



**University
of Worcester**

**Handbook for
MPhil/PhD Students
and Supervisors
2016-17**

This handbook is for advice and guidance only and is not a substitute for the Research Degree Regulatory Framework. In case of any conflict these formal statements and requirements take precedence over the student handbook.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in the handbook, as at 1st September 2016. The University of Worcester can, however, take no responsibility for errors or omissions or for arrangements made by third parties. It reserves the right to change the information given at any time.

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Introduction

The aim of this Handbook is to lead students undertaking an MPhil or PhD and their supervisors - through the research degree process: from registration to completion and all stages in between. A separate Handbook exists for students registered on an MRes, the Professional Doctorate and PhD by Published or Creative Work.

In this Handbook there will be particular focus on the key stages of the process: Approval of Research Proposal (RDB1); Transfer (RDB2); and Examination (RDB3). There will also be information on research training, on how progress and development is monitored and recorded, on the entitlements and responsibilities of both student and supervisor and on other key issues relating to undertaking and supervising an MPhil or PhD at the University of Worcester.

At the back of the Handbook is a list of useful contacts and a list of weblinks to documents and forms referred to throughout this Handbook.

This Handbook should be read alongside:

- The University of Worcester's [Research Degree Regulatory Framework](#)
- The University's [Policies and Procedures](#) relating to the programme of study
- The University's [Policies and Procedures for Research Governance](#), i.e. the Ethics Policy, the Research Data Management Policy and the Guidelines and Procedures for Good Research Practice.
- The Course Handbooks for the [Researcher Development Programme](#)
- [Library Services Researcher Guidance](#)

Section 1: The Standard of Research Degree Awards at the University of Worcester

- 1.1 The question of “how do I know if my work is of a sufficient standard?” is one that pre-occupies all research students. This section sets out the required standards for research degrees at the University of Worcester. Research students should familiarise themselves with these standards at the outset and supervisors should ensure that both they and their students are fully aware of what is required.
- 1.2 The standard of research degrees awarded is aligned with the levels as set out in the ‘Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland’ (FHEQ).

MPhil

- 1.3 The standard of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** (MPhil) is that of a good Honours graduate who has satisfactorily completed research training and has investigated and evaluated, or critically studied, an appropriate topic over not less than 18 months of full-time study, or equivalent, and has presented a satisfactory thesis. In addition, a candidate for the award of MPhil must be able to demonstrate a full and proper understanding of the research methods appropriate to the field of study.
- 1.4 The text of an MPhil thesis in science, engineering or art and design, excluding ancillary data, must not normally exceed 20,000 words; in the arts, humanities or social sciences, the limit is 40,000 words.
- 1.5 Where a submission incorporates material in other than written form, or the research involved creative writing or the preparation of a scholarly edition, the text of a thesis for the degree of MPhil must normally be of 20,000 words.
- 1.6 The FHEQ states the following:

MPhil degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- (i) 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 area of professional practice;
- (ii) a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- (iii) 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;
- (iv) conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;

- to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- (a) deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- (b) demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- (c) continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

- (d) the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Doctoral awards (PhD and Professional Doctorates)

1.7 The standard of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is that expected of a good Honours graduate who has satisfactorily completed research training and has investigated and evaluated, or critically studied, an appropriate topic over not less than 24 months of full-time study, or equivalent, resulting in a significant original contribution to knowledge, and has presented a satisfactory thesis.

1.8 The word limits for MPhil and Doctorates are outlined in the Research Degree Regulatory Framework.

1.9 The FHEQ states the following:

Doctorates (PhDs) are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- (i) 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;
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) 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 the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- (iv) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- (a) make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
 - (b) continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches;
- and will have:**
- (c) the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Section 2: The Management of Research Degrees at the University of Worcester

- 2.1 The MPhil and PhD at the University of Worcester are subject to the [Research Degree Regulatory Framework](#). These regulations are managed collectively by the supervisory team assigned to each student, by the Research School, and by the University's research committees, particularly the Research Degrees Board, Research Degree Programmes Committee and the Institute research sub-committees. Institute MPhil/PhD Course Leaders also play an important role in the process.

The Supervisory Team

- 2.2 The single most important aspect of the support available to research degree student is the supervisory team. Between them, the members of the team will have both subject expertise and experience of supervision. These are the people who will oversee the research and support the student's development as a researcher. Detailed arrangements for the team, in terms of completions etc, are set out in the [Research Degree Regulatory Framework](#).
- 2.3 At Worcester we use a team of two or more supervisors where each member of the team will be expected to bring a specific strength to the project. At least one (and normally two members) of the team will be a member of staff at Worcester, i.e. an 'internal supervisor'. The internal supervisor(s) will provide the bulk of the supervision and for this reason are normally expected to have some prior experience of supervising MPhil or PhD students.
- 2.4 At Worcester, we want to actively encourage colleagues to join supervisory teams and gain experience of supervision. This means that sometimes, internal supervisory teams do not have the required number of research degree completions. When the internal supervisory team has between them no or one completion at the required level, or if the Director of Studies has no completions, a case must be made to the Research Degrees Board, who may appoint a mentor (from the Approved Register of Research Degree Supervisors) to work alongside the team. Applications are considered on a case by case basis and the Research Degrees Board will always ensure the student is adequately supported.
- 2.5 An external supervisor may sometimes become a member of a supervisory team. This person will normally be attached to another University or perhaps to an organisation or business involved in research and development or is a highly-respected retired academic. In every case, the external supervisor will bring an expertise and experience to the team that is appropriate for the project. Please note

that external supervisors are paid an annual fee for their work following the receipt of their annual report for their student (see [Appendix 2](#) for rates).

- 2.6 One of the team will be designated as the person who will guide the student through the various stages of the research degree process. This nominated supervisor, known as the Director of Studies (DoS), will usually be a member of staff at Worcester and will have particular administrative responsibilities towards the student, which must be discharged in an orderly and timely manner. In special circumstances, a member of staff who leaves or retires from the university can continue to act as the Director of Studies. Please ask the RS for more information.
- 2.7 The team may also include one or more formal Advisors. An Advisor is normally added to a team to support the student with a particular, key aspect of the research. Not every individual who offers a research student help and guidance over the course of their degree should be classified as an Advisor; only those which play a distinct and discrete role. Unlike a supervisor, the Advisor does not enter a formal agreement with the student and supervisory team and does not have to provide any evidence of qualifications or experience to the Research Degrees Board.
- 2.8 Details of what support a research student can expect from his/her supervisory team is set out in the Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors (see [Section 4](#) of this Handbook).
- 2.9 For information about what happens if a Director of Studies goes on long term sick leave or leaves the university please contact the Research School.

The Research School (RS)

- 2.10 The RS offers day-to-day support and assistance for research students and supervisors. The School is managed by Helen Tabinor who is supported by two administrators: Joanna Jervis who is the Research Degrees Administrator; and Katherine Bruce who is the Administrative Assistant. In addition, a Researcher Development Officer is responsible for coordinating and delivering research training to students and staff. Details of staff hours, email, phone numbers, etc are to be found in [Contacts](#).
- 2.11 The School's principal role in the research degree process is to facilitate and monitor a research student's progress through registration, approval of the research proposal, transfer to PhD and examination and, if necessary, to assist with changes in a supervisory team, with suspensions or extensions of registration and with withdrawals. The Research Degrees Administrator is primarily

responsible for aiding both the student and DoS in this process and Joanna should be the first port of call for advice on such matters.

- 2.12 The RS Manager, in conjunction with the Research Degrees Board (see below), monitors the progress of students through the process. The RS will contact the DoS if a student fails to progress at the necessary rate. There are formal [time limits](#) on the period between registration and examination. There are also, however, timescales relating to, for example, the time between registration and submission of the RDB1 and the point of transfer from MPhil to PhD.
- 2.13 The RS provides training and support for research students on the research degree process through the Researcher Development Programme and for supervisors through the Research Supervisor Training Programme.

Research Degrees Board

- 2.12 The Research Degrees Board is principally responsible for the general oversight of research degree matters; for the scrutiny and approval of student research degree programmes; and for the monitoring of student progress.
- 2.13 Its membership consists of experienced research degree supervisors from across all the University's academic institutes.

Research Degree Programmes Quality Course Committee

- 2.14 The Research Degree Programmes Committee is responsible for the oversight of both the Researcher Development Programme and all the research degree programmes that exist across the University, both in terms of the academic quality and standards of our programmes and the research student experience.
- 2.15 The Committee reports directly to Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
- 2.16 Its membership consists of experienced research degree supervisors from across all Academic Institutes and Research Centres and research degree student representatives, both full time and part time, from different research degree programmes.

Institute Research and Knowledge Transfer Sub-Committees

- 2.17 The work of the Research Degrees Board is strongly supported at Institute level by the Institutes' Research and Knowledge Transfer Sub-Committees which have mechanisms for the review of research student proposals.

MPhil/PhD Course Leaders

- 2.18 Each Institute has one or more nominated MPhil/PhD Course Leaders who has particular responsibilities towards research students and supervisors.
- 2.19 For a current list of MPhil/PhD Course Leaders please contact the RS Office.

Section 3: The Research Degree Process

- 3.1 This section is intended to guide student and supervisor through all the academic and administrative requirements of undertaking an MPhil or PhD at the University of Worcester. There is also a large amount of helpful information on the Research Degree Programmes Blackboard organisation.

Starting your MPhil/PhD

Registration

- 3.2 Once a student has been accepted on a research degree, he/she will be asked to register. New students can currently register for a research degree at two points within the academic year (see Induction dates below). Re-registration in subsequent years will always take place prior to the beginning of the academic year in September/October.
- 3.3 Students can currently register for an MPhil or PhD, although all PhD students will normally be placed on the MPhil/PhD route which will require them to transfer to PhD midway through their programme. A student will only be registered for PhD direct in certain circumstances, for example: when a student transfers their programme from another University where they have already completed the transfer to PhD process.
- 3.4 Registering for an MPhil does not preclude a student from progressing to PhD, should the student and their supervisory team feel that the work is of an appropriate standard.
- 3.5 Registration for all UW students takes place electronically through the [SOLE](#) (Student On-line Environment) pages on the University of Worcester website.
- 3.6 All students will be given a SOLE username and password when they start their research degree. If a student forgets their password, they should contact Katherine Bruce who can re-set this.
- 3.7 Instructions about re-registration and fees will be sent, in the first instance, by e-mail in August each year.

Induction

- 3.8 There are 2 formal entry points for research degree in 2016/17:
- 3rd October 2016
 - 30th January 2017

- 3.9 On each of these days there will be a formal day of induction beginning at 9:30am. It is recommended that students arrange to meet his/her DoS during the first week. The full programme will be made available when a student is accepted on to a research degree.
- 3.10 It is recognised that it might not always be easy for PT students to attend these formal induction sessions. Although we can organise an informal induction, we would encourage PT students to take advantage of the formal events, not least because these sessions will allow research students to meet face-to-face.

RDB Forms

- 3.11 All the stages of the research degree process described below require the completion of the appropriate RDB form. All of the RDB forms can be found on the 'Research Degree Programmes' organisation on Blackboard.
- 3.12 These forms must in all instances be submitted to the RS and will be subject to scrutiny and approval by the Research Degrees Board. It is essential that students and supervisors ensure that the form is completed correctly and in full since failure to do so may delay progress through the process.
- 3.13 The completion of these detailed forms may appear at first sight to be an unnecessary administrative burden; but, in fact, they ensure that the process is rigorous and entirely transparent. Students will receive explicit guidance through the whole process, including the completion of the RDB forms, through the Researcher Development Programme. Supervisors will receive guidance through the Research Supervisor Training Programme. The RS is always available to offer any further guidance should it be needed.

