

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES

Effective from September 2021 to present

Student Regulations and Policies

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UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES

PREFACE

The application of the Academic Regulations for Professional Doctorates is underpinned by University policies and procedures, to which reference is made at appropriate points within the Regulations. Please refer to the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes, the Assessment Handbook for Taught Programmes and the Research Student Assessment Handbook. Guidance on the operational Framework for Professional Doctorates is contained in Appendix 12 of the Academic Quality Assurance Manual.

Cross reference should also be made to Section A and Section B of the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes for matters pertaining to:

- Powers of the University to Grant Awards
- Approval of Courses and Awards by the Academic Board of the University
- Approval of new Awards

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A Professional Doctorates

A1 List of Awards

A1.1 Professional Doctorates

Courses at Professional Doctorate level are restricted to certain, specific areas of study and lead to a specifically titled award at doctoral level. They will entail a combination of taught and research components.

A Professional Doctorate [DProf] programme will be conducted in an area of professional competence and will include a substantial element of professional based competencies.

The title of *Doctorate of Business Administration [DBA]* is reserved for courses concerned with researching business and management issues via the critical review and systematic application of appropriate theories and research to professional practice.

The title of *Doctorate in Education [EdD]* is reserved for courses concerned with researching educational practice, contexts and roles via the critical review and systematic application of appropriate theories and research to the education profession and to the practice of it.

FHEQ level	Title of Award	General Minimum Entry Requirement (equivalent qualifications or experience accepted. For course specific requirements see course documents)	Highest Level of study required for the Award
8	Professional Doctorate (DProf)	Bachelor Degree with Hons a lower second class or above plus professional experience ¶	8 + thesis
8	Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)	Bachelor Degree with Hons a lower second class or above plus professional experience †	8 + thesis
8	Doctor of Education (EdD)	Bachelor Degree with Hons a lower second class or above plus professional experience †	8 + thesis

¶ Masters or Professional Masters degree for direct entry to professional doctoral stage of programme

† Masters degree for direct entry to doctoral stage of programme

A2 Standard Credit Requirements and duration for Awards

Award title	Minimum module requirement	Level 4 or above	Level 5 or above	Level 6 or above	Level 7 or above	Level 8
Professional Doctorate	540				540	360

A2.1 The Professional Doctorate award includes both assessed taught modules as well as a substantial research element comprising an overall total notional credit rating of 540 credits. A minimum of 280 notional credits will be research components which will include a major Research project at level 8.

A2.2 The Professional Doctorate award includes a minimum of 120 (and a maximum of 220) taught credits. If included an exit award of Masters/Professional Masters should comprise

at least 180 credits and may also include Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma.

Stage 1	Taught components to be a minimum of 120 credits at level 7 or above to a maximum of 220 credits at Level 7 or above
Stage 2	Research components to be within a minimum of 280 credits at level 8 to include a thesis of at least 200 credits at level 8 to a maximum of 420 credits at level 8
Predicated on a notional 540 credits for a 3 year doctorate programme Full time 3 years or 6 years part time equivalent for the doctorate.	

Table of available exit awards:

Registered Award	Exit award/s*	Minimum credit requirement for Exit Award	Level
Professional Doctorate	Masters/Professional Masters	180	at level 7 or above
	Postgraduate Diploma	120	at level 7 or above
	Postgraduate Certificate	60	at level 7 or above

*following viva of the research element at Stage 2 a student may be awarded a Professional Doctorate or an MPhil as indicated in A7.6/A7.7

- A2.3 All taught awards of the University, including taught elements of the Professional Doctorate awards, are governed by the regulations that apply to the University's modular framework. Further information on the regulations pertaining to course design of taught elements of the Professional Doctorate awards can be found in Section C of the Academic Regulations for Taught programmes.
- A2.4 A full year for a full time student is notionally equivalent to 180 credits. The maximum registration time for full time students is 4 years and 7 years for part time students. The expected thesis submission times are 3 years for full time students and 6 years for part time students. Students entering directing into Stage 2 should have their expected submission date and maximum period of registration adjusted accordingly.
- A2.5 Where a student wishes to change from full-time to part-time study or vice versa, and is eligible to do so according to their funding and immigration circumstances, an application must be submitted for approval by the relevant Head of School. Following approval, the maximum period of study will be calculated on a pro rata basis.
- A2.6 Where a student is prevented, by exceptional or unforeseen cause, from making progress with their programme, they may seek authorisation for an interruption to the programme of study from their Course Leader (or nominee). Requests for interruptions to study must be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the period of interruption. Retrospective interruptions to study are not permitted.
- A2.7 The maximum period of authorised interruption to study which can be applied in a single application is 12 months. A period of authorised interruption to study shall normally be no less than one month. Periods up to one month would normally be considered authorised absence.
- A2.8 Where a student is permitted, and eligible according to their funding and immigration circumstances to interrupt their study to undertake a research internship or related professional development programme a period of interruption to study of up to 6 months

may be approved by the School. Requests for a period of between 6 and 12 months maximum would require approval by the Research Degrees Board.

