SENATE REGULATION 5: Research Degrees

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POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES

These Regulations are effective from 1 September 2017 for all research degree students and should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice for Research Degrees which sets out mandatory policies and procedures under Senate Regulation 5.

Standards

1. Doctoral degrees (FHEQ level 8) are awarded to candidates who have demonstrated:

a) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;

b) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;

c) the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust project design in the light of unforeseen problems;

d) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

2. Research Masters degrees (FHEQ level 7) are awarded to candidates who have demonstrated:

a) a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or professional practice;

b) a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;

c) originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;

d) a conceptual understanding that enables a critical evaluation of current research, advanced scholarship and methodologies in the discipline; and where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

3. A candidate for any research degree is required to demonstrate appropriate organisation and presentation of his/her material in the thesis, including clarity of expression and written style. It must be in the English language, and must be suitable for publication, either as submitted or suitably abridged.

4. A candidate for a research degree may present evidence of knowledge, understanding and, in the case of doctoral candidates, originality, through the medium of creative work. This might include, but is not limited to, the submission of, for example, a portfolio of substantial musical composition; an original literary text written specifically for the degree; evidence of research in the form of practical performance in drama and/or dance; or an artefact. In all such cases, the submission must be supported by a scholarly text indicating how the creative work fulfils, or contributes towards, the requirements for award.

5. Before recommending that a candidate be awarded the appropriate degree, Examiners are required to certify that:

a) they have satisfied themselves that the thesis is a satisfactory record of research undertaken by the candidate and is genuinely the work of the candidate;

b) the FHEQ descriptors set out in 5.1 (Doctoral award) or 5.2 (Research Masters award) are met in full;

c) the thesis is satisfactory in its literary presentation;

d) the thesis is suitable for publication (by placing an electronic copy in the Brunel University Research Archive) as a work approved for a higher degree of Brunel University.

Admission and Registration

6. The University may admit to programmes of research those applicants who meet the prescribed entry requirements and who are recommended for admission by the authorised member of staff.

7. The general University entrance requirement for registration for a research degree applicable from 1 March 2017 is normally a First or Upper Second Class Honours degree. The required level of English Language competence for those applicants whose first language is not English, is published by the University.

8. A candidate for a research degree may be registered in either full-time or part-time mode, and may also be registered as an external (off-campus) student in either of these modes. Initial registration may be for whichever mode and award deemed appropriate by the University.

9. Programmes of study for a research degree may lead to the following awards:

Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

LLM by Research (LLM)

Doctor of Education (EdD)

Doctor of Engineering (EngD)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)

10. The minimum and maximum duration of candidature for a research programme shall be as follows:

	Minimum duration (in months)	Maximum duration (in months)
Full-time		
PhD/EdD	24	48
MPhil/LLM	12	24

EngD/PhD by new route	36	60
DrPH	30	60
Part-time		
PhD/EdD	48	96
MPhil/LLM	24	48
DrPH	48	84

11. The period of candidature shall be determined from the date of registration and registration will lapse at the end of the maximum period of candidature, after which no submission can be made unless recommended by the Deputy Dean Academic Affairs authorised by the Pro Vice Chancellor Education.

12. In exceptional circumstances (e.g.: illness, family crisis or unforeseeable problems beyond the candidate's control) and as authorised by the University, candidates may be permitted to suspend their studies for normally not more than a total of 12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time). In addition, the University will comply with any statutory obligations, for example in relation to maternity/paternity leave. Such periods of abeyance do not count towards the maximum period of candidature. In the case of Research Council or sponsor-funded candidates, due regard should be given to Research Council or sponsor rules governing suspension of studies.

13. Candidates may not normally be registered simultaneously for more than one degree unless exceptional circumstances apply, for example, where a candidate wishes to register for a programme of research before formal confirmation of the award of a taught postgraduate degree is available.

Supervision

14. Each candidate shall work under the general supervision of a supervisory team approved by the University. One supervisor will be defined as the principal supervisor. All supervisors must be members of academic staff of the University or have Recognised Supervisor Status. Where candidates are registered off-campus, at least one member of the supervisory team must be a local supervisor.

