher development skills provided by their School or Institute, the Doctoral College, Doctoral Training Centres/Partnerships, and the Queen Mary Academy.

15.2. The individual programme of research training will be discussed at the student’s initial meeting with the supervisory team. The student and supervisory team should complete Development Needs Analysis - Doctoral College. The DNA should be reviewed regularly during the course of the programme, particularly at formal progress reviews.

15.3. All students must complete the training requirements of their School/Institute and funding body.

15.4. Every research student is expected to take part in at least 210 hours of development activities over the course of their studies. This is roughly equal to two weeks’ training and development for each full-time year of study.

15.5. Students are expected to record evidence of engagement with research and skills training and development activities on using the Skills Points plug-in on the CDP Training System. Points are awarded for different activities. Students who record 210 points of training by the submission of their thesis for examination will receive the Queen Mary Diploma in Researcher Development.

15.6. Students may have the opportunity to contribute to teaching through lecturing, seminars, demonstrating practical classes, project supervision, marking and taking tutorials according to the teaching practices in the Schools/Institutes for which the teaching is

being undertaken. All students must receive appropriate training before commencing any teaching. Please refer to the webpage Doctoral Students Who Teach for information about training available to research students who undertake teaching responsibilities.

- 15.7. Any teaching undertaken by the student must be agreed by their supervisor(s) and must be in line with the terms and conditions of a student's funding if appropriate.

16. Paid employment

- 16.1. All full-time students are expected to undertake a full week of study of at least 35 hours on their research degree programme and pro rata for part-time students. Students may undertake paid teaching or demonstrating work with the approval of their supervisor. For full-time students it is recommended that this is normally no more than six hours per week averaged over the year, including preparation and marking. If a student wishes to undertake paid work for Queen Mary for more than 6 hours per week, this should be approved by their supervisor and the School/Institute Director of Graduate Studies. The work must be supported by appropriate training. Students in receipt of scholarship funding must comply with any conditions concerning paid work set by their funding body. The total time spent (including preparation and marking) should not interfere with the progress of the student's research studies. Teaching work is paid at the Queen Mary standard rates for the type of activity. Schools and Institutes issue contracts to students for paid work.
- 16.2. In considering paid work outside Queen Mary, full-time students should bear in mind the need to work full-time on their research. Paid work should not delay or interfere with research training and the timely submission of the thesis. If a student is in receipt of a stipend from Queen Mary, stipend payments will be suspended if a student takes up full-time work during the period of the studentship, for example to undertake an external placement, internship and any other work that is not a formal requirement of the degree programme. If a student wishes to take-up full-time work they should discuss with their supervisor making an application to interrupt their studies.
- 16.3. International students studying full-time in the UK with student immigration permission may take up limited work. International students who have student immigration permission for part-time study are not permitted to work at all in the UK. Please see this guidance provided by the Advice and Counselling Service.

17. Internships and placements

- 17.1. Students may undertake internships or placements either within Queen Mary or with an external organisation. Such activities may be directly related to the PhD or undertaken for broader professional development, and must be approved in advance by the School/Institute.
- 17.2. Where an internship or placement is not directly related to the PhD, or is not permitted under the terms of a student's funding (including UKRI funding conditions), students will normally be required to interrupt their studies for the duration of the activity. During this period, no tuition fees will be charged, stipend payments will be paused, and the thesis

submission deadline and funding end date will be extended by a period equivalent to the interruption, with the overall programme and funding duration remaining unchanged.

- 17.3. In exceptional circumstances, where an internship or placement is not directly related to the PhD but can be demonstrated to provide significant academic benefit without detriment to academic progress, a case may be made for the student to remain enrolled. Such cases must be approved in advance by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Head of Research Degrees. Approval of such cases does not override the requirement that any paid work must be undertaken in accordance with the University's employment and tax obligations.
- 17.4. Where an internship or placement is directly related to the PhD, it will normally be treated as a period of study away, and the student will remain enrolled with tuition fees continuing and no change to the thesis submission deadline or overall programme duration. In such cases, where the internship is paid, stipend payments will normally be paused and the stipend end date extended accordingly, while fee funding end dates remain unchanged; where the internship is unpaid, stipend payments and funding end dates will continue as normal.
- 17.5. Students must ensure that any internship or placement complies with the conditions of their immigration permission, where applicable, and should seek advice from the Advice and Counselling Service.
- 17.6. In exceptional circumstances, variations to these arrangements may be approved by the Chair of the Research Degrees Programmes & Examination Board (or nominee) Board and the Head of Research Degrees, particularly where such schemes are affiliated with recognised external funders, and requests should normally be submitted at least four weeks in advance.

