Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations (MPhil/PhD)

These regulations must be read in conjunction with the *General and Admissions Regulations,* the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees* and any other associated School Policies, Procedures and Codes of Practice.

Contents

1.   Introduction and Scope of the Regulations

1.1   Application of postgraduate research degree regulations
These postgraduate research degree regulations apply to all postgraduate research programmes offered by SOAS University of London ("the School"). These regulations apply to doctoral candidates from institutions other than SOAS University of London when they are enrolled on postgraduate research programmes delivered by the School.

1.2   Taught degree regulations
The School's *Taught Degree Regulations* do not apply to postgraduate research degree candidates except where individual taught modules are being taken as part of their programme.

1.3   Code of Practice for Research Degrees
In addition to these regulations, postgraduate research degree candidates studying in attendance at SOAS are subject to the framework and requirements outlined in the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees*, published annually at the start of the academic year.

1.4   Code of Practice for Distance & Blended Research Degrees
In addition to these regulations, postgraduate research degree candidates studying on distance or blended learning programmes are subject to the framework and requirements outlined in the SOAS Code of Practice for Distance and Blended Research Degrees, published annually at the start of the academic year.

1.5   Minimum regulatory requirements
These regulations, the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees* or *Code of Practice for Distance and Blended Research Degrees*, and the departmental programme and training specifications set out the minimum requirements of the School.

2.   Award Criteria

2.1   PhD Degree
SOAS PhD degrees are awarded to candidates who have registered for the SOAS PhD or MPhil/PhD programme, completed relevant research training, devised and implemented a research project within the degree requirements, and demonstrated that the work examined forms a significant, distinct and original contribution to the knowledge of the subject.

2.2   MPhil Degree
SOAS MPhil degrees are awarded to candidates who have registered for a SOAS MPhil or MPhil/PhD programme, completed relevant research training, devised and implemented a research project within the degree requirements, and demonstrated that the   work

examined demonstrates a thorough understanding and critical assessment of knowledge within the subject.

3. Research Degree Programmes

3.1 Period of registration for PhD

The PhD Programme is of three years full-time study or six years part-time equivalent except for candidates enrolled on the +4 programme where the programme is four years of full-time study or eight years part-time equivalent.

3.2 Period of registration for MPhil

The MPhil Programme is of two years full-time study or four years part-time equivalent.

3.3 Minimum period of enrolment

Postgraduate research degree programmes must normally extend over at least two years of full time study or part-time equivalent.

3.4 Continuous study requirements

Postgraduate research degree programmes must be pursued continuously except where an Interruption of Studies has been approved by the School in accordance with the published procedure.

3.5 Training and Supervision

All postgraduate research degree candidates are required to take responsibility for their own learning and research by meeting regularly with their supervisor, undertaking the annual training needs analysis and engaging with their agreed training plan.

3.6 Upgrade to PhD

Postgraduate research degree candidates enrolled on the three year MPhil/PhD degree programme are considered for upgrade to PhD enrolment within 9 months of full-time enrolment or part-time equivalent of 21 months. Candidates on the +4 pathway will be considered for upgrade to PhD enrolment within 21 months of full-time enrolment or part-time equivalent as set out in Section 4.3.

3.7 Candidates are required to complete the online research ethics training in order to be upgraded to the PhD programme.

3.8 Submission of thesis for examination

Postgraduate research degree candidates enrolled on the three year PhD programme must submit a thesis for examination no later than four years from enrolment (seven years part-time) or within the deadline prescribed by the School where doctoral candidates are admitted with credit from other institutions or have an extended deadline agreed as a reasonable adjustment for disability or accepted mitigating circumstance under the relevant procedure. Doctoral candidates on the +4 pathway must submit for examination no later than five years from enrolment (nine years part-time) unless an extended deadline is agreed as a reasonable adjustment for disability or accepted mitigating circumstance under the relevant procedure. Doctoral candidates failing to submit by the required deadline may be withdrawn and their registration terminated.