- A2.9 For students who have completed the taught element of their programme but who have not had their programme of research approved, the maximum permitted period for an interruption to study will be three months.
- A2.10 Where a student needs to apply for a single or cumulative period of interruption to study for more than 12 months, the Faculty Director of Research and Innovation or their nominee must seek approval from the Research Degrees Board. Cumulative periods of interruption to study exceeding 24 months are not normally permitted. Students who wish to interrupt their studies for longer than the permissible periods, must withdraw from the programme and seek re-admission if they subsequently wish to resume their studies.
- A2.11 Students are not permitted to study, access supervision or submit their final thesis during an authorised interruption of study.
- A2.12 An authorised interruption to study would require an adjustment to the expected end date of the programme by the equivalent period of time.
- A2.13 Exceptionally, where the progress of research is impeded through causes not associated with the student's ability to study, a request to extend the period of registration at the end of the programme may be made to the Research Degrees Board who will determine the length of extension.
- A2.14 The period of study ends when either the research degree is awarded or when the maximum period of registration is reached. Continuation beyond the maximum period of registration is subject to approval by the Research Degree Tutor and will be subject to a maximum period of registration of one year.
- A2.15 Students who fail to submit their research component within the maximum period of registration, or who have continuous unauthorised absence from the taught elements of their award without an authorised interruption, shall be withdrawn from the course.
- A2.16 Student attendance and engagement at timetabled learning activities and supervision meetings is required. Notification of illness must be made to the Head of School or nominee (usually the Course Leader).
- A2.17 Individual modules and/or courses may incorporate a specific attendance requirement as part of the assessment criteria for successful completion of a module.

A3 Admission of Students and Applications for Research Programme Approval

A3.1 Principles

- A3.1.1 The selection of students for admission is based on the ability to benefit as demonstrated through prior educational achievement, motivation and commitment.
- A3.1.2 The University will not admit applicants unless there is a reasonable expectation that the applicant can fulfil the learning outcomes of the course and reach the required standard for the award.
- A3.1.3 The admission of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties is based on the academic judgement that the student can, with reasonable adjustments by the University, be reasonably expected to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course to achieve the award.
- A3.1.4 The admission of individual applicants is at the discretion of the University having regard to the safety and welfare of the University community and the general principles above.

A3.2 Misrepresentation in the application process

A3.2.1 Offers to applicants whom the University believes have wilfully or negligently misrepresented information in their application may be withdrawn and the applicant's contract with, and membership of, the University may be terminated. The applicant will be entitled to bring a complaint as detailed in the Admissions Policy and Applicant Complaints Procedure where he/she believes the decision is unreasonable.

A3.2.2 Where the University believes that a student has wilfully or negligently misrepresented information in their application, a nominee of the Vice-Chancellor may terminate the University's contract with the student and membership of the University will cease. The student will be given an opportunity to make representations to a nominee of the Vice-Chancellor before such a decision is taken.

A3.3 General Entry Requirements

A3.3.1 The University's minimum entry requirement is specified in A1.1 above. Equivalent learning from other study or experience will also meet this requirement. Applicants should be able to demonstrate they have had a period of working as a professional in their field.

A3.3.2 For some courses (especially those involving contact with children or vulnerable adults) applicants must declare any criminal conviction (spent and/or unspent) and a check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) may be additionally required for admission. In such cases the Head of School is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place for the consideration of convictions in line with University and/or professional body requirements and for notifying applicants of the outcome.

A3.3.3 All teaching, module assessment, supervision and examination of research components will be in the English language. Students must have a minimum level of proficiency equal to IELTS 6.5 or equivalent. A Head of School may prescribe a higher IELTS score where required by the discipline or professional body.

A3.3.4 Where appropriate, admission will be dependent on an assessment of the student's proposed field of research to ensure that the University is able to provide appropriate facilities and supervision to support the research. Where the decision on a research topic is to be developed during the taught elements of the course, it will be the responsibility of the Course Leader to provide advice prior to submission and approval of the topic by the Research Degrees Tutor.

A3.4 Admission with credit (including Accreditation of Prior Learning)

A3.4.1 The University operates procedures to formally recognise prior learning gained elsewhere both for admission to a course and, where appropriate, for admission with credit (the award of credit which can be counted towards the requirements for an identified University award).