18. Research Ethics and Research Integrity

- 18.1. Students must comply with Queen Mary policies on research integrity and ethical review of research. Students and supervisors will familiarise themselves with Queen Mary's policies on research with human participants and research integrity and associated procedures for the ethical review of research, and consider whether the student's research requires research ethics approval from the Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee
- 18.2. An application for approval should be submitted to the committee if necessary at the appropriate point before the research is undertaken. Please review the Queen Mary Research Ethics webpages for further information or email research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk to discuss an upcoming application.
- 18.3. The online training course in research integrity was introduced in 2022-23 for research students. The training is compulsory for all new research students initially enrolled with effect from 1 August 2022. Students are required to complete the course and to report this as part of their first year progression review. The training is available to all other research students who are strongly encouraged to complete the course. Please access the Research Integrity Essentials course via the CPD Training System.

- 18.4. Students must comply with the Editorial Assistance Policy for research degree theses, which can be found on the Policies webpage, in the 'Research' category, as well as follow the Doctoral College guidance on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in doctoral research.
- 18.5. Applications to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for research studies involving human participants can be supported through AskQM. Information about DBS requirements can be found on GOV.UK. Queries regarding DBS applications should be submitted via AskQM.
- 18.6. Information about Queen Mary research policies is available from the Queen Mary policy zone. Please check the policies each time you need to use them as the university may publish or revise the policies from time to time.
- 18.7. Allegations that may constitute student misconduct are managed under the Code of Student Discipline.

19. Intellectual Property

- 19.1. Students and supervisors must adhere to the Queen Mary Intellectual Property Policy. They must ensure that they implement and adhere to this policy throughout their research and in any interactions, whether in person or through electronic media, with parties external to Queen Mary.

20. Collaborative arrangements

- 20.1. Collaborative arrangements for the supervision and award of research degrees are considered and approved by the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board in accordance with the policy and procedures established by Senate for that purpose. Information about setting up a collaborative programme is provided at <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/governance-and-legal-services/quality-assurance/collaborative-provision/>. Please contact the Research Degrees Office.
- 20.2. Students may study at an accredited host institution in accordance with the Academic Regulations. Arrangements will be put in place for such students to ensure that the requirements of this Code are adhered to, particularly regarding supervision arrangements and progression monitoring.

21. Feedback mechanisms

- 21.1. All Schools/Institutes must offer opportunities for research students to provide feedback to them. Students must be advised during the induction period of the mechanisms for providing feedback to the School/Institute, including opportunities for representation on relevant committees such as Student-Staff Liaison Committees.

22. Examinations and awards

- 22.1. The Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board is responsible for the examination of research degrees and approves the award of research degrees.

22.2. The criteria for assessment of research degrees are outlined in the Academic Regulations and the Guidelines for Research Degree Examinations.

22.3. The procedures for examination entry and the examination process are outlined in the Procedures for Research Degree Examinations.

22.4. Panel of examiners

22.4.1. A Panel of Examiners is established for each individual examination of an MPhil, PhD, MD(Res), EngD, DrPS, DPsych, DCLin and DCLinDent.

22.4.2. The Panel of Examiners comprises a minimum of two examiners appointed by the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board on behalf of the Senate.

22.4.3. Examiners may be nominated as follows:

Either

[a] one internal examiner from the academic staff of Queen Mary University of London who has not been involved in the candidate's work and has not been a member of the candidate's progression panel(s); and

[b] one external examiner;

or

[c] where the criteria above for an internal examiner cannot be met or a School/Institute considers it to be academically desirable two external examiners may be appointed.

22.4.4. If the candidate is a member of Queen Mary staff normally two examiners who are external to Queen Mary shall be appointed.

22.4.5. In some cases, an independent chair may be appointed to the Panel of Examiners. The independent chair must be a senior member of academic staff (Senior Lecturer, Reader or Professor) with experience of examining at least one UK PhD (or equivalent for other awards). The independent chair may be from the same School or Institute but should not have had any prior involvement with the project or with the student. They should also be from a different area in the School/Institute and not from the same research group / sub-department or unit / centre. In such cases, the responsibility of the chair is to manage the process and ensure adherence to the regulations. The chair does not contribute to the decision regarding whether or not the standards for award have been met.