Approval of the Research Proposal ([RDB1](#))

- 3.14 One of the most important stages in the Research Degree Process is the approval of the research proposal. To progress, a student must have their proposal approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- 3.15 Approval requires the submission of an RDB1 form to the Research School, in which the student must set out the details of their research proposal in 2500 words – outlining the aims and objectives, the research context, the research question and the methodology or critical framework for the research; set out the project plan; discuss any ethical considerations and provide a brief, indicative bibliography. The RDB1 form can be found on a student's [SOLE](#) page.
- 3.16 Work on the RDB1 should start soon after registration. It is expected that a FT research student will submit the first draft of their RDB1 to the RS within 6 months of his/her start date. For PT students, it is within 9

months. The first draft of the form does not need to be fully signed, have CVs attached etc. At this stage the reviewers are concentrating on the research proposal itself. The complete paperwork is only required when the RDB1 is ready to be submitted to RDB. It is expected that the proposal will have been approved by the Research Degrees Board twelve months after initial registration on the programme for a FT students and after 18 months for PT students. The RS will contact students and supervisors when these dates approach. Failure to respond to this request for paperwork from the School may result in the termination of a research degree programme, unless appropriate evidence can be provided to explain the delay.

Expert Review

- 3.17 The proposal is then subject to scrutiny by two reviewers known as 'experts'. PLEASE NOTE: The RDB1 must not be submitted for scrutiny before it has been approved by the whole supervisory team. The experts are selected by the Director of Studies, in consultation with the other members of the supervisory team and the research student. Where subject expertise exists internally it is expected that internal experts will normally be used. Where there is limited internal expertise then external experts can be used.
- 3.18 Because RDB rely heavily on the comments and expertise of the expert reviewers, before the RS send the RDB1 for review, the choice of reviewers must be checked and approved by the Institute Research Degrees Co-ordinator. The DoS is asked to write a short paragraph, explaining the rationale for their choice of reviewers and to provide supporting evidence in the form of either a CV or a link to a detailed and up-to-date web profile. As the Research Degrees Co-ordinators have a good understanding of staff expertise across the Institute, they may suggest an alternative reviewer and it is therefore good practice to discuss the choice of reviewers with these colleagues before the RDB1 is submitted to the RS.
- 3.19 Where possible, expert reviewers should be independent of the student and their supervisory team. For example, the internal reviewer(s) should not normally be line managed by the student's DoS although we recognise that in some of the smaller Academic Institutes, this may be unavoidable.
- 3.20 Expert review is an iterative process and so following scrutiny, the student may be asked to revise the proposal and the student and DoS together will be asked to write letters detailing how they have responded to comments. These will be sent back to the reviewers to ensure that they are happy that the appropriate changes have been made.
- 3.21 It is at this point that the Research Degrees Board reviews the proposal. It is difficult to predict with any certainty the length of the process from the initial submission of the RDB1 to the RS to the point at which the proposal goes to the Research Degrees Board. We request that comments from both reviewers are returned within 2 weeks of their receipt of the RDB1. How long is taken in revising the

RDB1 and in responding to comments will of course depend on the extent of the required revisions and the nature of the comments. We would suggest that this stage of the process will probably take a minimum of 2-3 months.

- 3.22 In order to carry out its review the Research Degrees Board receives:
- The revised version of the RDB1 form which incorporates all the changes made following review. These should be clearly highlighted in the RDB1.
 - The comments from the reviewers
 - The response of the student and DoS to the reviewers
 - The CVs of the supervisory team

The RDB Meeting

- 3.23 All students are normally required to attend the Research Degrees Board with their Director of Studies (or appropriate nominee) to present their proposal to the Board. The Board will not consider the proposal unless the student and their DoS are both present although exceptions will sometimes be made if, for example, the student is working overseas.
- 3.24 The student will be asked to give a short (4 minute) presentation to provide RDB with context for the research proposal to an audience of academics who do not necessarily have knowledge of the subject area (or even of the broader discipline) but who do have considerable experience of reading and assessing research degree proposals. The Board particularly want to learn about what interests the student in this research. The Board have the information about the proposal itself in front of them and so want to learn more about why the student is the best person to undertake this research and the skills that they bring to the project.
- 3.25 Following this short presentation, the Director of Studies (DoS) will be given the opportunity to briefly add any additional information and the Board will then ask the student questions about their research. If another member of the supervisory team is a member of the Board and present at the meeting then they will not be permitted to ask questions about the research as it is assumed that these questions will already have been asked in a supervisory context before the meeting. Following these discussions the student will be asked to leave the meeting. The DoS will remain to hear the recommendations of the Board. These fall into three categories:
- a.) No amendments, Board approves the proposal.
 - b.) Minor amendments need to be made to the proposal. A time frame for completion will be given to the student along with a list of the required changes and on receipt, these changes will be signed off by Chair's Action.
 - c.) More significant changes are still required to the proposal. The RS will write to the student and DoS with feedback from the

Board and will give a timescale in which they expect to receive the amended paperwork. If the student fails to submit the revised paperwork by the given deadline they will be contacted by the RS. The revised paperwork must be re-submitted to the RS for re-submission to the Board. The Board will specify whether they wish to see the student and the DoS again at a second meeting.

- 3.26 In the case of (c) above, a proposal can only be re-submitted to the Board a maximum of twice. Following re-submission, the review by RDB will normally result in one of the following recommendations:
- a) No further amendments, Board approves the proposal.
 - b) Minor amendments need to be made to the proposal. A time frame for completion will be given to the student along with a list of the required changes and on receipt, these changes will be signed off by Chair's Action.
 - c) No further opportunities for re-submission of the proposal. The student is withdrawn from their programme of study.
- 3.27 The RDB1 process, although potentially quite a lengthy one, is vital to ensure that the aims and objectives are realistic and worth pursuing, the methodology is appropriate and the proposed timescales manageable. At the end of this process the student should have in place a rigorous proposal which will act to guide him/her through the rest of the research degree – although the process of research of course means that some elements of the initial proposal *will* change. N.B. approval of the RDB1 does not constitute ethical approval which must be sought separately following the University of Worcester Ethics Policy.

Some guidance on completing the RDB1

- 3.28 Some of the information sought on the RDB1 form should be self-explanatory (e.g. Sections 1 and 2) but we offer here some brief guidance relating to sections of the form which may need some further explanation.

Section 3

- 3.29 Proposed Title of Thesis – this must be 20 words or less and should accurately reflect what the thesis is going to be about. The RS will make a record of this title and it will be displayed on the student's SOLE page.
- 3.30 Initial Degree Registration – where a student has been accepted to undertake an MPhil, their initial degree registration will naturally be 'MPhil'; where a student has been accepted to undertake a PhD a student will normally be initially registered on the MPhil/PhD route, which will require them to transfer to PhD at the midpoint of their research degree. A student may be registered for PhD direct (which

will not require the student to transfer) only where the student is switching to the University of Worcester from a research degree programme at another University at an advanced (i.e. post-transfer) stage.

- 3.31 Registration Date – this is the date when you started your research degree.
- 3.32 Maximum registration periods – the maximum times allowed for research degrees are set out below (i.e. the date by which the student must have submitted their thesis for examination). Note these can be reduced or extended in exceptional circumstances.

Category	Mode	Maximum
MPhil	Full-time	2 years
	Part-time	4 years
MPhil/PhD	Full-time	4 years
	Part-time	6 years

Students registering for PhD direct having moved to the University of Worcester from a research degree programme at another University at an advanced (i.e. post-transfer) stage are asked to please contact the RS to establish these dates.

- 3.33 Expected transfer date – this only needs to be completed if a student is registered for MPhil/PhD. This is no more than an estimate but should reflect the timescales set out in the RDB1 proposal itself. This will be around 12-15 months after approval of the Research Proposal by the Research Degrees Board for FT students and 18-24 months for PT students. Students will not be held to this date but it will act as a trigger for the RS to contact the student and DoS if the date goes by and the student has not applied to transfer.
- 3.34 Expected submission date – again this is no more than an estimate but should be in line with the timescales in the RDB1 proposal and must fall between the minimum and maximum completion dates. Students will not be held to this date but it will act as a trigger for the RS to contact the student and DoS if the date goes by and you have not submitted.

Section 4 – Research Proposal

- 3.35 This is the key section of the RDB1. The proposal must be the student's work guided by the DoS. Detailed advice and assistance in completing this section is provided for students through the Researcher Development Programme but there follows here some initial guidance.
- 3.36 The proposal must be preceded by a lay summary of 200 words. This should be written so that it can be understood by a non-specialist audience. It must therefore be generalised and avoid unnecessary

jargon and acronyms (known only in your research community) unless these terms are clearly defined.

- 3.37 The lay summary and proposal should be completed separately to the form and attached. The proposal should consist of:
- the proposal itself
 - a timescale for the research
 - a reference list
- 3.38 The proposal itself should not exceed 2500 words: that is approximately 7 sides of A4 in a 12pt font assuming sensible margins and single line spacing. Proposals that ignore this limit may simply be returned to the student for further editing.
- 3.39 The proposal **MUST** be organised under the following headings:
- Context for the research – this should provide the background for the research and is essentially a preliminary literature review that should outline the work that has been done in the research area in the past but perhaps most essentially the work that has not been done i.e. the gap(s) in the research; a student is not expected to be systematic here so should focus on the key works in their area.
 - The research question – this should outline what question or questions the research will be addressing; all researchers should have a question in mind that their research is trying to answer – although this question may change as the research progresses, students need to show here that they have a clear idea of where their research is going at the outset.
 - Aims and objectives – it may be that the overall aim is to answer the research question posed but it may be that the aim for the research degree is to answer only a part of this question or to lay the groundwork for answering this question; the objectives should be more specific and should feed into the overall aim.
 - The expected or planned original contribution to knowledge (for MPhil/PhD students only) – RDB want to see clear evidence that the work has the potential to progress to PhD. The way in which the research does or will contribute to new knowledge should therefore be clearly articulated.
 - Methodology/critical framework – this part of the proposal will differ considerably for students from different subject areas but for all this section is about demonstrating how the student will go about ‘doing’ their research:
 - Ethical considerations – in this section the student should identify, explain and discuss any potential ethical considerations within their proposed programme of research and how these will seek to be addressed. The University Ethics Policy should be used as a guide to identify any particular areas of ethical concerns, plus any discipline specific guidance that may be available.