A3.4.2 Credit for non-University learning towards the requirements for a University award may be gained through articulation agreements, tariff arrangements or the accreditation of prior learning (APL). A student can make an application to apply credit from prior learning to a University course through the Admissions Office when applying for that course.

A3.4.3 APL is the identification and formal acknowledgement of an individual student's prior learning in order to gain credit towards a specified University award. It may be certificated (from another institution/awarding body) or experiential (drawn from life/work experience).

A3.4.4 Students may be permitted to enter a Professional Doctorate award with recognition of prior learning (APL) for the taught elements of the programme at Level 7 in accordance with the University published procedures in relation to APL/APEL.

A3.4.5 The maximum APL which can be applied towards a Professional Doctorate award cannot be greater than the credit value of the taught element of the approved programme at Level 7. The maximum allowable APL would therefore be up to a maximum 180 credit qualification at Level 7 in line with the allowable exit awards. The Level 7 qualification

used for APL must be a cognate qualification, which must be relevant to and underpin the proposed Professional Doctorate award. In deciding how much APL may be awarded the Course Leader must ensure that the applicant has the necessary academic and research related underpinning to successfully complete the Stage 2 research component and therefore applicants lacking the required skills may be directed to undertake specific taught modules in preparation for Stage 2.

A3.5 Applications for Research Programme Approval

A3.5.1 All students are required to apply for Research Programme Approval for their research component by the appropriate Research Degree Tutor within three months (full time students) or six months (part time students) of the completion of the taught modules within their award.

A3.5.2 In considering applications for Research Programme Approval, the Research Degree Tutor shall be satisfied that the sponsoring School has a suitable programme of research for the target award, that appropriate supervision arrangements and a suitable programme of training is in place. Where the programme of work includes a practice-based element, the proposed constitution of the final thesis must also be approved.

A3.5.3 A change to an approved research degree programme must be approved by the Research Degree Tutor.

A4 Supervision of Research Component at Stage 2

A4.1 Professional Doctorate students within their research component shall be supervised by a supervisory team of normally 2, and no more than 3, which includes a Director of Studies, supervisor (s) and, where appropriate, specialist advisor (s). All supervisors will be demonstrably active researchers with relevant knowledge and skills. The School will ensure that there are no conflicts of interest arising in those arrangements and that appropriate supervisory arrangements are maintained throughout the student's programme.

A4.2 The Director of Studies shall be a member of the University's staff with a contract which covers the period of study. The other supervisor(s) may be a member of the University's staff, an Emeritus Professor or a member of staff at another higher education institution including a partner or collaborating institution of the University. An advisor or advisors may be proposed to contribute some specialist knowledge or a link with an external organization.

A4.3 The supervisory team shall have experience of supervising at least one student to the successful completion of a research degree at or above the level of the target award. Supervisors who have completed an approved supervisor training programme may count this as one successful supervision, but a team will not be deemed qualified where the only successful completion within the team has been obtained through an approved supervisor training programme.

A4.4 Proposals for a change in the approved supervision arrangements must be agreed by the appropriate Research Degree Tutor.

A5 Assessment

A5.1 Principles of Assessment

A5.1.1 The purpose of assessment is to provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the course and achieved the standard required for the award they seek.

A5.1.2 Assessment must reflect individual student achievement and relate it to a standard for each award which is recognised and maintained across Universities and other higher education institutions in the United Kingdom.

A5.1.3 Reasonable adjustments to assessment processes for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties will be made providing the requirement has been established by an assessment of need undertaken by the Inclusive Support Service.

A6 Assessment at Stage 1

A6.2 Taught Module Assessment and Feedback at Stage 1

A6.2.1 All modules will be assessed. Students are expected to attempt all required assessments for each module for which they are registered, and to do so at the times scheduled unless authorised extensions, special arrangements for students with a disability, or extenuating circumstances allowing deferral have been granted.

A6.2.2 Each module will specify an assessment strategy by which students can demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes for that module.

A6.2.3 The maximum number of summative assessment elements in each 20 credit module is not normally more than 2. All modules may be passed on aggregate. Professional body requirements may require that all elements must be passed.

A6.2.4 Generic feedback on all summative elements of assessment which contribute to a module, will be made available to students within 15 working days (3 weeks) of the scheduled submission or examination date. Generic feedback on end of module assessment will be made available within 15 working days following the publication of results.

A6.2.5 For all assessments, students will be provided with individual feedback.

A6.2.6 Feedback may be provided in oral, written, audio or digital format as appropriate.

A6.3 Late Submission of work on taught modules at Stage 1

A6.3.1 The University requires students to adhere to submission deadlines for any form of assessment. A penalty will be applied in relation to unauthorised late submission of work.