Progress of candidates

15. Each candidate registered for a research degree shall be required to attend such lectures, courses and colloquia as may be specified by the authorised member of staff. A candidate may be required to complete and pass all or part of a taught postgraduate programme or formal training in research methods as part of the research programme.

16. The progress of each candidate for a research degree shall be reviewed within four weeks of initial registration, and at least annually thereafter to ensure that the registration status of individual candidates remains appropriate. The membership of each progression panel shall be appointed by the candidate's Head of Department. The panel shall not include the candidate's supervisors or Researcher Development Advisor. The appointed panel shall, at the outcome of the review, make one of the recommendations set out in paragraph 17 or 18 below to the Vice-Dean (Education) of the candidate's College.

17. A candidate registered for a doctoral degree who fails to pass progression points either through poor performance in assessed work or by lack of satisfactory progress or attendance in his or her programme of research, may be:

a) confirmed in registration for the award, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed;

b) transferred to registration for another award and may be required to take further formal assessments;

c) required to withdraw.

18. A candidate registered for a research Masters award who fails to pass progression points either by poor performance in assessed work or by lack of satisfactory progress or attendance in his or her programme of research may be:

a) confirmed in registration for the award, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed;

b) required to withdraw.

The Thesis

19. Each candidate for a research degree shall be required to submit a thesis on a topic approved by the authorised member of staff.

20. The thesis must have been completed during the candidature with the University, under supervisory arrangements approved by the University. The thesis may include published papers by the candidate which must be acknowledged in the text of the thesis. A student may not submit written work which s/he has submitted for a degree of this or any other University or other recognised award-granting body. All work that is not the candidate's own must be acknowledged.

21. The thesis must be presented in the manner prescribed in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

22. When the candidate for a research degree is ready to submit, the thesis shall be submitted with the required form to the authorised member of staff.

23. The final version of the thesis, approved by the examiners, will be published by being stored electronically in the Brunel University Research Archive. The British Library will electronically harvest theses stored in this manner.

24. The University may agree that a thesis should be held under confidential cover for a specified period of time, up to a maximum of three years. Exceptionally, this period may be extended, upon expiry of the initial period. The copyright of the thesis will be protected by a copyright declaration in the thesis.

Appointment of Examiners

25. The Examiners and Independent Chair ('Examination Panel') for a research degree shall be appointed by Senate on the recommendation of the authorised member of staff. The Independent Chair shall oversee the examination process but will not act as an examiner.

26. All candidates for a research degree will be examined by at least two Examiners, one of which must be external to the University. Candidates who are current or recent members of the staff of the University must be examined by at least two External Examiners and one Internal Examiner. “Current” members of staff are defined as anyone employed by the University at any point since the date of their registration for the research degree and up to the date of their viva voce examination. The only exception to the requirement for two external examiners is where a candidate becomes employed by the University after submission of their thesis. In these circumstances, the Head of Quality Assurance may approve an exception to the requirement to appoint two external examiners”. "Recent" in this context shall mean members of staff who have ceased employment with the University within the last five years.

27. Each External Examiner for a research degree should normally hold a position in a UK university as Professor, Reader or Senior Lecturer. The External Examiner(s) should possess specialist current knowledge in an appropriate field. If an External Examiner does not hold such a position, a case for their appointment must be made. Any prior relationship between the External Examiner(s) and the candidate or any prior knowledge of the candidate’s work must be declared. The same person should not be asked to serve as an External Examiner for a research degree examination for the University within a twelve month period without the prior approval of Senate.

28. Members of the candidate’s recorded supervisory team may not be appointed as an Internal Examiner or Independent Chair for a research degree.

29. Former members of Brunel staff may not be appointed as an External Examiner for a research degree of the University before a period of at least five years has elapsed since s/he was a member of staff of the University. Former members of staff of the University may not be appointed as External Examiners for a research degree of the University if they have had any previous connection with the candidate, including being in post during the candidate’s period of registration for any degree of the University. Should a former member of Brunel staff be appointed as an External Examiner, Senate will determine if a second External Examiner or second Internal Examiner should be appointed as an additional safeguard.