- How the student will collect and/or select their data (i.e. methods) – whether the data is from experiments, whether it is from questionnaires, interviews or focus groups, whether it is from fieldwork diaries or whether it is a body of literary texts, historical documents or visual images.
 - How the student will analyse the data – for some this may be an account of statistical techniques or of analytical tools (such as content analysis) or it may be an account of the theoretical or critical framework(s) that will inform the analysis.
 - Ethical Considerations – any student whose study involves: human participants; human tissue, DNA or bodily fluids; human remains; data or records relating to humans, living or dead; human burial sites; or animals must complete an Application for Ethical Approval in line with the University's Ethics Policy. In instances where a project involves NHS patients, premises or staff, students will need to gain appropriate ethical approval from and NHS REC and/or Trust R&D departments. Ethical approval should normally happen after the RDB1 has been approved, although in some instances, particularly where external approvals are required or where periods of data-collection are time limited, it may be appropriate to seek ethical approval prior to approval of RDB1. This section of the proposal is an opportunity for the student to elaborate briefly on ethical issues with the project and to identify how these might be addressed; this should not be seen as an opportunity to set out a full ethical protocol. Students should consult the Ethics Policy and the Research Data Management policy before writing this section, as well as any subject-specific ethical guidance or code of practice.
- 3.40 The project plan should take the form of a Gantt chart or similar (clear guidance on this will be given as part of the Researcher Development Programme) and should outline when the key stages of the research will take place (e.g. literature review, ethical approval; data collection, data analysis, fieldwork, archival research) and when the key stages of the research degree process are scheduled (e.g. approval, transfer, submission). This timescale will be more detailed for projects where data is collected and analysed in clear, distinct phases or for those projects where data can only be collected at certain, specific times. The detail **MUST** reflect the nature of the project. It is recognised that the timescale is likely to change as the project progresses and that at this early stage there is a considerable amount of conjecture but it is imperative that the timescale is realistic and achievable.
- 3.41 The data management plan which will normally take the form of a table (clear guidance on this will be given as part of the Researcher Development Programme) should address the following key issues:
- What data is to be collected

- How it will be collected
- How it will be stored during the project and in what form(s)
- What will happen to the data at the end of the project, i.e. what will be retained, what will be disposed of
- How retained data will be stored and in what form
- How others may gain access to retained data

3.42 The reference list should only include work that has been referred to in the proposal. This is not an opportunity to produce an exhaustive bibliography. Students should ensure that referencing is complete, consistent and in an appropriate style for the discipline.

Section 5 – Collaborating establishment

3.43 This section relates only to formal collaborations whereby the collaborator is providing, for example, funding or access to equipment, archives or other data for which a letter, confirming provision is required.

Section 6 – Research Training

3.44 All students must engage in a Researcher Development Programme but there are two distinct pathways within the programme. Students will normally be allocated to one of the two pathways post-interview when receiving an offer of a place, although this decision may be revisited at the beginning of the programme. The decision is normally guided by the student's qualifications at entry. Students with a recent, relevant Masters (i.e. a Masters awarded in the last 7 years in an area cognate to the topic of the research degree) will be assigned to Pathway 2. Students without such a qualification will normally be assigned to Pathway 1. Account, however, may be taken of experiential learning in this decision. It may also be judged that a student with a recent, relevant Masters would benefit from entering Pathway 1. More information about the two pathways can be found in the Programme Specification (Appendix 3).

3.45 Where a student has failed (or provisionally failed) a module, the Research Degrees Board will normally delay approval of the student's proposal.

Section 7 – Supervisory Team

3.46 Full details of all the supervisory team must be provided here including information about the research supervisory experience of each member of the team, i.e. the number of successful research degree completions (for UK doctorates and UK MPhils) for each member and the number of students currently being supervised. This information must be complete and accurate since the Research Degrees Board will use it to ensure the team as a whole has the requisite experience.

- 3.47 Signed CVs must be provided for all the team and attached to the RDB1. Internal supervisors can submit their UW CV and do not need to complete the RDB12 CV.

Section 8 – Expert Reviewers

- 3.48 The RDB1 will be considered by two expert reviewers (please see 3.17-3.20 above).
- 3.49 The DoS should informally approach both expert reviewers in advance to ensure that they are happy to carry out this role if asked. It is worth pointing out that external experts are paid a small [fee](#) for their work.
- 3.50 At the appropriate stage in the process the RS will formally write to the internal and or external expert(s) sending them the RDB1 for comment. Some expert reviewers ask to see
- 3.51 the revised RDB1 and so, in these cases, the form will be sent back to the reviewers when the student and supervisor have responded to the comments to ensure they are satisfied with the changes made.
- 3.52 Identifying appropriate expert reviewers is not always an easy task, but it should be noted that experts used at the RDB1 stage CAN be used as examiners.

Temporary withdrawal (previously suspension of studies)

- 3.53 Any student who wishes to temporarily withdraw from their studies (previously known as suspension) must make their case in the RDB4a form. A request will normally only be approved if the student can provide evidence of having grounds for claims of exceptional mitigating circumstances. This claim will only be shared with the Supervisory Team, Chair and Secretary of RDB. What constitutes grounds for such a claim and the type of evidence that is required is listed in 'Procedures for Dealing with Claims of Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances' which can be found on your SOLE page and at: <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registrieservices/679.htm>. The final decision will be made by the Research Degrees Board in recognition that what constitutes reasonable grounds may sometimes vary between a taught postgraduate and research degree programme. All requests must be agreed by the supervisory team.
- 3.54 A request to temporarily withdraw can be made for no more than 12 consecutive months at any one time. Only one request will normally be permitted during a research degree programme. If, in exceptional circumstances a temporary withdrawal of more than 12 months is required, a second request must be made which once more must make the case. Although the Research Degrees Board will always be sympathetic to any such request, it must be stressed that questions as to whether a student can successfully return to their project after a

period longer than 12 months may be raised. Requests to temporarily withdraw that are received 6 months (or less) before the maximum completion date are not normally permitted.

- 3.55 The student will not pay fees for the period of the temporary withdrawal. The maximum completion dates will be amended to take the suspension period in to account.

Extension Requests

- 3.56 If a student and his/her DoS think it is likely that a student will be unable to submit by their maximum completion date, a request for an extension must be made using the form RDB4b. This cannot normally be done retrospectively and the Board will normally only approve one extension request.

- 3.57 Such requests are normally only granted if sufficient grounds can be demonstrated (see 3.54 above). It is possible that these circumstances arose much earlier on in the research degree, but that a request for an extension on these grounds is still valid (unless a suspension has already been previously awarded based on the same supporting evidence). Please note pressure of work will not normally be an acceptable reason for an extension.

- 3.58 All requests must be agreed by the supervisory team.

Withdrawals

- 3.59 Any student who wishes to withdraw from their research degree should take every opportunity to discuss this intent with their DoS, with the RS and with fellow students. It is not unusual to feel like giving up during a research degree: the sometimes solitary nature of a research degree can make students feel lost or helpless.

- 3.60 If, after discussion, a student still wishes to withdraw then they must complete an RDB5, which asks the student to give reasons for their decision. The Research Degrees Board wishes to be notified of all withdrawals so students are asked to complete the RDB5 even if they have not had their RDB1 'Research Proposal' approved.

- 3.61 The tuition fee for students who withdraw part way through an academic year will be calculated on a pro rata basis (based on the 12 month academic year). Students may therefore be required to make up the balance owed for their time registered (if, for example, they have chosen to pay their fee in instalments) or, if they have paid their annual tuition fee up front, will be eligible for a refund for the remaining months, based on the date of withdrawal.

- 3.62 Following withdrawal, a supervisory team may be asked to undertake a supervisory team de-brief. This provides an opportunity for the

individuals involved in the supervision process to learn, develop and come to terms with situations where a student departs before completing their research. It is particularly useful where the student has completed a substantial part of the research ($\geq 40\%$) before leaving. Early departure debriefing enables those involved to discuss their experiences using a structured format and seeks to establish why a student departed early and enable both individual and organisational level learning. Feedback on supervision provided by the student may be drawn upon during the de-briefing process.

Supervisory Changes

- 3.63 Once the supervisory team has been deemed appropriate through the approval of the RDB1, any changes to this team must be approved by the Research Degrees Board. This requires the completion of an RDB6. Reasons for the change must be detailed in the form. Please note the requirement that every supervisor who is being added or replaced must sign the form.
- 3.64 It goes without saying that all changes should be discussed at length by the student and supervisors and it should be ensured that the student is happy with the proposed changes. Where a change is necessitated by, for example, the DoS leaving the University of Worcester, it should be recognised that it may not always be possible to provide a suitable replacement. While every effort will be made to identify an appropriate and satisfactory (to the student) supervisory team, this may not always be possible.

Monitoring

- 3.65 A student's progress is monitored throughout the research degree process:
- By the DoS through regular meetings with the student of which a record should be kept.
 - Through formal annual monitoring which requires the completion of an RDB7 form and an interview with an independent member of staff.
 - By the RS which tracks the progress of all research students through the RDB process and contacts student and/or DoS as appropriate if this progress does not match stated requirements and/or expectations.
 - Through a report to each meeting of the Research Degrees Board which presents information on the progress of each research student.

Records of Meetings

- 3.66 Students and supervisors are strongly advised to make formal records of all their meetings. The way in which these records are kept can be

decided upon between the student and their supervisory team but the RS suggests a number of possible methods which are set out on the RDP Blackboard pages:

Annual Monitoring (RDB7)

- 3.67 Once a year, all students registered on a research degree programme at the UoW are required to complete an annual monitoring report (RDB7) and to have an annual review interview with an independent member of academic staff. The purpose of the Annual Monitoring Process is three fold. It allows the student and supervisor to reflect on the previous year, it allows the student and supervisor to plan for the coming year and the interview allows the student to reflect more holistically on their student experience with a member of staff from outside the supervisory team.
- 3.68 For students commencing their studies in academic year 2012/13 onwards the timing of annual monitoring will depend on the student's initial start date. Students commencing their studies in September will therefore be required to complete the RDB7 in each subsequent September and students commencing their studies in February will be required to do so in each subsequent February.
- 3.69 The RDB7 asks the student and their DoS to discuss progress made in the last 12 months, asks for details about the supervisory arrangements and asks the student to reflect on training they have undertaken during the year and other activities they have engaged in for the university, outside of their research degree programme. When the student has completed sections 1-4 of the RDB7 we suggest that they arrange to meet their DoS to discuss this. During or following this meeting, the DoS can complete their section of the form where they are asked to reflect on the progress their student has made etc based on the information they have provided. If a meeting is impractical, then this can be done electronically. When sections 1-5 are completed, the DoS and student are asked to sign the form and forward this paperwork to the Research Degrees Co-ordinator.
- 3.70 As the completed RDB7 will form the basis for the annual interview, the RS will send out electronic copies of the paperwork, for completion, to students and supervisors in July (for September review) and at the end of November (for February review).
- 3.71 All interviews are expected to take place between the end of July and the end of October each year for students who commenced their studies in September or prior to Academic Year 2012/13. From Academic year 2012/13 onwards, all students commencing their studies in February (Semester 2) will be expected to have an annual interview between the beginning of November and the end of February. Interviews will be arranged by the Research Degrees Co-ordinator who

will contact students by email to arrange a date. Interviews will go ahead irrespective of whether the RDB7 has been received before hand.