A6.3.2 Extensions may be granted for up to 10 working days and will be confirmed to the student in writing. The request should be made in writing by the student to the relevant Course Leader through the Academic Registry, clearly stating the reason for the extension and detailing the module and assessment where an extension is requested. Students who submit work after an authorised extended deadline date will be awarded a mark of 0% for that element of assessment.

A6.3.3 The University operates a universal penalty scale for unauthorised late submission of any form of assessed work. Students who submit work within 5 working days after the published submission date without an authorised extension will be awarded the minimum pass mark (see H3) for that element of assessment. All work submitted later than 5 working days after the published submission date without an authorised extension will be awarded a mark of 0% for that element of assessment.

A6.3.4 Unauthorised late submission at resubmission will automatically be awarded a mark of 0% for that element of assessment.

A6.3.5 Where the nature of the circumstances is such that the extension is required for more than 10 working days, students may submit a case for consideration in accordance with the procedure for Extenuating Circumstances on taught modules. This will be dealt with by the Academic Registry.

A6.4 Examination Arrangements for taught modules at Stage 1

A6.4.1 An examination is defined as a formal, timed assessment of any duration which is subject

to continuous invigilation.

A6.4.2 The University operates Examination Procedures in relation to the behaviour of examination students.

A6.5 Taught Assessment Practice at Stage 1

A6.5.1 The University is committed to the principle of maintaining academic standards through the processes of verification and moderation.

A6.5.2 Comments made by the first marker on the student's work or performance must be available to the moderator for all assessments other than projects/dissertations.

A6.5.3 The University requires all summative assessments to be anonymised where possible.

A6.5.4 All Level 7 and above projects/dissertations must be clean double marked except where this is precluded because of the method of presentation for students with a disability or learning difficulty.

A6.5. Oral presentations or examinations which contribute more than 25% of the overall module mark require at least two members of academic staff to witness the presentation and to agree the mark awarded.

A6.6 Marking and Grading of taught modules at Stage 1

A6.6.1 The University uses a grade band marking scale as detailed below. This marking scale contains a fixed number of percentage points in each class band which is assigned by a marker for a piece of assessed work.

Band	Numerical equivalent
Exceptional Distinction	100
Very High Distinction	94
High Distinction	87
Mid Distinction	80
Low Distinction	74
High Merit	68
Mid Merit	65
Low Merit	62
High Pass	58
Mid Pass	55
Low Pass	52
(Minimum Pass/Capped Mark)	50
Marginal Fail	45*

Band	Numerical equivalent
Mid+ Fail	42
Mid Fail	40
Fail	35
	30
	25
Fail	10

Non-submission/Penalty/No Academic Merit	0
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*can be compensated

A6.6.2 For modules at Level 7 and above, the term pass refers to a mark ≥ 50 . Ungraded credit is a pass. Compensated modules are treated as passes for the purposes of determining that the module requirement has been met.

A6.6.3 In addition to grading bands, the University uses a system of grades and codes to denote study performance.

Description	Grade
Pass	P
Satisfactory	S
Unsatisfactory	U
Fail (where aggregate module mark is at or above the minimum pass mark but a core element is failed)	F
Decision deferred	I
Decision deferred at reassessment	IR
Description	Grade
Not graded	NG
Associate/Exchange student: not assessed	Z
Description	Grade Qualifier
Compensated failed module	C
Fail: reassessment recommended	R
Fail: reassessment not taken up	X
Fail: retake module	K

A7 Assessment at Stage 2

A7.1 Examination of research element at Stage 2

A7.1.1 The examination has two parts:

Part 1 is the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis or thesis plus practice based materials. Where the structure of the research element of the doctorate has disparate components, the students must submit a thesis which is composed of the individual pieces of research and an overview summarising the work.

Part 2 is its defence by oral examination.

A7.1.2 All students are examined orally on the thesis, the programme of work, and on the field of study in which the programme lies. Where appropriate the examination may include specific consideration of the professional skills and competencies acquired. Oral examinations are to be conducted in English (except where B1.6 Taught Regulations applies).

A7.1.3 The examination arrangements proposed by the School must be approved by the Research Degrees Board before examination can occur. These examination arrangements should be submitted to the Academic Registry at least four months before the student's intended submission date to allow sufficient time for approval and arrangements to be made. Exceptionally, where it has not been possible to confirm an examination team prior to the student's intended submission date, then the student will be allowed to submit pending the examination arrangements being approved.

A7.1.4 Where for reasons of ill health, disability or comparable valid cause, the Research

Degrees Board is satisfied that a student would be put at a serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination, an alternative form of examination may be approved. Such approval shall not be given on the grounds that the student's knowledge of the language in which the thesis is presented is inadequate.

A7.1.5 Supervisors may, with the consent of the student, attend the oral examination but must not participate in discussion during the examination and must withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.