30. Senate will appoint Designated Officers to resolve any disagreements which may arise between Examiners. Such Designated Officers shall be a member of the senior academic staff of the University (i.e. an Executive Dean or Pro Vice Chancellor). In the rare case of Examiners disagreeing, the matter shall be referred to an appropriate Designated Officer.

<u>The Examination</u>

31. The examination of the thesis is deemed to have commenced once the thesis is submitted to the University, and to have been completed when the recommendation of the Examiners has been accepted by the University.

32. Each External and Internal Examiner shall independently complete and submit a preliminary written report prior to the *viva voce* examination, or, in cases where a viva is not to be held, prior to the determination by the Examiners of the award to be recommended. Each preliminary report:

a) shall be between 300 and 500 words in length;

b) shall assess the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis and indicate the main lines of enquiry to be followed in the *viva voce*;

c) shall, if appropriate, set out reasons why no *viva voce* should be held;

d) shall be confidential to the Examination Panel members;

33. *Viva voce* examinations shall normally take place within three months of the date of the submission of the thesis. The candidate will be required to present themselves for the *viva voce* examination.

Recommendations of the Examiners

34. The Examiners shall make a joint written report to Senate on the examination of the candidate and may make any of the following recommendations:

a) Where all the Examiners are in agreement that the thesis does not meet the standards for the award and that the degree not be awarded, in exceptional circumstances, they may make a recommendation to that effect, without requiring the candidate to defend the thesis in a *viva voce*.

b) If the thesis meets the standards for the award, and the candidate has satisfied the Examiners at the *viva voce* examination, the Examiners may recommend the award of the relevant degree.

c) If the thesis meets the standards for award but requires minor amendments, and if the candidate satisfies the Examiners in all other parts of the examination, the Examiners may, in writing, require the candidate to make such amendments to the thesis as will satisfy them within a maximum period of six months. Extensions to the maximum amendment period may be approved by the College if there are accepted extenuating circumstances. The examiner(s) will normally complete the review of the amended thesis within 20 working days of the re-submission.

d) If the thesis does not meet the standards for the award, the Examiners may allow the candidate the opportunity to resubmit the thesis in a revised form for re-examination within twelve months, with a further *viva voce* examination. Exceptionally, where the Examiners, following receipt of the revised thesis, agree the re-submitted thesis meets the required standard, and where they were satisfied with the candidate's performance in the *viva voce* in the first examination, the Examiners may determine that a second *viva voce* is not required. Extensions to the twelve-month period may be approved by the College if there are accepted extenuating circumstances. The examination of the revised thesis will normally be completed within three months of the re-submission.

e) If the thesis is judged by the Examiners to have met the standards for the award, but the candidate fails to satisfy the Examiners at the *viva voce* examination, the candidate may be allowed to re-submit the same thesis for re-examination at a second *viva voce* examination within three months.

f) In the case of a *viva voce* for a doctoral award, if the thesis is judged by the Examiners to be of an insufficient standard for a doctoral award, the Examiners may allow the candidate the opportunity to be re-examined, with a further *viva voce* examination, on a resubmitted thesis, following appropriate revisions, for the award of a research masters, within six months. Exceptionally, where the Examiners, following receipt of the revised thesis, agree the re-submitted thesis meets the required standard for a research masters, and where they were satisfied with the candidate's performance in the *viva voce* examination, the Examiners may determine that a second *viva voce* examination is not required.

Extensions to the six-month period may be approved by the College if there are accepted extenuating circumstances. The examination of the revised thesis will normally be completed within three months of the re-submission.

g) The Examiners may, upon consideration of the thesis and the candidate's performance at the *viva voce*, make the recommendation that the degree not be awarded.

35. At the conclusion of the *viva voce* examination the appropriate report form should be completed, signed by all Examiners. Where all Examiners agree in their recommendations, they should submit a joint report, although each may, in addition, make separate written statements on any matter concerned with the examinations.