- 3.72 It is the responsibility of the Research Degrees Co-ordinator to allocate every research degree student in their Institute with an appropriate interviewer. This must normally be a member of staff who is not on the student's supervisory team, is independent of the student and who has some experience of research degree supervision. The interviewer must make contact with the student to explain the process and to arrange an appropriate interview date. It is important that the student's DoS and the RS are also made aware that the interview will be taking place and with whom. It is expected that the interview will normally take place in a private office and if this is not possible, that an appropriate room will be booked.
- 3.73 It is the student's responsibility to provide the interviewer with a copy of the completed RDB7 at least 1 week before their interview. The Research School only want to receive a copy of the form when this has been fully completed, after interview. This will be held on the student file. If any significant areas of concern are highlighted in the RDB7, it may be necessary to involve the DoS in all or some of the meeting. A judgement on this must be made following discussion at Institute level.
- 3.74 Following the meeting, section 6 of the RDB7 must be completed by the interviewer. If areas of concern have been highlighted, the report needs to summarise these.
- 3.75 All completed RDB7s must be passed back to the Research Degrees Co-ordinator who will forward these on to the RS. Prior to doing so, the Research Degrees Co-ordinator will take forward any points of action. A summary of all interviews that have taken place within an Institute will be received at the December meeting of RDB (for the Semester 1 starters) and at the March meeting of RDB (for the Semester 2 starters) including any action points for the Board.
- 3.76 If annual meetings have failed to take place by the December or March meeting of RDB (as appropriate), the Board will make a decision on how best to proceed. This may involve a discussion with the Research Degrees Co-ordinator or HoI in the first instance. If however the interviewer has attempted to arrange an interview but the student has not responded or attended, RDB will write to the student asking for the interview to take place within a given period. Failure to do so may result in a review of the student's status on their programme.

Transfer to PhD (RDB2)

- 3.77 Transfer from MPhil to PhD should only be contemplated when enough progress has been made to provide evidence of the development of the project and the student towards a PhD. This will be around 12-15

months after approval of the Research Proposal by the Research Degrees Board for FT students and 18-24 months for PT students.

- 3.78 The transfer process requires the student to submit a substantial piece of written work, normally a chapter of the thesis, and to give a presentation to and undergo an 'interview' with an upgrade panel consisting of all members of the supervisory team (normally including external supervisors) and a researcher with experience in the field who is independent of the team (internal expert). Where an appropriate member of staff cannot be identified internally, it will be necessary to make a case to the relevant Head of Institute to call upon the expertise of a colleague external to the University (normally one of the External Experts used during the Approval of the Research Proposal RDB1). If this decision is supported by the Head of Institute, it is important to inform the Research School who will be responsible for organising the interview on the student's behalf. The cost of using an external expert in this process will be met by the Institute.
- 3.79 As stated above, transfer should only take place when the student and his/her team feel that the work has now reached or is about to reach the appropriate level. This will mean that the supervisory team is fully supportive of the student's case for transfer to PhD. On very rare occasions it is possible for a student to decide to go through the transfer process without the backing of their supervisory team. This is not advisable and in these circumstances the team will not sign off the RDB2 form.
- 3.80 The format and content of the written work will vary across disciplines and it is therefore imperative that students discuss this with the Supervisory Team. It should be stressed that students are not being asked to write a separate transfer document but to use something they have already written. This is not to say that some students don't still adopt the 'writing up' approach in their final year, but in these cases written work *will* then need to be produced explicitly for Transfer.
- 3.81 As a guideline, it is normally expected that the written work will involve 1-2 chapters of the thesis of around 10,000 words. Ideally the written work should introduce the research, set the context and include a discussion around the methodology or data collection and initial analysis. The submission of a literature review which is something most students will be expected to do in the first 6-12 months of their programme will not normally be permitted.
- 3.82 The Upgrade Interview will be chaired by an experienced researcher and supervisor. This person will act as an Independent Chair, whose role will be primarily to ensure that the interview is conducted according to the regulations and to keep an eye on the student's welfare. It is expected that the Chair will be involved in the final decision of the Panel about the transfer to PhD. At the interview, the student must give a presentation of

up to 30 minutes (see 3.86-88 below) and take questions from the panel for up to 1 hour.

- 3.83 The Supervisory Team are present at the Upgrade Interview primarily to support the student and to listen to the discussion and then any feedback given by the panel at the end of the process. It is hoped that this will make post transfer discussions between the student and their supervisor more effective. It is expected that any fundamental questions about the research will normally have already been addressed at supervisory meetings and that in the context of the upgrade interview, supervisors will therefore normally only ask questions in order to draw out information from the student which may not have otherwise been made explicit. On an occasion where it is necessary for the supervisor to ask more critical questions, we strongly advise the student and supervisor to discuss this approach prior to the interview.
- 3.84 It is hoped that this process will be of benefit to students, as it offers an opportunity for students to undergo an experience similar to the viva but also offers an opportunity for the whole supervisory team to hear the student present their research in a formal context.
- 3.85 The purpose of the Upgrade Interview is to show that the student:
- understands their research problem
 - is aware of the related literature
 - has demonstrated the capacity to conduct research including the use of appropriate methodology
 - has made satisfactory progress in their research to date and has a realistic research plan and schedule for completion of their research
 - has demonstrated that their work has the potential to make an original contribution to knowledge.
- 3.86 It is unlikely that this can be demonstrated through the written work alone and so the presentation should build on this and discuss the work that still needs to be done. The presentation SHOULD NOT simply duplicate what has already been presented in written form.
- 3.87 The written work submitted should be of the required standard for the discipline in terms of presentation, literary style, referencing, etc, as well as in terms of its content.
- 3.88 In order to set the process in motion, students must submit an RDB2 with sections 1 to 4 completed and sufficient copies of the piece of written work for each member of the interview panel (i.e. the number in your supervisory team plus one).
- 3.89 It is the responsibility of the team (primarily the DoS) to find an appropriate Internal Expert to sit on the Upgrade Panel. Please provide the name of this person when the transfer paperwork is submitted to the RS along with the preferred date for interview (as it is likely that the

whole team will meet with the student prior to upgrade we would suggest that the student and team agree some suitable dates at this point which are finalised on speaking to the Internal Expert). When choosing a date please allow enough time for organisation of the interview and reading of the work. We would suggest at least 4 weeks is allowed for this.

- 3.90 The RS will appoint the Chair for the Interview. The RS will also organise a time and place for the Interview, normally within 4 weeks of the submission of the RDB2.

Outcome of the upgrade interview

- 3.91 Following the Interview the Panel will complete section 5-7 of the RDB2 (which includes a written report, to be collated by the Chair) identifying the outcome of the interview and their recommendation to the Research Degrees Board as follows:

- Recommend transfer to PhD.
- Recommend transfer to PhD subject to a satisfactory response to the comments of the Panel.
- Recommend the student not be upgraded to PhD at this time but re-submit for transfer at a later date, taking account of the Panel's comments. It is expected that when the student re-submits for transfer they will undergo the same process, as discussed above, but with a new Chair. The student will be expected to include a discussion in their presentation around the original comments of the Panel and how these have been addressed. This option is only available if the Panel feel this work is achievable within the student's remaining registration period.
- Recommend the student not be upgraded to PhD and submit for an MPhil taking into account the Panel's comments.
- Recommend the student be withdrawn from their programme of study. Withdrawal might be recommended on academic grounds or because there is insufficient time within the student's 'maximum registration period' to complete the work required for either MPhil or PhD.

- 3.92 Where the Panel requires the student to respond to comments, the response should be sent to the RS. This response should address how the student will meet any issues highlighted by the Panel and any planned changes to be made to the project in light of the comments. The Independent Expert will review these comments and make a final recommendation to the Research Degrees Board. At this stage this may be for Transfer to PhD or for the student to submit for transfer at a later date. This recommendation must be approved by the Research Degrees Board.

- 3.93 Where the Interview Panel cannot reach an agreement, it should submit a report, outlining the disagreements. This should be collated by the Chair. At this point the views of an external expert may be sought.

- 3.94 Following the interview, the RDB2 paperwork, associated written report from the Panel and, where applicable, written response from the student must be forwarded to the RS for consideration at the next meeting of the Research Degrees Board.

Examination (RDB3)

- 3.95 Students approaching the final stages of his/her research degree will need to submit an examination arrangements form (RDB3) to the Research School accompanied by CVs for each of the proposed examiners.

- 3.96 It is up to the DoS:

- to put together the proposed examination team (please note that External Examiners are paid a [fee](#) plus expenses.
- to get each member of the proposed team to supply a copy of their CV
- to acquire their signatures in Section 7 of the RDB3 form which confirms that they are willing to undertake the task and that they are independent of the project (and in the case of External Examiners, of the University). The form cannot be considered without these signatures

The student should have no contact with the examiners.

- 3.97 In identifying the examination team please remember the following:

The team must normally consist of at least one internal and at least one external examiner; unless the student is a member of academic staff at Worcester in which case two external examiners are required. Two external examiners must also be appointed if the student is a member of honorary academic staff, is employed by the Institute as an HPL or is a member of support staff and employed by the Academic Support Unit for the Institute in which they are to be examined. In the case of students previously employed as an HPL, then two external examiners will be required if the appointment has been made in the academic year prior to the one in which the *viva voce* is to be held.

- Any person appointed as External Examiner must not have been employed by the University during the previous three years.
- The team should not normally consist of more than three examiners.
- Each examiner must be experienced in research in the general subject area of a particular candidate's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.
- The collective experience of the examining team for MPhil students should include a minimum of three MPhil or Doctorate students examined, in the UK. For the assessment of a student for a Doctorate, the examination team should include three Doctorate students examined, in the UK. The external examiner

is normally expected to have examined at least one MPhil student (for examination of MPhil) and one doctorate student (for examination of PhD/Professional Doctorate). The external examiner is also normally expected to have a track record of research degree supervision which they will be asked to demonstrate in the CV supplied to the Research Degrees Board. Examination teams will be approved according to their examination and supervisory experience. An examiner for a Doctorate does therefore not necessarily have to have a doctoral level qualification, although this is desirable.

- Each examiner must not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser or been a member of the Transfer to PhD Panel.

3.98 Completing the RDB3 form should be fairly straightforward but please note the following:

- The title on the RDB3 is essentially the final title of the thesis.
 - It should be the same or fairly close to the title in the RDB1 and RDB2
 - If there have been substantial changes to the title, the student may be asked to justify and explain these changes.
 - The title on the RDB3 must match exactly the title of the subsequently submitted thesis. Any change to the title must have been approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- The estimated submission date is not written in stone but as a guide it **MUST** be before the maximum completion date and should normally be about three months after the date of the Research Degrees Board to which the RDB3 is to be submitted. In an attempt to reduce the time between submission and examination, the RS will use the expected submission date to agree a provisional viva date. When the RDB3 has been approved, the Research Degrees Administrator will contact the student and examiners to agree this provisional date.
- Students are similarly not bound by the estimated examination date but this should normally be about two months after the estimated submission date.

3.99 The RDB3 and CVs are submitted to Research Degrees Board. Assuming it is satisfied that the team has the appropriate expertise and experience and that it satisfies other aspects of the regulations (see below), the Board will, if in agreement, approve the arrangements and will also appoint an Independent Chair for the *viva*.

3.100 The process of approval can be completed in an absolute minimum of 6 weeks, but students and supervisors are normally advised to submit the RDB3 three months before the student plans to hand in their completed thesis.

- 3.101 It is recognised that even the most meticulous plans can go awry and that a student may end up submitting their thesis somewhat later than intended. If twelve months have passed since the approval of the exam arrangements and the student has still not submitted, it will be necessary for the RS to approach the examiners again to ensure that they are still happy to act as such and that they remain independent.
- 3.102 A student who goes beyond the maximum completion date between having their exam arrangements approved and submitting their thesis, must apply for an extension of their registration period. The 'clock' does not stop ticking until the thesis is actually submitted.