A7.1.6 All examiners must complete the preliminary reports before the oral examination takes place.

A7.1.7 Where there is a failure to comply with the procedures of the examination process, Research Degree Board may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

A7.2 The Student's Responsibilities

A7.2.1 It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the thesis is submitted for examination within the period of registration. The submission of a thesis for examination is at the discretion of the student.

A7.2.2 Students must take no part in the arrangement of their examination and have no contact with the examiner/s between the appointment of the examiners and the oral examination.

A7.2.3 A student shall not submit a thesis by which they have qualified for a degree in any university, nor one which is being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree; but they may refer to work which they have already submitted for a degree in a thesis covering a wider field.

A7.2.4 Students must declare the use of any proofreading services.

A7.3 The Thesis

A7.3.1 The thesis shall be in the format prescribed in the Research Student Assessment Handbook.

A7.3.2 The thesis must be presented in English (except where B1.6 of the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes applies).

A7.3.3 The copyright of the thesis as a literary work is invested in the student except in certain circumstances which are set out in the Intellectual Property Regulations.

A7.3.4 The final version of the thesis must be deposited in the Institutional Repository. An application for an embargo to the full publication of the thesis may be submitted to Research Degrees Board at the time of submission of the examination arrangements.

A7.4 Examiners for Students at Stage 2

A7.4.1 The student is examined by a minimum of two examiners, at least one of whom must be external to the University.

A7.4.2 A second external examiner will be required for students who are either:

- (i) a member of staff of the University, whether temporary or on an indefinite contract or;
- (ii) a member of staff, whether temporary or on an indefinite contract, at a designated partner institution of the University; or
- (iii) a member of staff, whether temporary or on an indefinite contract, at a collaborating institution of the University.

A7.5 Criteria for Appointment of Examiners at Stage 2

A7.5.1 General Principles

- A7.5.1.1 Examiners must have expertise in the research area of the student's thesis and be demonstrably research active.
- A7.5.1.2 The examining team must collectively have experience in the topic(s) to be examined and must have experience of a minimum of two or more previous examinations at the level of the award. The external examiner should have experience of at least one examination at or above the level of the award.
- A7.5.1.4 Examiners are required to maintain confidentiality within the examining process and in particular with respect to the thesis once it has been received, until publication.

A7.5.2 External examiners

- A7.5.2.1 External examiners must be independent of the University and of any collaborating institution.
- A7.5.2.2 An external examiner shall not be either a supervisor of another student or an external examiner on a taught course in the student's sponsoring academic School.
- A7.5.2.4 The same external examiner must not be proposed so frequently that their familiarity with the sponsoring School might prejudice objective judgement.
- A7.5.2.4 Former members of staff of the University may not be appointed as external examiners until three years after the termination of their employment with the University.

A7.5.3 Internal examiners

- A7.5.3.1 The internal examiner should be a member of the University's staff with a contract which covers the period of examination or an Emeritus Professor.
- A7.5.3.2 A student's supervisor, former supervisor or advisor may not be appointed as an internal examiner.

A7.5.4 Independent chairs of examination

- A7.5.4.1 Independent chairs are required solely for oral examinations where the internal examiner has had no previous doctoral level examining experience.
- A7.5.4.2 The role of independent chair is procedural; there is no requirement to read the thesis.

A7.6 Outcomes of the First Examination

Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend that the student:

- (i) pass the research element of the award;
- (ii) pass the research element of the award subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within a maximum period of 3 months. The examiners must indicate to the student in writing, via the Academic Registry, what amendments and corrections are required;
- (iii) pass the research element of the award subject to major revisions being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiners within a maximum period of 6 months. The revised thesis must be submitted to the internal examiner and at least one external examiner before the degree can be awarded. The examiners must indicate to the student in writing, via the Academic Registry, what amendments and corrections are required;

- (iv) be referred and be permitted to resubmit the thesis for re-examination within a maximum period of 12 months without a further oral examination. The examiners must indicate to the student in writing, via the Academic Registry, the deficiencies of the first examination;
- (v) be referred and be permitted to resubmit the thesis for re-examination within a maximum period of 12 months and undergo a further oral examination. The examiners must indicate to the student in writing, via the Academic Registry, the deficiencies of the first examination;
- (vi) be awarded the degree of MPhil with or without minor amendments to the thesis, subject to the satisfaction of the examiners. A maximum period of 3 months will be permitted for the completion of minor amendments. The examiners must indicate to the student in writing, via the Academic Registry, what amendments and corrections are required;
- (vii) be referred, as appropriate, for the degree of MPhil, subject to the thesis being amended to the satisfaction of the examiners within a maximum period of 12 months. In such circumstances, the examiners must indicate to the student in writing, via the Academic Registry, what amendments and corrections are required;
- (viii) fail the research element of the award and not be permitted to be re-examined.