22.4.6. The candidate may invite their supervisor to attend the examination but the supervisor may not participate in the examination and must absent themselves when the decision regarding the outcome of the examination is to be made. If the candidate does not wish the supervisor to be present, he/she should make this clear at the time of examination entry.

22.5. Criteria for examiners

22.5.1. Examiners for MPhil, PhD, MD(Res), EngD, DrPS, DPsych, DClin and DClinDent normally fulfil the following criteria:

[a] Examiners should be experts in the field of the thesis but not necessarily in all parts of the precise topic.

[b] The examiners should have examined at least five research degrees of the same or equivalent level between them, of which a minimum of three examinations should have been for a research degree in the UK. For the MD(Res), at least one examiner should have previous experience of examining for the MD(Res).

[c] Nominated examiners must have had no direct involvement in the candidate's research or any close connections or extensive recent (within the past five years) collaborations with either the supervisor(s) or student including joint publications or research grants that might compromise the examination. They must not have taken an active role in considering the student's progression and/or transfer of status from MPhil to PhD.

[d] An external examiner should not normally be appointed more than once during a given academic year by members of the same School/Institute.

[e] An examiner who is a member of Queen Mary staff may be appointed up to three times during a given academic year.

[f] NHS Consultants or the equivalent in the NHS who are not Queen Mary or University employees may be appointed as examiners, but they should hold an Honorary Senior Lecturer or above contract with a College or University. Other professional experts may be appointed as external examiners, but the normal requirements for examining experience across the examination team will apply.

[g] Individuals who were previously members of staff, students or other members of Queen Mary University of London must not be appointed as an external examiner until a period of three years has elapsed.

[h] Individuals who have retired from academic positions at Queen Mary University of London or another higher education institution may be appointed as internal or external examiners (subject to the provisions in 22.5.1[g] above) if they remain active in their field of research.

[i] When an overseas examiner is appointed, we recommend that the viva be conducted online to help avoid unnecessary travel and associated costs. However, if the School considers an in-person examination essential, the Head of School must formally approve the travel expenses in advance. In such cases, please ensure that a budget code is provided within the MySIS nomination task, as that will be used to cover the external examiner's expenses.

22.5.2. Examiners for ResM (Master by Research) normally fulfil the following criteria:

[a] The collective experience of the examination panel for a ResM degree must include the assessment of at least five research degrees. This total may comprise both PhD (Level 8) and ResM (Level 7) candidates, with a minimum of three of these examinations conducted in the United Kingdom and at research degree level – such as PhD, ResM, EngD, MD(Res) or MPhil. If one examiner satisfies this minimum requirement, a second examiner may be appointed even if their prior examination experience has primarily involved taught master's programmes (Level 7) – such as MSc, MA or MRes qualifications.

[b] There is no restriction on the number of individual examinations an examiner – whether internal or external to Queen Mary – may be appointed to within a single academic year.

22.5.3. The Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board will monitor issues arising from reports from research degree examiners and recommend appropriate action.

23. Alternate Thesis Formats

23.1. PhD candidates may, in certain circumstances, submit their thesis in an alternative format. All thesis formats must meet the same requirements for originality, scholarly rigour, and examination standards as a traditional thesis, and must demonstrate an equivalent contribution to knowledge.

23.2. Consistency of Thesis Format

Candidates must adopt a single thesis format for the entirety of the submission. A thesis must be structured consistently in accordance with the requirements of the chosen format and may not combine elements of different formats (for example, a journal-format structure alongside a traditional monograph structure). The format of the thesis should be agreed with the supervisory team at an early stage of the programme.

23.3. Approval

23.3.1. Candidates wishing to submit a thesis in an alternative format (including practice-based or journal format) must obtain approval in advance from:

- their supervisory team; and
- the Director of Graduate Studies within their School or Institute.

23.3.2. For practice-based theses in disciplines not listed below, additional approval must be obtained from the Faculty Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Research (or nominee).