Submitting the thesis

- 3.103 Once the examination arrangements have been formally approved by the Research Degrees Board the student can submit their completed thesis to the Research School. Information about the expected format of the thesis can be found in [Appendix 1](#). Once submitted, the student will not be required to pay fees. However if the student is awarded major amendments by the examiners, fees will resume at the 'amendments' rate until the final amended thesis is submitted to the RS.
- 3.104 Although the University would not recommend that a student submit for examination against the advice of the supervisors, the submission for examination is at the sole discretion of the student. When a student submits for examination against the advice of the whole supervisory team then the examination team and independent chair will be informed of this. The team will also be given the opportunity to write a short report, outlining their reasons for not supporting the submission which will be held on the student's file.
- 3.105 Before submitting the thesis, there are a few things that the student and supervisor must think about.

Copyright

Reproduction of published work

- 3.106 Research degree students are actively encouraged to publish their research during their programme of study. To cover against charges of 'self plagiarism' the student must however acknowledge which parts of the work have been published previously and where. If an article has multiple authors then the student must also add a clear statement about which part of the work is theirs.
- 3.107 If a student *is* going to use text, diagrams, figure, etc. from a published paper in the thesis then it is also important that they look at the copyright agreement signed with the publishers in advance of publication (most have a standard form that the student and any other co-authors will sign). This will specify the rights the author has to reuse

this material in other contexts and whether explicit permission must be sought. Many publishers will automatically allow the author to reuse the article or an adapted version of it (in full or in part) in a thesis subject to normal acknowledgment, i.e. permission will not be required as long as the student references the published article. If in doubt it is worth just clarifying the situation with the publisher at the time of publication.

- 3.108 It is extremely important that research students think carefully about the copyright implications of making their thesis available on the web, as required by the University. All research degree students are advised to read a separate document 'Keeping Your Thesis Legal' which can be found on the RDP Blackboard pages. This focuses primarily on digital theses (**eTheses**) rather than traditional printed versions and there is some coverage of the copyright law differences between the two different formats.

Turnitin

- 3.109 In order prevent plagiarism of any kind, the University subscribes to plagiarism detection software called Turnitin. Before submitting the thesis to the Research School (RS) for examination, research degree students are asked to put an electronic copy of their thesis through Turnitin (this can be done any number of times). For more information about how to use Turnitin please click [here](#).

- 3.110 Turnitin is a comprehensive cloud-based solution that will check the thesis for potential plagiarism using pattern recognition algorithms. An Originality Report is generated which will help students to ensure that material is correctly referenced etc before it is submitted for examination. It is the responsibility of the student to respond to the originality report and make any changes to thesis as appropriate. The revised thesis can then be put back through Turnitin and a new originality report will be generated. The final originality report must be submitted to the RS with the thesis that is to be submitted for examination. The report will be sent with the thesis to the examination team.

- 3.111 The RS will provide the Class ID number and password for the Research School submission area. If you already have access to the Turnitin system, please do not submit your thesis to any other submission area.

- 3.112 The thesis must include:

- i) an abstract of around 400 words bound into each copy which provides a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject;
- ii) a statement of the student's objectives;
- iii) a substantive critical review of the appropriate literature and relevant practice;

- iv) a critical methodology appropriate to the subject
- v) a comprehensive discussion of the research findings
- vi) a critical evaluation of the findings in light of the literature and methodology;
- vii) an acknowledgement of published and other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and of any assistance received;
- viii) where the research was undertaken as part of a collaborative group, a clear statement of the student's individual contribution and of the extent of the collaboration;
- ix) if applicable, the student must state which part of the submission has been submitted for another academic award, name the award concerned, and give the outcome of that submission plus date of any conferment.

3.113 There are certain requirements for the formatting of the text and the look the thesis (see [Appendix 1](#)):

3.114 Students must submit 1 **soft-bound** copy for each of the examiners. Students are also advised to have a bound copy for themselves at this stage and for their DoS and other members of the supervisory team. Please do not print these until the team have confirmed what is required. It is the student's responsibility to get the thesis bound at this stage.

3.115 It is also the student's responsibility to ensure that the thesis has been correctly printed and copied. It is not the responsibility of the RS to check, for example, that there are no pages missing or that the print is consistently legible.

3.116 The student must also submit at this time an RDB10 signed by the student and by the DoS which declares that the thesis is the student's own work and that it has not been submitted in part or whole for any other award.

3.117 Once received the copies of the bound thesis will be sent to the examiners.

3.118 The purpose of the written thesis is to:

- Provide a critical review of existing literature and practice relevant to the project
- Contextualise the practical component within the existing area of theory and practice
- Establish a clear research question
- Demonstrate an appropriate methodology
- Critically evaluate the research findings

Academic misdemeanour

- 3.119 A research degree student is subject to the same regulations as other students of the University in the eventuality of any cheating or plagiarism in the preparation of the thesis or other academic misdemeanour in connection with an assessment or examination <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/Proceduresforinvestigationofallegedcheating.pdf>
- 3.120 Any entitlement to an award may be set aside by an Examination Investigatory Panel following a case of cheating; the Panel may also award a lower award to a candidate in such circumstances, and may fail a student who has otherwise passed the course concerned. A student penalised for cheating shall not normally have the right to be assessed or reassessed to improve their award.

Before the Viva

- 3.121 At this stage the RS will liaise with the student, the supervisory team, the Independent Chair and the examiners to organise a date for the *viva* that is suitable for all parties. Neither the student nor the supervisory team should have any contact with the examiners.
- 3.122 As an absolute minimum we give the examiners 6 weeks to read the thesis. Normally the *viva* will take place 2-3 months after the thesis is submitted. Please note, however, that in arranging the date for the *viva* we are not in a position to insist on dates to the examiners.
- 3.123 The RS writes to all parties with the agreed date and timings for the *viva*.
- 3.124 At least one week prior to the *viva* the examiners must submit their preliminary reports (RDB8a) to the RS.
- 3.125 The examiners must complete these forms independently. When all reports have been received, the RS will share these with the examination team. A copy is automatically sent to the Independent Chair.
- 3.126 Under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 the student may see a copy of these reports after the *viva*. Requests should be made formally to the Registrar within 40 days on the request form available in the University Student Handbook. There is an associated fee.

The Viva

- 3.127 The *viva* normally takes place at the University of Worcester and normally lasts about two hours. Those automatically present at the

viva will comprise the candidate, the Independent Chair and the appointed examiners.

- 3.128 The Independent Chair is there to ensure that the examination is conducted in an orderly fashion and to keep an eye on the welfare of the candidate.
- 3.129 The RS strongly recommend that the student gives permission for one of their supervisors to attend the viva. This is to ensure that if amendments are required, these are fully understood by both the student and the supervisory team. If the student does not wish their supervisor to be present during the viva or if the supervisor declines the invitation, they can be invited to attend at the end of the viva to hear the recommendations of the examiners. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the supervisor is notified of this decision well in advance so that they can ensure that they are available at this date and time. When the student is asked to leave the room while the examiner's make their final decision, it is the student's responsibility to contact their supervisor who will then join the student to hear the recommendations of the examiners.
- 3.130 When a second viva is required after the student has completed major amendments then, if not present at the viva, the Director of Studies or internal supervisor must be present to hear the final decision of the examiners. It is the student's responsibility to contact their supervisor who will then join the student to hear the recommendations of the examiners.
- 3.131 No one else is permitted to attend the *viva* without prior permission being granted in writing by the student.
- 3.132 The student is expected to defend their thesis in English, and respond to the rigorous questioning of the examiners. It is very good practice for the student to take a marked up copy of the thesis with them into the viva. Students will have been given training relating to the *viva* through the Researcher Development Programme. It is also useful for the supervisory team to set up a mock *viva* in advance of the real thing. Remember: no-one knows your thesis as well as you do; you're the expert in this context. Many people leave a *viva* and comment on how much they enjoyed really getting to grips with their work.

The outcome of the Viva

- 3.133 At the conclusion of the *viva* the student and any supervisors present will be asked to leave the room so that the examiners can discuss their decision. Please do not assume that the examiners will give any indication of what this decision might be during the *viva*. It is not unheard of for the examiners to make it clear to the candidate at the beginning of the *viva* that, assuming the student demonstrates the thesis is his/her own work, it will pass with limited changes. This is not, however, the norm. Most examiners will not give any real idea of what

their decision might be: which may be because they have not yet decided but which may also be because that is their approach.

- 3.134 Once the examiners have reached their decision, the Chair will call the student back into the room to reveal the outcome. The amount of time the examiners spend discussing the outcome has no necessary correlation to what that outcome might be.
- 3.135 The examiners are required to recommend one of the following outcomes:
- a) The candidate be granted the degree.
 - b) The candidate be granted the degree subject to minor amendments and corrections being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal examiner(s) and/or external examiner(s). The candidate should be advised that these amendments must be completed and submitted according to a timeframe which will be decided by the examiners but shall not exceed 6 months.
 - c) The candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree (often referred to as 'major amends') within 12 months and be re-examined as follows:
 - i) the thesis must be revised and if deemed satisfactory by the examiners, the candidate will be exempt from further examination, oral or otherwise.
 - ii) the thesis must be revised and the candidate must undergo a further oral or alternative examination.
 - iii) the thesis is satisfactory, but the candidate must undergo a further oral or alternative examination.
 - iv) the thesis is satisfactory, but the candidate must undergo a further examination.
 - d) The candidate not be granted the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined.
 - e) In the case of a PhD student, the examiners have the option to grant the candidate the degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners the timeframe of which will be decided by the examiners but shall not exceed 12 months; .
 - f) In the case of an MPhil student, the candidate be awarded the degree of PhD subject to presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners.

Amendments

- 3.136 Where major or minor amendments are required, the RS will formally write to the student and their DoS with a list of corrections, requirements, timescale etc as provided by the examiners. This list of amendments is final. Examiners cannot ask for further changes to be made on receipt of the revised thesis. The letter will also make clear whether just one or more of the examination team will wish to see the amended thesis. It is often the case that it is agreed after the *viva* that

the amendments will be checked by just the internal examiner. Students will normally receive this letter within a week of the *viva*.

- 3.137 On receipt of the examiners' report, the student and Director of Studies will be given two weeks in which they can query or seek clarification about any of the amendments listed. A query must be made by the Director of Studies through the Research School, who will contact the examiner(s) on their behalf. No further contact between student/supervisor and examiner is permitted after this time.
- 3.138 Minor amendments are awarded when only very minor corrections are required to the thesis, such as typos, changes to formatting etc. In most cases, minor corrections can be completed within a few weeks, but students are given up to 6 months to complete and submit their amended thesis to the RS.
- 3.139 Major amendments are awarded when the examiners agree that more substantial work is required to the thesis. A student who is given major amendments will be given 12 months to complete the corrections and during this time, fees will resume at $\frac{1}{4}$ of the current full time or part time tuition fee rate. Major amendments may involve, for example, some re-structuring of the thesis, the inclusion of more material etc. Major amendments should not be regarded as a fail but as a way of ensuring that the thesis is absolutely right before being released into the intellectual community.
- 3.140 On receipt of the report, the student and Director of Studies will be given two weeks in which they can query or seek clarification about any of the amendments listed. A query must be made by the Director of Studies through the Research School, who will contact the examiner(s) on their behalf. No further contact between student/supervisor and examiner is permitted after this time
- 3.141 The student will be asked to submit soft bound copies of the amended thesis to the RS, one for each examiner who has requested to see the amended version. It is helpful to the examiners to provide a letter indicating exactly how the student has responded to the examiner(s) comments.
- 3.142 Where oral or alternative re-examination is required the RS will organise this.
- 3.143 We expect the student to share drafts of the amended thesis with the supervisory team before it is resubmitted to the RS. The RS will forward the amended thesis to the examiner(s). The examiner(s) are asked to notify the RS in writing if the amended thesis meets their requirements as set out in the Examiners' Final Report 'RDB9' and to recommend or not the candidate for the award.