A7.7 Requirements for re-examination of research element

- A7.7.1 One re-examination may be permitted in line with the recommendations in A7.6.
- A7.7.3 The Research Degrees Board may, where there are extenuating circumstances, approve an interruption to studies during the period allowed for revisions for the research element. (See the Research Student Assessment Handbook).
- A7.7.4 The Research Degrees Board may require that an additional external examiner be appointed for the re-examination, in which case their appointment must be submitted to the Research Degrees Board for approval in the normal way.
- A7.7.5 Following the completion of the re-examination, the examiners may recommend to the Research Degree Board:
 - (i) that the student be awarded the degree;
 - (ii) that the student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments to the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal examiner;
 - (iii) that the student be awarded the degree of MPhil with or without minor amendments to the thesis made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner
 - (iv) that the student fail the degree.

A7.8 Where the examiners are not in agreement following an examination or re-examination

- A7.8.1 Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted to the Research Degrees Board.
- A7.8.2 Research Degrees Board may:
 - (i) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner);

- (ii) accept the recommendation of the external examiner;
- (iii) require the appointment of an additional external examiner(s)

A7.8.2 Where an additional external examiner is appointed he/she shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the thesis and, if he/she considers necessary, conduct a further oral examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner the Research Degrees Board will consider the report and agree the outcome of the examination.

A8 Academic Misconduct

A8.1 The University regards any use of academic misconduct in an attempt to enhance performance or to influence the standard of any award obtained as a serious offence.

A8.2 Academic Misconduct includes all forms of cheating, plagiarism, collusion and re-presentation of work.

A8.3 Details of the Academic Misconduct Procedure and how it applies to the postgraduate research student experience are set out in the Assessment Handbook for Taught Programmes.

A8.4 All instances or allegations of the use of academic misconduct at any assessment point in the postgraduate research student journey: Taught module assessment, Research Programme Approval, Annual Assessment of Progress and examination, will be investigated in line with the procedure set out in the Assessment Handbook for Taught Programmes. Assessment proceedings will be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

A8.5 If an allegation of academic misconduct is found to be proven at any point in the postgraduate research student journey, the following penalties may apply.

In the event of a single offence at any stage other than in relation to assessment of taught modules, the penalties available are:

- a. Referral for a second opportunity to complete the assessment satisfactorily, with or without a further oral examination;
- b. In the case of a student registered on the award of Professional Doctorate, a maximum award of MPhil; subject to meeting the criteria for that award
- c. Failure of the award.

A8.6 Where academic misconduct is detected for the first time on a reassessment, no further reassessment will be permitted.

A8.7 Where evidence of academic misconduct becomes apparent subsequent to the recommendation of the assessors or examiners, the matter will be re-opened and the original decision may be set aside if appropriate.

A9 Composition and Responsibilities of Assessment Boards

A9.1 Award of the Professional Doctorate

Decisions on the reports and recommendation of the examiners in respect of Professional Doctorate students are taken by the Research Degrees Board. The power to confer the degree is delegated to the Research Degrees Board by the Academic Board.

A9.2 Each School will operate Module Assessment Boards for all taught modules assigned to that School in line with approved procedures.

A9.3 It is the responsibility of the Module Assessment Board to determine the mark/grade achieved by each student in individual modules and to make recommendations to the appropriate Course Assessment Board in relation to reassessment and compensation.

- A9.4 Marks/grades determined by Module Assessment Boards shall not be subject to revision by other Boards.
- A9.5 Research Degrees Board will undertake the Course Assessment Boards for Professional Doctorate awards. Relevant Course Leaders will attend as appropriate for each course under consideration. In exceptional circumstances, the Head of School may nominate an appropriate deputy for a Course Leader who is unavoidably absent. Course Assessment Boards will make recommendations for awards through the application of the academic and relevant course regulations using academic judgement to operate discretion within the limits defined in these Regulations.
- A9.6 It is the responsibility of Research Degree Board acting as the Course Assessment Board to determine, based on the overall student profile any applicable compensation and reassessments and to determine results for each student in relation to their progression or award. This will include confirmation of progression through the taught modules of the award as well as the research component.
- A9.7 Results determined by Course Assessment Boards shall not be subject to revision by other Boards.
- A9.8 The Research Degrees Board will make arrangements for the annual assessment of students' progress throughout the research components of their programme. Responsibility for ensuring that the students' progress is adequately monitored and assessed throughout the year lies with the Dean/Head of School.
- A9.9 Recommendations on progression to the next academic session will be made by Schools and confirmed by Research Degrees Board. This will include confirmation of progression through the taught modules of the award as well as the research component.
- A9.10 Research Degree Board will make one of the following recommendations:
- (i) Progress to next academic session
 - (ii) Referred, indicating what action must be taken within a two month remedial period
 - (iii) Deferred (students with an authorised interruption of study only)
 - (iv) Fail