36. If the Examiners disagree on their recommendations, they should submit separate reports. Disagreement between Examiners will be resolved by a Designated Officer (as set out in para 30) who will make such arrangements as are necessary to resolve the disagreement. Outcomes mediated or adjudicated by the Designated Officer shall constitute an examination decision and hence be subject to appeal.

37. The final report(s), including the preliminary reports, of the Examiners will be issued to the candidate.

38. Following submission of the thesis no candidate for a research degree may be assessed on more than two occasions, except where the second examination is a re-examination for a doctoral award, following which the Examiners may, if appropriate, recommend that the candidate be examined on a third occasion for a research masters.

39. Any re-examination is normally conducted by the same Panel of Examiners in accordance with the requirements set out in 5.25-5.36.

40. Exceptionally, where a research candidate has passed away before a final thesis can be submitted, and/or a Viva Voce could not be scheduled, the supervisor may request that the intended posthumous award be made.

41. The request for a posthumous award must:

- reflect the judgement of the supervisor and senior College representative that, on the basis of the evidence available to them, the candidate would have presented their thesis and achieved their intended award (with or without minor modifications) within the next 12 months
- include consideration of the draft thesis submissions
- take into consideration, the candidates engagement with regular and productive supervisory meetings and any additional evidence, such as, supplementary modules undertaken, or any research relevant extra-curricular activities undertaken.

42. Requests for posthumous awards must be submitted by the College, and be considered and approved by the Pro Vice Chancellor of Education in agreement with the Registrar. The thesis title on the certificate will not be their final proposed title and instead would display “the research addressed [the area their research covered]”.

Appeals

Appeals against the decisions of the Examiners shall only be permitted in accordance with Senate Regulation 12.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY BY PUBLISHED WORKS

43. 'Published works' shall be defined as work, written, performed or displayed, in the public domain (or accepted as such) and for which there is a retrievable record.

44. The degree of PhD may be awarded on the basis of published works, accompanied by a critical review, which provide proof of a significant contribution to original thought. The work submitted for such a PhD shall contain an overarching theme, and shall not consist solely of a collection of published papers, or of a single book, musical composition, artefact or performance. The standard of works submitted should be the same as that expected for the award of a PhD by the submission of a thesis as defined in paragraphs 5.1.

45. A candidate for a PhD degree by this means must have held a post as a member of the academic staff of the University for a period of at least three years continuously at the date on which a submission is made. Candidates shall be members of staff at the time of the submission.

46. No person may normally make a submission for the PhD degree by published works if s/he has previously been awarded a doctoral degree, or is concurrently enrolled on another award-bearing programme in this or any other University/Institution.

47. An applicant for registration for the degree of PhD on the basis of published works must in the first instance submit a list of the published works to be considered, together with a list of the applicant's contribution to any multi-authored papers/collaborative work to the relevant Head of Department. If the applicant meets the conditions for eligibility specified in SR5.42 and 5.43, the Head of Department, in consultation with the Executive Dean of College, shall determine whether the candidate shall be registered for the degree.

48. A candidate shall be required to complete a minimum period of candidature of six months and a maximum of one year from the date of registration, during which the candidate will prepare the submission for examination.

49. Two supervisors shall be appointed for the candidate, at least one of which (the principal supervisor) must be a full-time member of the academic staff of the University. The candidate shall provide each of the supervisors with a copy of each of the published works which s/he proposes to submit. The role of the supervisors shall be to support and advise on:

a) the standard of work expected for the award;

b) the development of the critical review;

c) the coherence of the body of work to be submitted;

d) preparation for the *viva voce* examination.

50. When the candidate is ready to submit, the written submission as set out in paragraph 5.49 (3 copies) shall be submitted with the required form to the authorised member of staff.

51. The candidate shall be required to provide the following information along with the final submission for examination:

a) a declaration that the submission is not substantially the same as any that s/he has previously made or is currently making, either in published or unpublished form, for an award of any university or similar institution;

b) a statement regarding which, if any, parts of the submission have previously been submitted for any such award;

c) a declaration that, until the outcome of the current submission is known, the works submitted will not be submitted for any such award at any other university or similar institution.