23.3.3. Requests should normally include:

- proposed thesis title
- supervisory arrangements
- expected completion date
- proposed structure and format

- (where relevant) the balance between written and practical components
- arrangements for examination

23.4. Practice-Based Theses

23.4.1. In some disciplines, doctoral research may include a significant creative, professional, or practical component. A practice-based thesis will consist of:

- [a] a substantial practical or creative work; and
- [b] a written thesis which contextualises, analyses, and critically reflects on that work.

23.4.2. The submission must demonstrate a significant and original contribution to knowledge equivalent to that required for a traditional doctoral thesis.

23.4.3. Structure of the Submission

The submission will normally consist of two integrated components:

Practical Component

[a] An original work created by the candidate, which may include (but is not limited to):

- creative works
- performances
- exhibitions
- artefacts or designs
- digital or multimedia outputs
- professional practice outputs

Written Thesis

[b] The written element should:

- situate the practice within relevant scholarly or professional contexts
- describe the research process and methodology
- critically analyse the outcomes of the practical work
- demonstrate the relationship between theoretical investigation and practice

The following disciplines are approved to offer practice-based theses and specify additional requirements:

23.4.4. Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies

In the field of Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, a candidate may undertake research leading either to the submission of a written thesis or a combination of a written thesis and practice (the balance between the written and practical components is determined by the needs of the project).

23.4.5. English

In the field of English, a candidate may undertake research leading to the submission of an unwritten thesis, or a combination of a written thesis and practice in the form of a creative element (original novel, novella, collection of short stories, work of creative nonfiction including memoir and other forms of life-writing such as biography and autobiography, collection of poetry, full-length stage play, screenplay, or teleplay). In the case of a doctorate with a creative element, it will usually constitute the largest proportion of the submitted work and the critical thesis the balance thereof, the latter taking the form either of an exegesis reflecting on the candidate's creative practice and the work produced, or a critical project on a topic whose analysis informs, or is related to, the creative component. The balance between the creative and critical elements shall be agreed between the student and supervisor(s). The critical commentary component shall be a minimum of 20,000 words. 138 of 152 Academic Regulations 2025-26

23.4.6. Film Studies

In the field of Film Studies, a candidate may undertake research leading either to the submission of a written thesis or a combination of a written thesis and practice in the form of original film, video, or new media (the balance between the written and practical components is determined by the needs of the project).

23.4.7 Modern Languages

In the field of Modern Languages, a candidate may undertake research leading either to the submission of a written thesis or a combination of a written thesis and practice in the form of a translation into English of a literary text. The critical commentary shall be a minimum of 30,000 words. The balance between the written and practical components is determined by the needs of the project. In such cases the submission is examined in relation to the criteria for the degree outlined above. Students who submit a combination of a written thesis and practice do so on the understanding that the material is submitted concurrently and examined as an integrated whole. Practice must be submitted using a form of retainable documentation agreed in consultation with the supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies, and approved by the faculty Deputy Dean for Research (Research Degrees), or nominee.

23.4.8. Geography

A candidate may submit a thesis comprising a combination of a written component and a practice-based element (for example: an exhibition, architectural project, substantive GIS project, public policy document, community-engagement project, site-based environmental project, or other applied "real-world" project). The practice-based element may be drawn, filmed, built, exhibited, or otherwise produced using any media appropriate to the discipline, and will normally constitute the larger proportion of the submission, with the written

component forming a critical commentary or related analytical project. The written component must be approximately 60,000 words.

23.4.9. Submission and Examination

23.4.9.1. The written and practical components must be submitted concurrently and will be examined as an integrated whole. Practice must be submitted in a retainable form of documentation agreed with the supervisory team and Director of Graduate Studies, and approved by the Faculty Deputy Dean for Research (Research Degrees) or nominee.

23.4.9.2. Assessment will include evaluation of both components and a viva voce examination. Examiners may require corrections or revisions to the written thesis, the practical element, or both.

23.4.10. Word Length

The written component of a practice-based PhD will normally be between 20,000 and 50,000 words, unless otherwise specified by the relevant discipline. The balance between written and practical components should be agreed between the candidate and supervisory team, normally by the end of the first year of study, and formally recorded.

23.5. Journal-Format Theses

23.5.1. A doctoral thesis may be presented in journal format, in which research chapters are structured as papers suitable for submission to scholarly journals or other peer-reviewed outputs. This format must constitute a coherent and integrated body of research and meet the same academic standards as a traditional thesis.