A10 Mitigating Circumstances at Stage 1

- A10.1 The University operates standard procedures for the submission of mitigating circumstances in relation to taught modules.
- A10.2 In determining assessment recommendations, Course Assessment Boards will take into account approved claims from students for mitigating circumstances.
- A10.3 A disability or learning difficulty does not constitute a mitigating circumstance.
- A10.4 Course Assessment Boards are not permitted to alter individual assessment marks to take account of mitigating circumstances.
- A10.5 Mitigating circumstances will be taken into consideration by a Course Assessment Board as appropriate in the determination of the application of compensation provisions, opportunity for re-assessment and in overall progression and award decisions. A Course Assessment Board, using its academic judgement, may take account of mitigating circumstances where the student's overall performance is borderline, provided that there is good reason to believe that the student's performance has been compromised by mitigating circumstances to an extent which has not been fully reflected in adjustments made to assessment at the module level (such as deadline extensions and variations in assessment method).

A11 Compensation

A11.1 Compensation describes the process by which a student who fails to satisfy some element of assessment is nevertheless recommended for progression/award on the grounds that the failure is marginal or is offset by good performance in other components of their study programme.

A11.2 A Course Assessment Board may, at its discretion, compensate failure in a module where, in its considered academic judgement, the compensation is fair and reasonable in relation to the learning outcomes of the course and the standard of the student's performance as a whole.

Compensation must not be applied where the module mark falls below the threshold mark of 45% for modules at Level 7 or above. A higher threshold may be set where there are sound academic reasons such as professional body requirements.

A11.3 The number of credits which can be compensated within a Professional Doctorate is limited to one 20 credit module at Stage 1. Course regulations may specify less than the maximum where this is appropriate or where professional body requirements so dictate.

A11.4 Where a Course Assessment Board applies compensation to a module the original mark or grade shall not be altered and that original mark will be used in any award classification.

A11.5 Performance in core modules cannot be compensated.

A12 Taught Module Reassessment

A12.1 The decision to offer reassessment lies with the Course Assessment Board taking account of the recommendations from Module Boards and the student's overall profile.

A12.2 Where a student has failed a component and is required to be reassessed in that component, the maximum mark which may be awarded for any reassessed component will be the minimum pass mark i.e. 50 for Level 7 and 8 modules. This mark will contribute to the overall aggregate mark for the module.

A12.3 Where the module does not require the student to pass each component of assessment but the module is failed on aggregate, if following re-assessment the capping of the component mark (application of A12.2) prevents the student from passing the module, the module mark will be capped rather than the component mark.

A12.4 A module, or a component within it, may be reassessed only once.

A12.5 In-module reassessment is permitted and if marked numerically is subject to the requirements of A12.2 and A12.4 (i.e. that the assessment is capped and a further attempt is treated as the reassessment opportunity). In-module skills tests which are graded pass/fail are not subject to A12.2 and A12.4.

A12.6 If upon reassessment the original mark and the reassessed mark are both under the minimum pass mark, the higher of the two marks will be used in any subsequent averaging calculation.

A13 Taught Module Attempts

A13.1 The definition of 'attempt' is a student's first 'sit' and any 'resit' (of any component of assessment) within a module.

A retake of the same or an alternative module in a subsequent year or semester is considered to be a separate second attempt.

The following are not considered to be separate attempts

1. where a student is reassessed for a module;
2. re-enrolment for the module in a subsequent semester where a module grade is 'deferred'.
3. Where, because of extenuating circumstances, a student is permitted to repeat a year, all module results from the original year will be invalidated and such modules will not count towards the total number of attempts.

- A13.2 The number of additional credit attempts as defined in A13.1 above is limited to 120 credits.
- A13.3 In order to retake a failed module or to attempt an equivalent module to a failed module, a Course Assessment Board may allow a full time student to register for 20 additional credits in the following year.
- A13.4 Retaken modules must be studied and completed in full. Any passed elements from the previous attempt cannot be carried over.
- A13.5 Marks for retaken modules will be capped at the minimum pass mark.
- A13.6 At the discretion of the Course Assessment Board and subject to any specific course requirements a student may be allowed to nominate an alternative module as the retaken module. The alternative module will be capped at the minimum pass mark.
- A13.7 No student is permitted to retake a module that has been passed, subject to the following exceptions:
- i. where a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is permitted to repeat a year in full, all module grades in that year will be invalidated and passed modules may be newly attempted;
 - ii. where a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is permitted to retake an assessment as a result of an appeal, the student will be able to rely on the higher of the original and the reattempted mark;
 - i. where a student cannot retake modules on a part-time basis because of documented circumstances beyond their control (e.g. international bursary or registration conditions), that student may exceptionally be permitted to retake one or more modules which have been passed, in order to constitute a full-time year. However, the marks awarded for those modules at the original attempt will stand.
- A13.8 Approval of additional module attempts on all programmes shall be at the discretion of the appropriate Course Assessment Board, which will not withhold such approval unless, in its academic judgement, the student lacks any reasonable prospect of success in subsequent attempts. In the latter case, the student will be obliged to withdraw from the programme, and any future re-admission will be at the discretion of the relevant Head of School.