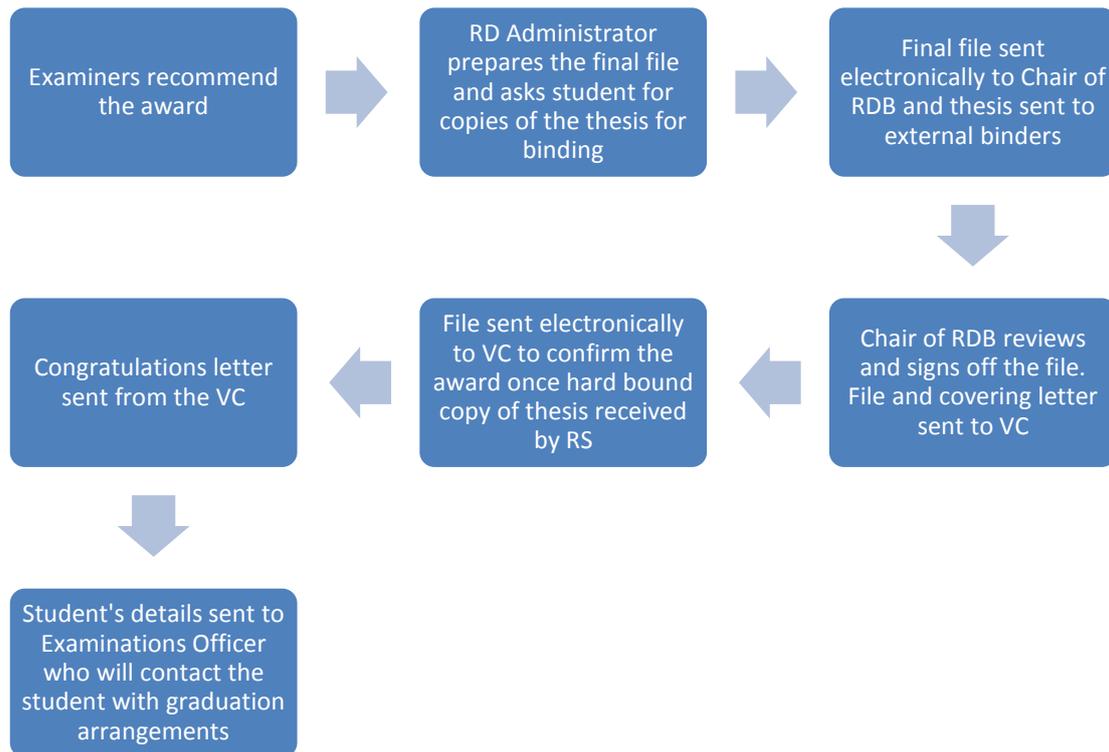
- 3.144 If the examiner(s) are not satisfied that the amendments meet their requirements the student does not have the right to re-submit for a second time.
- 3.145 If the examiner(s) are satisfied the RS will contact the student and the DoS with the decision.
- 3.146 The formal regulations for reassessment of an MPhil or Doctoral thesis can be found in the [Research Degree Regulatory Framework](#).

Presentation of the final amended thesis

- 3.147 Before the research degree can be formally awarded, the student must submit the final amended versions of their thesis. The rules relating to the format of the final amended thesis are set out in [Appendix 1](#).
- 3.148 The RS requires:
- One hard-bound copy (to be kept in the library) accompanied by a copyright declaration (obtained from the RS)
 - One CD-ROM or USB memory stick with a copy of your thesis in PDF Format. The thesis MUST be saved as one PDF document and not chapter by chapter.
- 3.149 University of Worcester research students are required by the University's regulations to provide a licensed digital copy of their completed, accepted thesis into the Worcester Research Repository (WRAP), and to the British Library to be made available via the EThOS system. In addition a bound paper copy is required for the University Library, the HIVE. The memory stick must therefore be submitted alongside the Deposit Agreement which the RS will send to you when you are ready to submit. The thesis can only be uploaded if it is saved as one PDF document. If there are issues of confidentiality or intellectual property relating to another party please contact the RS Manager.
- 3.150 For more information on the Copyright implications of making your thesis available on the web, please refer to the document 'Keeping your Thesis Legal' which can be found on the RDP Blackboard pages.

What happens after the examiners have agreed the award

- 3.151 The flow diagram below shows what happens after the examiners have written to the RS to say they are happy with the amendments and therefore recommend the award:



3.152 It is Academic Board's role to ensure that the process has been completed satisfactorily at each stage. If it is satisfied that this is the case, the award is approved and a letter confirming this is sent to the candidate.

Graduation is normally in October. Candidates wishing to graduate within a given year must have submitted their final amended thesis by August 30th in that same year.

Section 4: The Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors

- 4.1 Formal regulations governing the registration and examination of research students are published annually in the Research Degree Regulatory Framework and the University of Worcester Student Handbook. Students and their supervisors should acquaint themselves with these regulations.
- 4.2 All successful applicants are provided with an individual letter of acceptance. The letter constitutes a contract between the student and the University and sets out the terms of the offer. Students with special needs are referred to the University's student support services. The terms of the letter are binding on the institution and, upon acceptance, on the student.
- 4.3 Every year, all students are required to complete a UoW registration form. On signing this form, the student is entering into a binding agreement with the University.

Supervision

- 4.4 Supervisors are normally assigned to students at the time an offer of admission is made, although external supervisors are usually added to the team at a later date.

4.5 Every Research Degree student will normally expect the following:

- A supervisory team consisting of at least two supervisors, at least one of whom will be a member of staff at the University of Worcester and normally, at least one of whom will be external to the University of Worcester (hereafter the 'external supervisor'). The lead internal supervisor is called the Director of Studies (hereafter the 'DoS').
- A supervisory team with appropriate experience in the subject area and of research supervision, with the team as a whole having a minimum of 3 research degree completions at the appropriate level.
- Contact with the DoS (and/or any other internal supervisor) amounting to a minimum of **20** hours per year (or equivalent) for part time students and **30** hours per year (or equivalent) for full time students. This contact may be in the form of face to face meetings, e-mail or telephone correspondence but this and the frequency of contact should be agreed at an early stage of the research degree.
- Formal supervisory meetings (preferably with the full internal supervisory team) 3 times a year for part time students and 6 times a year for full time students.
- A meeting with the whole supervisory team (including external supervisors) **once** per year for part time students and **at least once** and normally twice a year for full time students to formally review the student's progress and plan the next stage or phase of the programme.
- A response within 10 working days to any e-mail communication, documentation and other work submitted by the student to the Director of Studies.
- The appointment of an alternative acting Director of Studies, where a Director of Studies is ill or absent continuously from the University for more than 8 working weeks.
- Where possible, the appointment of an alternative Director of Studies if the existing Director of Studies leaves the Institution. Every effort will be made to find a suitable replacement, but if one cannot be found, it may then be necessary to terminate the research degree (see also Section 2.7-2.12 above).
- Following the viva examination, if the student is given minor amendments and corrections (no further tuition fee applied), verbal advice from the supervisory team about the corrections given and one reading of the final amendments for submission.
- Following the viva examination, if the student is given major amendments and corrections (during which fees will resume at the amendments rate), 1-2 initial supervisory team meetings to evaluate the work to be done followed by a monthly/bi monthly (once every 2 months) meeting (whether in person or over the

phone, SKYPE etc) to monitor and steer progress. As the submission date approaches, reading of the amended thesis and feedback.

4.6 Obligations of the student

It is expected that Research Students will:

- be research active; agree research activity with their Director of Studies (DoS).
- undertake at least **37.5** hours study per week over the year (FT students only).
- study flexibly and efficiently. This pattern of study may be varied with the prior agreement of the DoS.
- submit work to their DoS for evaluative comment as the research proceeds.
- respond to any suggestions regarding the development of work submitted.
- maintain regular contact with all supervisors, including external supervisors to ensure that the fullest advice on the research project is maintained.
- Write up all formal supervisory team meetings and provide a copy of this report for the RS to be held on the student file.
- provide the DoS with a formal progress report once a year (RDB7) which will be completed by the DoS and sent to the Research School.

4.7 Obligations of the Director of Studies and supervisors

The Director of Studies should have knowledge of a student's subject area and theoretical approach.

It is expected that the Directors of Studies and Supervisors will:

- meet regularly with their student and approve the formal record of supervisory team meetings, written up by the student after each meeting, before passing this to the RS to be held on the student's file.
- agree research activity with their research student(s).
- make evaluative comments on work as the research proceeds.
- suggest development of the work submitted.
- initiate and develop contact with other supervisors to ensure that the fullest advice on the research project is maintained.
- ensure that the research student maintains an ongoing record of their research progress (to include material 'written-up' in semi-finished form).
- maintain a good professional relationship with the student.
- provide the RS Manager with a formal progress report once a year (RDB7) and evaluation forms related to the students personal development planning were appropriate.
- ensure that appropriate administrative arrangements are made for changes in the student's circumstances (such as approval of the research proposal, transfer, examination arrangements, suspension, extension, withdrawal etc.).

- liaise as appropriate with the Manager of the RS about the general progress of the student.
- take the initiative in updating their skills relevant to supporting and guiding research students, such as through the supervisor training workshops offered by the RS and external workshops publicised by the School.

Researcher Development

4.8 A Research Degree student should normally expect:

- A programme of workshops, modules and events to develop their underpinning research and subject skills.
- Access to individual careers advice, workshops or events to help prepare for future employment or the development of the next stage in their research career.

4.9 Obligations of the student

It is expected that Research Students will:

- record and reflect ongoing training and development needs across the research degrees programme using the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and associated RDF Planner
- undertake the appropriate pathway of the Researcher Development Programme.

4.10 Obligations of the Director of Studies and supervisors

It is expected that the Directors of Studies and Supervisors will:

- explore at the outset, the student's academic background in order to identify any areas in which further training and development needs (including language training) are required.
- encourage and support the student to engage with researcher development at all stages of their research degree programme.

The Research

4.11 The University recognises that the research project undertaken is the student's work guided by the DoS and other supervisors. It is an expectation that the student will have considerable self-reliance and that he/she will be able to think through research problems. It is unrealistic that a student will make contact with their DoS every time they are unsure of a matter of fact or research strategy, although guidance on such matters will be given at regular meetings with Directors of Study and Supervisors.

4.12 Obligations of the student

It is expected that Research Students will:

- in due course, publish material relating to the research being undertaken, where this is practicable. Reference to any such published material must be made in the thesis. Moreover, a

copy of any published material must either be bound into the thesis or be placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the thesis.

- supply one copy of the thesis for the University of Worcester Library and a further electronic copy for the University's Digital Repository.
- make contributions to conferences.