23.5.2. Material Included

[a] papers that have been published

[b] papers accepted for publication

[c] papers submitted for review

Papers may be sole-authored or co-authored. All included material must represent original research undertaken during the candidate's registration and must not have been submitted for another qualification.

23.5.3. Candidate Contribution

Where work is co-authored, the thesis must clearly identify the candidate's individual contribution and the contributions of collaborators. Candidates are normally expected to have taken a major role in the research, which may include:

[a] conceptual development or research design

[b] data generation or collection

[c] analysis and interpretation

[d] preparation of the manuscript

A clear statement of author contribution must be included, either in the introductory section of the thesis and/or at the beginning of each relevant chapter, to enable examiners to assess the candidate's independent contribution.

23.5.4. Use of Co-Authored Publications

Candidates must ensure that co-authors are aware that the work will be included in the thesis. The inclusion of such material must comply with University requirements relating to academic integrity, copyright, and intellectual property. All material must be appropriately acknowledged and referenced.

23.5.5. Structure

A journal-format thesis must demonstrate clear intellectual coherence and may not be presented as a series of unrelated publications. Chapters should be integrated through appropriate introductory and linking text and must clearly identify where material corresponds to published or submitted work.

A journal-format thesis will normally include:

[a] a general introduction (context, research questions, explanation of format)

[b] a literature review

[c] a methodology section

[d] research chapters presented as journal-style papers

[e] an integrative discussion or conclusion

[f] references and any supporting material

The number of papers is not prescribed but must reflect a volume, depth, and originality of research equivalent to a traditional doctoral thesis. In many disciplines this may correspond to three to five substantial papers, although this will vary.

23.5.6. Presentation

Formatting should be sufficiently consistent to ensure readability across the thesis. Figures, tables, and references should follow a consistent style. Previously published material must be appropriately cited.

23.5.7. Word Length

The maximum length of the main text will normally not exceed:

[a] 100,000 words for a doctoral thesis

[b] 60,000 words for an MPhil thesis

Some repetition across journal-style chapters may be unavoidable.

23.5.8. Examination

Journal-format theses are examined in the same way as traditional theses. Examiners will assess the originality and significance of the research, the coherence of the submission as a whole, the candidate's independent contribution, and their defence in the viva voce examination. The inclusion of published material does not in itself determine the outcome of the examination.

24. Complaints and appeals

- 24.1. Students are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have about their research studies with their supervisor or Director of Graduate Studies in the first instance. If a student has a problem regarding their supervision or other research support or Queen Mary services they should address their concerns to their supervisor first and keep a clear record of this. If the situation is not resolved or concerns remain regarding supervision then students are expected to raise their concerns with their School/Institute Director of Graduate Studies. Raising concerns promptly will provide staff with the opportunity to address these matters, and to reduce the impact on students as much as possible. Try to seek informal resolution of concerns where possible. Many problems can be solved informally, without the need for a formal complaint.
- 24.2. The Student Complaints Policy provides guidance on raising concerns or complaints about both academic and non-academic services provided by Queen Mary. Students who wish to make a complaint about any aspect of their research programme should refer to the Queen Mary Student Complaints Policy which outlines the procedures to be followed.
- 24.3. Students who wish to appeal against the outcome of the recommendation of examiners or the outcome of a progression review should refer to the Appeal Policy which outlines the procedures to be followed. Students are advised to talk to their supervisor or another member of staff in their department before submitting an appeal. Please note that an appeal against the academic judgment of the examiners is not valid grounds for an appeal.
- 24.4. A formal concern about the conduct of another student (for example bullying, harassment and discrimination) would be investigated under the Code of Student Discipline.
- 24.5. Further information is available at <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/governance-and-legal-services/student-appeals/>

Student Support and Contacts

Research Degrees Office

The Research Degrees Office (RDO) provides administrative support for research degree applicants, students, supervisors and examiners. The RDO is responsible for the administration of admissions, registration, examinations, changes to candidature, funding administration and other matters relating to research degree programmes.

Current contact details, office opening hours and methods of contact are available [on the Queen Mary website](#).

Doctoral College

The Doctoral College provides researcher development, training, events and support for postgraduate research students and their supervisors.

Further information, contact details and details of available training and support can be found <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/> on the Queen Mary website.