A14 Exclusion from a Professional Doctorate programme during an academic session for academic reasons

Where it becomes clear that a student will not meet the academic or other specific progression requirements, or if a student fails to fulfil taught module attendance requirements for the Professional Doctorate programme, Schools and/or the Research Degrees Board may require a student to terminate their study during the academic session.

A15 Recommendation for Award

- A15.1 Students are assessed for the registered award on completion of the appropriate taught module minima and completion of examination at Stage 2.
- A15.2 To be recommended for an award a student must have:

1. achieved passes in the taught module requirement specified for the award;

2. presented and successfully defended a thesis by oral examination

A15.3 Compensated modules are treated as passes for the purposes of determining that the module requirement has been met.

A15.3 A7 defines the outcomes for the award of Professional Doctorate.

A15.4 Course Assessment Boards may recommend an approved alternatively named award to a student who has failed the registered award, provided the minimum requirements for the alternative award have been achieved.

A15.5 Available exit awards:

Registered Award	Exit award/s	Minimum credit requirement for Exit Award	Level
Professional Doctorate	Masters/Professional Masters	180	at level 7 or above
	Postgraduate Diploma	120	at level 7 or above

Registered Award	Exit award/s	Minimum credit requirement for Exit Award	Level
	Postgraduate Certificate	60	at level 7 or above

A15.6 Course Assessment Boards may recommend an exit award to a student who has failed the registered award or who leaves at an interim progression point provided the minimum requirements for the exit award have been achieved.

A15.7 Exit awards will only be recommended where a student's study for their registered award has been completed or terminated.

A15.8 A student who leaves their course and who has not been recommended for an exit award, may apply to the Chair of the Course Assessment Board to be considered for an award at the next meeting of the Board.

In calculating the APM for Exit Awards:

1. the number of counting modules used in the calculation of the APM is as specified for the exit award concerned;
2. fail grades do not contribute to the APM calculation;
3. modules are included in the chronological order in which they were completed. Surplus modules are disregarded from the calculation.
4. any grades awarded as part of a final target award which has then been used as an entry qualification for Direct Entry will not be included in the APM

A15.9 The classification of exit awards is based on the Average Percentage Mark (APM) - a calculation derived from the marks achieved in specified modules. Classifications are subject to other conditions as detailed below.

A15.10 A minimum APM of X9.5 will be rounded up to the next classification for all.

A15.11 Classification of exit award of Taught/Professional Masters Degree;

The classification of awards for Taught/Professional Masters Degree will be based on an APM derived from all Level 7 modules.

For Taught/Professional Masters Degree awards the following scale will be used to determine the classification:

APM	Award
70% or above	Distinction
60% or above	Merit

A15.12 Classification of exit awards for Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate;

The classification of awards for the Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate will be based on an APM derived from all Level 7 modules.

For Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate awards the following scale will be used to determine the award classification:

APM	Award
70 - 100%	Distinction
60 - 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Pass

A16 **Posthumous Award**

The University may confer any of its awards posthumously provided there is evidence of work successfully completed at the appropriate level. The award can be accepted on the student's behalf by a parent, spouse or other appropriate individual.

A17 **Academic Appeals against Progression and Examination Decisions**

A17.1 Principles

A17.1.1 The Academic Appeals Procedure applies to all assessment points in the postgraduate research student journey: Assessment of taught modules, progression decisions, Research Programme Approval; Annual Assessment of Progress and examination.

A17.1.2 Details of the Academic Appeals Procedure, and how it relates to the postgraduate research student experience are set out in the Assessment Handbook for Taught Programmes.

A17.2 Grounds for Appeal

A17.2.1 A request for an appeal against a progression or examination decision shall be valid only if it is based on one or more of the following grounds:

- i) that insufficient weight has been given to extenuating circumstances;
- ii) that the student's academic performance has been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances which the student has **for good reason** been unable to make known at the time;
- iii) that there has been a material administrative error at a stage of the process, or that some material irregularities have occurred;
- iv) that the assessment procedure and/or examination(s) have not been conducted in accordance with the approved regulations.