52. All written works submitted for examination shall be in English and shall comprise:

a) an abstract of no more than 300 words that provides a summary of the main concepts and conclusions of the published work;

b) a summary sheet listing all of the published work submitted together with a statement of the extent of the candidate's contribution to multi-authored work, substantiated by all the co-authors;

c) a copy of each publication numbered in accordance with point b) above;

d) A critical review of between 10,000 and 15,000 words. In particular the critical review shall:

- outline the themes that give the works their defining coherence;
- show how the works make a significant and coherent contribution to knowledge;
- provide an assessment of the impact of the works contained in the submission;
- justify the overarching approach and methodologies used for the works.

Examination and Recommendations of Examiners

53. The regulations set out in paragraphs 5.25-5.39 applies with the exception of 5.33f and paragraph 38. No recommendation for re-submission for the award of a research masters can be made.

54. In the event that the Examiners recommend that the degree be not awarded, the candidate will not normally be permitted to make a further submission until a period of one year has elapsed since the date of that recommendation being made. Following the initial submission, no candidate for the degree of PhD by published works may be examined on more than two occasions.

55. One copy of the submission will be retained by Brunel University London Library.

HIGHER DOCTORATES

56. The degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD), Doctor of Letters (DLitt), Doctor of Science (DSc) and Doctor of Technology (DTech) shall be awarded on the basis of distinguished original work which has established a candidate's position as an authority in his or her field of study. The title of the higher doctorate shall appropriately reflect the candidate's field of

study. The original work can be demonstrated in the form of either (a) published material or (b) scientific or technological innovation, development, or achievement. The submission may contain material certified as refereed and accepted for publication by a reputable learned journal.

57. A candidate for the degree must hold another degree of the University or be a current member of the University staff. Retired members of the full-time staff may submit for the degree after the normal date of retirement, provided that the greater part of the work submitted was carried out while the candidate was employed by the University.

58. Candidates for an award should seek informal advice from a senior member of the University staff, usually the Head of a relevant academic unit, before proceeding with a formal application.

59. The candidate should forward to the Registrar and Director of Governance, Legal, Academic and Student Services, for initial consideration:

a) a *curriculum vitae*;

b) a list detailing each publication to be submitted in support of the formal application;

c) a short statement outlining the main themes of the publications and the overall contribution to the advancement of knowledge;

d) a statement of the candidate's contribution to any publication under joint authorship;

e) a note of work submitted for any other degree.

60. The Pro Vice Chancellor Education and the Head of the relevant academic unit, in consultation with other senior academic staff with appropriate expertise in Brunel or at another University, shall review the preliminary submission.

61. The University shall then advise the candidate whether to delay submission or to proceed with a full submission. If a full submission is invited, three Examiners, of which at least two shall be external to the University, shall be appointed by Senate.

62. The candidate shall present three sets of the application to the Registrar. The application shall include:

a) A copy of each of the candidate's published books submitted in support of the application. Teaching text books and popular books or articles should not be submitted unless they show considerable originality of material or approach;

b) A copy of all papers submitted, normally collected together within A4 boards. The front covers should indicate clearly the applicant's full name. Photocopies of papers are acceptable, but extracts mounted on backing sheets are not. If the submission includes papers accepted for publication but not yet published, a statement certifying that the paper(s) have been refereed for, and accepted by, named journal(s) should be submitted, countersigned by either the Internal Examiner or the Head of the relevant academic unit;

c) A *curriculum vitae*, including details of research experience, degrees and other qualifications held (with the class of degree, subject, year of the award and the name of the awarding institution). Full particulars necessary to establish the candidate's eligibility under paragraph 5.53 above should be stated;

d) A statement briefly outlining the main theme or themes of the candidate's

publications and indicating those areas which s/he considers contain an original and significant contribution to the advancement and/or application of knowledge;

e) A list of the submitted publications grouped according to subject and numbered consecutively. For books, the title, publisher and year of publication should be listed. For published papers or chapters in books, etc., the title of the paper or contribution, full details of the publication in which each appeared, the year, volume number, and the first and last page should be given. A full list of authors should be given in each case;

f) A declaration on any work which has been done in collaboration, indicating precisely the share which the candidate personally has taken in each case and the name(s) of the collaborator(s);

g) A statement whether the work or any part of it has been submitted, successfully or unsuccessfully, for a degree of this or any other university or educational institution.