4.13 Obligations of the Director of Studies and supervisors

It is expected that the Directors of Studies and Supervisors will:

- give guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, the planning of the research programme, relevant literature and sources, research methods and instrumental techniques.
- arrange, as appropriate, for the student to present his or her work at seminars within the University and to attend external academic meetings or conferences and where possible to present their work, and to provide encouragement and assistance with possible publication of the student's research.

Teaching and Other Duties

- 4.14 The University wishes to offer our research degree students training opportunities which will equip them with the skills required for future employment.

Obligations of the Student

- 4.15 Students on a full time research studentship bursary will be expected to undertake on behalf of their DoS:
- Up to 6 hours a week in total of:
 - teaching duties
 - and/or**
 - other academic support duties
 - and/or**
 - research support duties
- 4.16 Students are expected to discuss the type and nature of the work with their DoS and to carefully plan how the 6 hours will be used across the year. The 6hrs/a week should be seen as an opportunity for students to gain skills appropriate for future employment etc.
- 4.17 It may sometimes be appropriate to accumulate these hours, for example, to take advantage of a particular teaching opportunity or to take account of the other responsibilities and requirements of either the student or their supervisor. Hours can only be accumulated when this is agreed by both the student and their supervisor.

- 4.18 Self funded full time students will be given the opportunity to undertake on behalf of their DoS:
- Up to 6 hours a week in total of:
 - teaching duties
and/or
 - other academic support duties to include demonstrating
and/or
 - research/consultancy support duties
- 4.19 Part time self funded students may be given the opportunity to undertake teaching or other academic or research/consultancy support duties on behalf of their DoS.
- 4.20 In all cases these teaching opportunities are subject to undertaking:
- *MAHE4141: Supporting Student Learning in HE*
- 4.21 Students should discuss which option is most appropriate for them with their DoS.

Obligations of the Supervisor

- 4.22 Supervisors are expected to carefully plan and manage all opportunities for teaching and related duties with their student, ensuring that the opportunities are appropriate for the development of the student and that the student has sufficient time and is sufficiently trained to undertake these duties.
- 4.23 Supervisors of students in receipt of a studentship bursary are expected to discuss the type and nature of the work with their student and to carefully plan how the 6 hours will be used across the year. The 6hrs/a week should be seen as an opportunity for students to gain skills appropriate for future employment etc. Please also see 4.17 above.

Facilities and Resources

- 4.24 A FT Research Degree student should normally expect the following:
- A desk and storage space in a shared office.
 - A PC with appropriate software to facilitate research activity.
 - Shared access to a printer.
 - Secure storage on the University Servers which is automatically and regularly backed up.
 - Access via the Library or on-line to appropriate reference and research materials to facilitate research.
 - Up to **50** inter-library loan requests/annum.

- Access to specialist advice and support from library and e-learning staff within LS
- For self funded, registered (RDB1 approved) students, access to the Research Student Support Scheme.

4.25 A PT Research Degree student should normally expect the following:

- 24-hour access to the Peirson Information and Guidance Centre
- Secure storage on the University Servers which is automatically and regularly backed up.
- Access via the Library or on-line to appropriate reference and research materials to facilitate research.
- Up to **30** inter-library loan requests/annum. Additional requests are negotiable with LS staff providing the service.
- Access to specialist advice and support from library and e-learning staff within LS
- For registered (RDB1 approved) students, access to the Research Student Support scheme.

Illness and Other Absence from Study, including Maternity Leave

4.26 Research Degree Students are not employees of the University and are therefore not entitled to the statutory entitlements of employees in relation to illness or absence of study. For this reason, the benefits laid out below in relation to illness, maternity and paternity pay are discretionary and offered in accordance with best practice. A FT Research Degree student should normally be expected to commit to:

- Notify their DoS of any illness or other emergency absence as quickly as possible and preferably before 09:00 hours on the day of the absence.
- Provide self-certified absence forms for periods of illness up to 5 working days and a medical certificate for periods greater than or equal to 6 working days.
- For absences of more than 7 calendar days a medical certificate is required. This must be obtained as soon as the absence exceeds 7 days and sent immediately to the Research School. Further certificates must be submitted if the absence exceeds the expiry date of the original certificate. The student and their DoS should ensure that regular contact is maintained throughout the period of absence.

4.27 Full time research students on a studentship contract are entitled to one month's full pay within any 12 month period, at which point the studentship will be suspended until the student's return to study. Students who are absent for more than four weeks are advised to

contact the Benefits Agency immediately as all University financial support will cease until study is resumed.

- 4.28 Irrespective of circumstances, the maximum period of suspension allowed for any research degree student is twelve months in total.
- 4.29 When the student is certified as fit to resume study the research programme will re-commence and for a student on a studentship, the bursary will be re-instated until the student has received three years funding in total. The maximum submission date is not altered following a period of suspension.
- 4.30 A judgement of what constitutes 'unacceptable' or 'acceptable' levels of absence is dependent on the individual circumstances of each case. Above all, it is imperative that a student remains in regular contact with their DoS to discuss any absence, medical, or other circumstances which may prevent them from completing their programme of study in the agreed timescale.
- 4.31 Where students are absent long-term due to sickness and have little or no prospect of returning to study or where frequent sickness absence is preventing adequate progress on the research degree programme, the studentship contract or research degree programme may need to be terminated.
- 4.32 The University of Worcester will allow up to four months paid maternity leave for full time research students in receipt of a studentship bursary without the level of the award being reduced. However, if the student does not return to study or if the student returns, but withdraws prior to completing 3 full months of study, she will be expected to pay this back in full. A further 6 months unpaid maternity leave may also be approved following discussions with the Research School and Supervisory Team.
- 4.33 Once you have informed your supervisory team that you are pregnant, they will complete a Risk Assessment with you to identify any relevant risks associated with your study programme and to manage these risks for your protection. The main risks are associated with physical activity or exposure to some chemicals, radiation and biological agents.
- 4.34 You will also need to plan with your team the impact of your pregnancy on your course of study. You are entitled to interrupt your course of study because of pregnancy and it is important to make a plan to take account both of the academic requirements of your study programme and your needs as a pregnant mother. You will be expected **not** to attend UoW during the four weeks immediately preceding birth and for one month after birth. Normally, the maximum period of interruption allowed is one year but this must be approved by your supervisory team and the University's Research Degrees Board. You should also arrange with your team any absences needed for attendance at ante-natal clinics.

- 4.35 Students on a studentship bursary may take two weeks' paternity leave over and above their entitlement. There is no extension of funding or registration for students who take paternity leave.
- 4.36 A PT Research Degree student should normally be expected to commit to:
- Discuss with their DoS any absence, medical, or other circumstances which may prevent them from completing their programme of study in the agreed timescale.
- 4.37 As for FT students, where students are absent long-term due to sickness and have little or no prospect of returning to study or where frequent sickness absence is preventing adequate progress on the research degree programme, the research degree programme may need to be terminated.
- 4.38 Part time students who become pregnant are referred to para 4.30-31 above which refers to both full time and part time students.

Holiday

- 4.39 Research students are not subject to terms or semesters in the conventional sense nor do they have fixed hours of study. The academic year and therefore the leave year commences on 1 September and ends on 31st August.
- 4.40 If you wish to take annual leave you can take up to the following:
- 1.) Up to **25** working days holiday per academic year, with the prior agreement of the DoS.
 - 2.) Statutory Bank Holidays and University Closed Days.
- 4.41 In reality most students tend to keep holidays to a minimum to maximise their chances of completing their studies during their funded period. Holiday is not accrued when a student is on long term sick leave or maternity leave and holiday not taken in one academic year cannot be carried forward to another academic year.

Section 5: Funding for Research Expenses

Research Student Support Scheme

- 5.1 The Scheme is designed to support research students in:
- Developing research networks
 - Disseminating research
 - Undertaking specialist training
- 5.2 For students based in the UK, the Research School will automatically cover the cost of one visit to see a UK based external supervisor a year. The School will also pay for the binding of one copy of your thesis for the Library.
- 5.3 The scheme therefore provides support for the following:
- Costs associated with attending conferences or research seminars including travel, accommodation and subsistence where appropriate¹
 - Costs associated with presenting at conferences or research seminars including travel, accommodation and subsistence where appropriate
 - Printing of research posters
 - Costs associated with publication e.g. Open Access fees, page costs, copyright permissions
 - Costs associated with other forms of dissemination

¹ Funding for conference attendance is conditional on the attendee writing a short blog post for the RS Blog about the conference after the event.

- Costs associated with specialist training courses including travel, accommodation and subsistence where appropriate - Please note, these costs will normally only be considered if no viable alternative is available within the Researcher Development Programme and if the training/development is essential to the completion of the project.
- 5.4 The scheme is open to all research degree students at any stage of their research degree; however, given that a clear rationale for the activity is required it is not expected that students will apply in the early stages of their degree.² Please note that any student who has not satisfactorily completed the RDB7 process or whose progress is otherwise deemed unsatisfactory will not be eligible.
- 5.5 Students wishing to apply to the Research Student Support Scheme must complete the application form below providing the following:
- A clear rationale for the request for support, e.g. why it is essential to attend a particular conference; the benefits of presenting at a particular conference; why a gold open access route is necessary; why specific training is vital to completion of the project.
 - For amounts over £100, students will be asked to identify other possible sources of funding for their request and to provide evidence that they have applied for or are applying for this funding. It is recognised that there is limited funding available for supporting research students so in many cases you will not be able to identify alternative sources; however, we would expect some reflection on how you reached this conclusion.³
- 5.6 Please be aware that the Research Student Support Scheme is not intended for the purchase of IT. All students are given access to the secure University servers which will store a large amount of material and is backed up every evening.
- 5.7 If students wish to purchase a software licence please talk to the RS Manager. If the licence will be of benefit to more than one student, the School will consider purchasing this. If the software is specific to one individual's needs, it will be taken out of that student's allocation.

External funding for research expenses

- 5.1 There are a number of external funders who will provide funding for research expenses, in particular for travel to and from conferences or for travel associated explicitly with the research.

² It is not expected that MPhil/PhD students should apply before the approval of RDB1 or that MRes students apply until the thesis stage.

³ Please note, that all research students have access to the Alternative Guide to Research Funding and Research Professional. We also provide training within in the Researcher Development Programme in using these resources.

- 5.2 Many such funders tend to be subject associations or learned societies focused on a very specific subject area and it is only in this specific area that they will fund research. In some cases, you can only apply for such funding if you are a member of the association or society.
- 5.3 There are too many such funders to list them here. Directors of Study will be able to guide students to associations or societies who will support them. Alternatively, students can make use of the research funding database [Research Professional](#) which allows a user to search for funding of all kinds by specific subject area. Contact the RS for assistance in using the database. Students can also make use of the [Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding](#). Please contact the RS Office for the password.

Section 6: Complaints, Appeals and Feedback

- 6.1 This section firstly provides some information on complaints and appeals. Research students are subject to the same standard regulations and procedures for complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters as all other students at the UoW. Exceptions are highlighted below. More details on complaints and appeals can be found on the [Registry Services website](#).