63. On receipt of the formal submission, the candidate's submission will be forwarded to each Examiner. Examiners will not be told each other's identity in order to facilitate independent assessment. In their evaluation of a submission, Examiners shall be empowered to make such enquiries as they think fit.

64. If all Examiners recommend the award of the degree, their reports together with a recommendation for the conferment of the award shall be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor, as Chairman of Senate. If the Examiners' reports do not unanimously recommend the award of the degree, the Pro Vice Chancellor shall consult the Vice-Chancellor and take appropriate action.

65. The anonymised final report(s) of the Examiners will be issued to the candidate.

66. One copy of the published works submitted in evidence for the award of the degree shall be retained by the University Library.

SR5(b) JOINT RESEARCH DEGREES

Award of the Joint Degree

67. The University may approve arrangements for a candidate to register on a programme leading to a joint award of the degree of Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy with a specific named institution, in accordance with the University's procedures for approving collaborative partnerships and the procedures established for such degrees.

68. A joint research degree programme leading to a joint award with another named institution shall be governed by a Memorandum of Agreement approved and signed by the authorised signatories of the University and the other named Institution participating in the award.

69. In addition to the Memorandum of Agreement every candidate for the award of the degree of PhD under these regulations shall enter into an Individual Doctoral Agreement signed by authorised signatories of the University and the other named Institution and the candidate's supervisors which sets out the terms and conditions governing the joint award.

70. The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) may be awarded by Senate to postgraduate students who have successfully pursued a programme of study jointly with another approved institution, as prescribed below and have satisfied any other requirements to the satisfaction of the relevant academic authorities of both institutions concerned.

Admission

71. For candidates applying for admission to a higher degree by research programme offered jointly with another institution, the application must be approved by the appropriate academic authorities in both institutions and must satisfy the formal entry requirements for both institutions.

72. The procedures for admission will be specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

Candidature

73. The programme to be followed shall be one of full-time supervised study, including research training which will be generic and subject specific, together with generic skills training.

74. Candidates will normally be formally registered and enrolled at both institutions throughout the period of candidature unless otherwise specified in the Memorandum of Agreement. If a candidate is not enrolled at both institutions throughout the period of candidature, periods of separate enrolment at either institution in the partnership shall be counted as equivalent for the purposes of determining the overall period of candidature for the degree of PhD.

75. Candidates will be subject to the regulations, rules, policies and practices of the institutions with which they are registered. Procedures for dealing with breaches of the aforesaid will be specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

76. The minimum period of candidature to be spent at each institution and the expected division of the period of candidature between institutions will be specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

77. A candidate for the degree of PhD may be permitted at any time prior to submission of the thesis to transfer to a programme leading to the degree of MPhil, except in cases

where a candidate is registered for a joint award with an institution which does not offer an MPhil degree. In such cases the candidate may be given the option to transfer to a programme leading to the degree of MPhil from Brunel University London only.

Supervision and Progress

78. Candidates registered on a programme leading to a joint award shall have a supervisory team which includes at least one supervisor from each institution. The supervisor from Brunel University shall be an academic member of University staff. One supervisor in the team shall be designated as the principal supervisor. If appropriate, the principal supervisor may change depending upon the institution in which the candidate is physically located. The supervisory team may include other supervisors and/or independent mentors and should normally include at least one additional member from the institution at which a candidate is physically located, to provide additional support. The supervisors appointed shall satisfy the academic criteria for the appointment of supervisors at both institutions, and shall be approved by the normal academic route in both institutions.

79. The responsibilities of the supervisory team and of the candidate shall be set out in writing in the Memorandum of Agreement and in the Individual Doctoral Agreement provided to and signed by the supervisors and the candidate, and approved by the University.

80. Every candidate will take part in an individualised assessment of their research training needs or equivalent with their supervisor(s) at the commencement of their studies. Candidates will also be required to take part in a postgraduate student research training programme which will include generic and subject specific research training, together with generic skills training and may include a range of elements which are compulsory, optional or conditions of funding. Research training may take place at any or all of the institutions party to the joint degree, as agreed by the supervisory team and the candidate in a written training agreement. It is the responsibility of the supervisor from the University to ensure that the candidate undertakes a programme which meets all the training requirements.

81. The progress review points of an individual candidate will be set out in the Memorandum of Agreement. The outcome of such reviews will normally be in accordance with Senate Regulation 5.17.

Duration

82. The duration of the programme shall be specified in the relevant Memorandum of Agreement. The minimum period of candidature shall be not less than 24 months and shall be spent in supervised study. The maximum period of candidature shall normally be 48 months, excluding periods of abeyance. Where applicable the period spent in candidature for the degree of MPhil to the point of transfer will be counted towards the period of candidature required for the degree of PhD.

83. The period of candidature ends when the thesis is submitted. A candidate who fails to submit a thesis by the end of the agreed maximum period of candidature shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the programme.

Abeyance

84. Candidates must continue in registration for the degree until such time as they submit their thesis or withdraw, except that abeyance of candidature may be permitted in extenuating circumstances (e.g.: illness, family crisis or unforeseeable problems beyond the candidate's control), with the agreement of the supervisory team and approval through the relevant academic authorities at both institutions as specified in the Memorandum of

Agreement. In addition, the University will comply with any statutory obligations, for example in relation to maternity/paternity leave. The maximum period of abeyance should be stipulated and will normally be in accordance with Senate Regulation 5.12. In the case of Research Council or sponsor-funded candidates, due regard should be given to Research Council or sponsor rules governing suspension of studies. Periods of abeyance shall not count towards the maximum period of study.

85. While based at Brunel, candidates in abeyance should not receive supervision and normally should not have access to services.

Extension of candidature

86. The minimum and maximum periods of candidature specified in the Memorandum of Agreement should be strictly adhered to. The University's regulations on extension of candidature (Senate Regulation 5.11) will apply unless otherwise specified in the Memorandum of Agreement. Any requests for an extension must be approved through the relevant academic procedures in both institutions.

Submission of Thesis

87. After completion of the necessary period of study, a thesis shall be submitted for examination. Procedures for submission will be specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

Examination

88. The examination process for research students registered for a degree jointly awarded with another University will be based on the principles described below:

- No member of the supervisory team may be appointed as an examiner; nor may they take part in the judgement of the thesis under consideration in any other way;
- The research student will be expected to submit a written thesis (or equivalent) and to defend this in some form of oral examination;
- The panel of examiners will consist of at least two examiners, one of whom will be an examiner external to the Universities awarding the degree.

For degrees examined jointly with an international partner, additional members of the examining panel beyond two will be part of the negotiations when setting up the agreement.

89. The examination will be conducted jointly by both institutions.

90. The arrangements for examination will be specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

Outcome of the Examination

91. The outcomes of the examination will be as set out in paragraph 5.33 unless otherwise specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

92. The award must be approved by the relevant academic authorities at both institutions. For Brunel, the award will be made by Senate on the recommendation of the Examiners concerned.

93. A candidate who fails to submit a corrected or revised thesis by the date set by the examiners shall normally be regarded as having failed the examination and the recommendations of the examiners shall lapse. In exceptional circumstances a revised date for submitting corrections may be approved by the partner institutions.

94. Where the examiners recommend that the degree be not awarded and that submission of a revised thesis be not permitted, the candidate may ask for the case to be reviewed in accordance with procedures set out in the Memorandum of Agreement.

(Updated December 2024)