What to do if you wish to complain

- 6.2 If a student feels that they have cause for complaint during the course of their research degree programme, the first point of contact should always be the DoS. In this way it is normally possible for concerns to be resolved informally and rapidly.
- 6.3 Should a student feel that it is inappropriate to talk to their DoS or if the matter is unresolved after discussion, then they should bring the matter to the attention of the Institute Research Coordinator who in turn may refer the student to the Chair of the Research Degrees Board.
- 6.4 If the problem cannot be resolved to the student's satisfaction they should consult the Research School Manager about the formal University Grievance Procedures.

Appeals

- 6.5 If Research Degrees Board (RDB) makes a recommendation that results in the termination of a research degree programme then the student has the right to appeal within 5 working days. For further advice, for example, concerning the grounds for appeal, please consult the Research School Manager.
- 6.6 Candidates for MPhil and PhD are subject to the same regulations and procedures as other students at the UoW.
- 6.7 Alleged inadequacy of supervision, or of other arrangements during the period of registration are not admissible grounds for a candidate requesting a review of an assessment decision. Complaints regarding inadequacy of supervision, where these cannot be resolved in conjunction with the DoS should be referred to the Chair of RDB, and should be raised at the time of the problem.

Feedback

- 6.8 There are a number of more or less formal ways in which students can express their views of their experience as a research student to the University. Students can also discuss their experience with the supervisory team and with the RS manager at any time.

Student Representatives

- 6.9 Each year a FT and a PT research student representative is elected. Students will be contacted when elections are coming up. The reps sit on the Research Degrees Programmes Committee, Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee and are expected to attend the Research Student Forum and induction sessions for new research degree students.
- 6.10 In addition to the formal student representative role, it is recognised that research students also engage in a wide range of other activities. These include, for example, attending Institute Research and KT Committees, the Postgraduate Student Society, the Work in Progress Series, the Annual Research Student Conference. To ensure that a wide range of research degree students are given the opportunity to engage with these activities, a rota is drawn up annually by the Postgraduate Student Society. It is an expectation that all students in receipt of a funded bursary will take part on one or more of these activities as part of their studentship contract.

Research Student Forum

- 6.11 The Research Student Forum meets once a semester and is led by the PVC Students. All students are welcome and times and dates are circulated well in advance and can also be found on the website and on Twitter.

- 6.12 The Forum has a number of purposes. It is a social occasion; a chance to meet fellow students. It is an opportunity for us to share important developments in the University's research policy. It is also an opportunity for students to raise issues that they think are important.

Course Evaluation

- 6.13 At the end of all Researcher Development Programme modules, seminars and workshops, students are given the opportunity to complete a course evaluation form.

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

- 6.14 In 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2015 the University participated in a national survey on the research student experience. The survey allowed our students to comment on and to assess all aspects of their research degree.
- 6.15 The results of these surveys, including an overview are published on the RS website and have been fed back to the University's Research Degrees Board, to the Institutes and to the RS Steering Group which have acted/are acting on the conclusions drawn from the survey.

Exit Questionnaires and Interviews

- 6.16 All students who have completed their research degree are asked to complete an exit questionnaire which will solicit their opinion on their experience and will seek suggestions as to how, if at all, it might have been improved.
- 6.17 Leaving students are also given the opportunity to have an exit interview with an appropriate member of staff should they wish to comment more directly on their experience.
- 6.18 In some cases, the supervisory team are asked to participate in a Supervisory Team de-brief following withdrawal of a student. De-briefing provides an opportunity for the individuals involved in the supervision process to learn, develop and come to terms with situations where a student departs before completing their research. It is particularly useful where the student has completed a substantial part of the research ($\geq 40\%$) before leaving.

Contacts

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Internal Contact number:

The last four digits of the telephone number are also the internal telephone extension numbers.

Email Contact:

You can contact staff in the Research School on the following email address:
research@worc.ac.uk.

Weblinks

Registry Services Website (internal):

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices>

Research Degree Regulatory Framework:

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/649.htm>

Taught Course Regulatory Framework:

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/649.htm>

Student Handbook:

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/666.htm>

Researcher Development Programme Course Handbook:

<https://worcresearcherdevelopment.com/links-and-resources/>

Library Services for Researchers:

<http://library.worc.ac.uk/>

Appendix 1: Format of the Final Amended Thesis

This information sheet is intended to answer the most frequently asked questions received about the physical layout of a thesis.

The expected format of the thesis and referencing system however varies from discipline to discipline so it is vital that the student seeks guidance from their supervisory team about what their examiners will expect to see. It is also good practice to look at other PhD theses in your discipline area to get an idea about how they were structured and formatted.

Please be aware that your thesis must be lodged with the Research School **PRIOR** to an award being recommended. This means that when the final version of your thesis has been approved and signed off by your examiners, you **MUST** submit the required number of hard and electronic copies to the Research School before your award can be granted.

What should the text look like?

The Regulations require that:

- ❖ Your work should be presented either in typescript or print.
- ❖ The text may be printed on one or both sides of the paper. If you print on both sides of the paper it should be of sufficient density that the text on one side does not show through to the other.
- ❖ The text should be in one-and-a-half or double line spacing, except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.
- ❖ Pages should be numbered consecutively through the main text, including photographs and diagrams which form whole pages.

We recommend the following:

- ❖ A 3cm margin is used for all margins, which gives ample space for binding, etc.
- ❖ Any clear and readable font is acceptable, i.e. Arial or Times New Roman.
- ❖ Don't use a font smaller than 10 point for the main text.

What is a 'hardbound' copy?

For a 'hardbound' copy, the outside covers should be made of a rigid board and is a permanent form of binding – the pages are glued or stitched into the cover and cannot be removed.

What is a 'softbound' copy?

A softbound copy is a photocopy of the thesis with a plastic or card cover. It may be fastback, spiral or comb bound.

Requirements

There aren't many rules and regulations governing the 'look' of the thesis, but the following are the requirements:

- ❖ The front cover of your thesis should have the title of the work in at least 24-point type.
- ❖ The initials and surname of the author, the academic award for which submitted and the year of submission must also be shown.
- ❖ On the spine, there should be the name of the author, the award and the year of submission (see over for example)

Colour of hard binding

University of Worcester require black covers

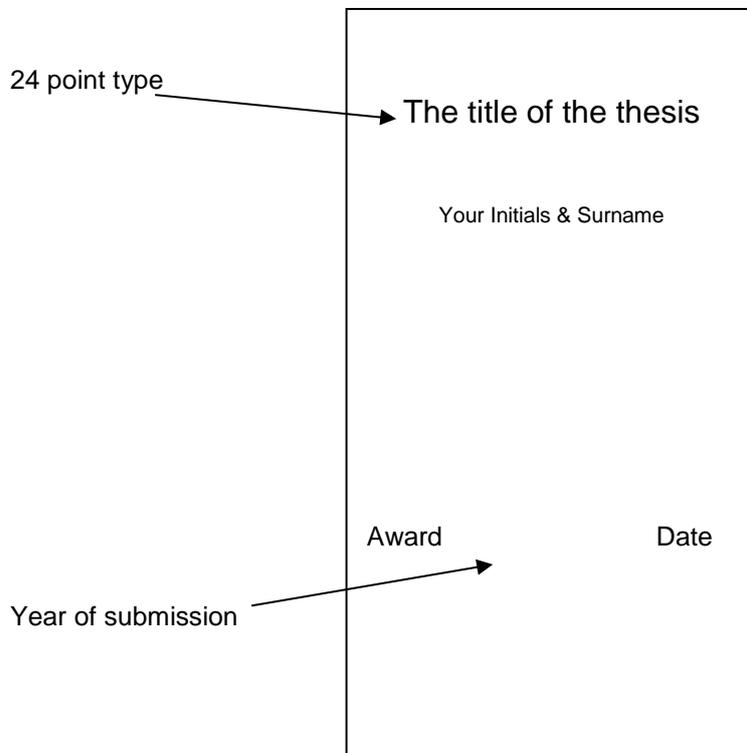
How to get the thesis bound

Binding is arranged by the Research School, and the student is invoiced for the costs incurred.

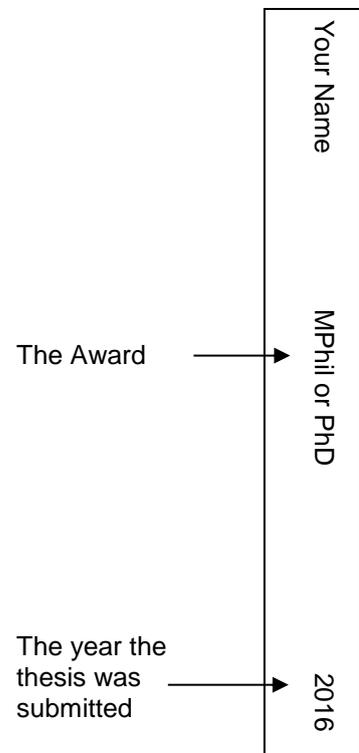
Appendices, etc

If you wish to submit Appendices as a separate volume, it is acceptable. Just make sure the covers comply with the regulations above, and specify volume numbers on each copy (i.e. Vol I, Vol II).

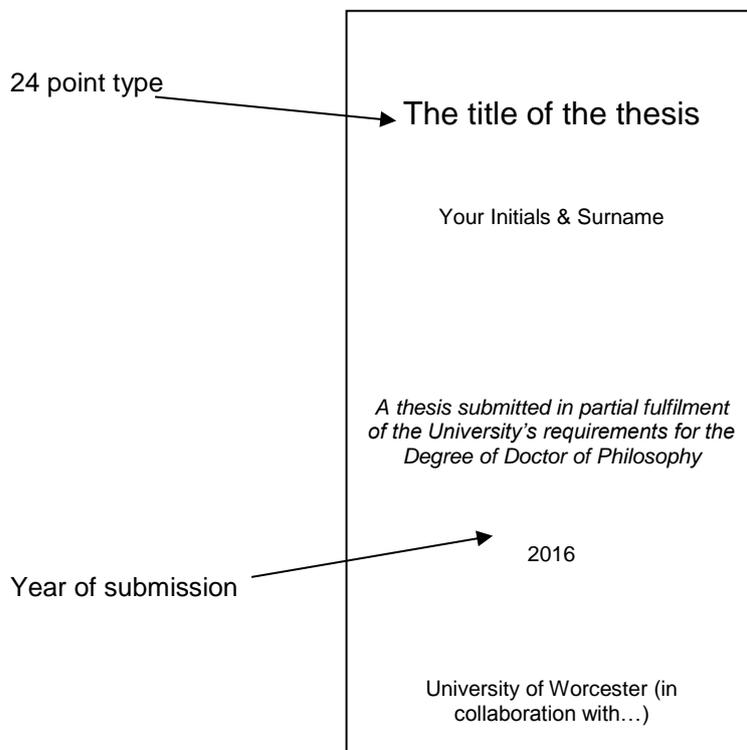
An example of the front cover for a thesis:



An example of a Spine:



An example of the first page of the thesis:



Title of thesis

It is absolutely essential that the title of the thesis matches the title on the RDB3 form (examination arrangements).

Appendix 2: Rates of Remuneration for Externals

Role	Payment (2016/17)
External Examiner	£225 + expenses ¹
External Expert (RDB1)	£125
External Expert (RDB2/RDB2a)	£125
External Supervisor (FT)	£350 ²
External Supervisor (PT)	£250 ²
Advisor	No fee

1. Expenses to include travel plus accommodation plus subsistence
2. To be paid annually subject to the submission of a brief report detailing contact with the student