3.9 PhD by Thesis and Portfolio

Postgraduate research doctoral candidates may seek to undertake a PhD by a combination of thesis and portfolio of original creative work. To undertake a PhD by thesis and portfolio approval must be obtained prior to upgrade. The postgraduate

research doctoral candidate, having consulted appropriately with the SOAS Library and Research Office, should prepare a proposal for the portfolio content making clear what work will be created, how the work relates to their research, the medium to be used and how it is to be recorded and presented for examination and preservation thereafter. If the creative work has written or spoken elements this should normally be in English, however a request can be made to permit another language to be used. Proposals which are supported by the candidate's supervisory committee should be forwarded to the Directors of Doctoral Studies for approval.

3.10   **Examination procedures**
Candidates will be examined in accordance with the procedures and the requirements of a thesis or thesis and portfolio outlined in section 6 of these regulations.

4.   Enrolment, Attendance, Upgrade and Progression

4.1   **Enrolment**
Postgraduate research degree candidates must enrol upon initial registration for the postgraduate research degree and at the start of each academic session for the period of the degree.

4.2   **Supervisory committee**
All postgraduate research degree candidates are appointed a two person supervisory committee to support them in their research project. There may be some circumstances where it is considered appropriate for a third member of the supervisory committee to be appointed to provide support for particular aspects of the research.

4.3   **Initial enrolment as MPhil and upgrade process**
Postgraduate research degree candidates whose aim is to complete a PhD are initially registered as MPhil/PhD candidates and considered for upgrade to PhD enrolment during the first year of study. If the outcome of this is unsuccessful, doctoral candidates may be required to withdraw from the degree programme or to continue on the MPhil degree and be assessed for the award of MPhil within the requirements outlined in the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees*. For doctoral candidates on the +4 pathway consideration for upgrade to PhD enrolment will take place during the second year of study.

4.4   **Attendance requirements**

4.4.1   Postgraduate research degree candidates are required to pursue a continuous course of study at the School under the direction of their supervisors.

4.4.2   Postgraduate research degree candidates are considered to be studying in attendance unless registered on a designated distance or blended programme. Doctoral candidates, whether full-time or part-time, are required to undertake research for their degree based at SOAS in London. Doctoral candidates should ensure that they are able to attend SOAS in person regularly to pursue their research and for training and meetings in accordance with the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees* and the *SOAS Attendance Policy*.

4.4.3   Postgraduate research degree candidates studying on a programme specifically designated as being a distance or blended programme are required to attend at SOAS

only on such occasions as outlined in their programme specification and the *Code of Practice for Distance and Blended Research Degrees*. Candidates are expected to maintain regular contact with their supervisor and engage with research training and other required activities.

4.5   Fieldwork

Following completion of the consideration for upgrade to PhD, postgraduate research degree candidates may be granted permission for fieldwork away from SOAS subject to relevant provisions of the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees* and applicable departmental requirements.

4.6   Annual progression

Annual progression is subject to satisfactory annual report from the Supervisor being approved by the Doctoral School and the appropriate Directors of Doctoral Studies. Postgraduate researcher failing to make satisfactory progress on their research may be subject to withdrawal.

5.   Writing Up

5.1   Timeframe for writing up

Doctoral candidates on a full-time enrolment for the three-year programme are expected to undertake writing up of the thesis during the third year of study following completion of fieldwork and/or data collection in year two. This timetable is adjusted accordingly for part-time enrolment. Doctoral candidates enrolled on the +4 pathway will undertake writing up during the fourth year of full-time enrolment.

5.2   Extension of Writing-up status

5.2.1   Doctoral candidates are permitted the maximum of one additional year at the conclusion of their normal period of full-time or part-time study for completion of the writing-up of their thesis on Extension of Writing-up status.

5.2.2   Conditions and requirements for the additional year of enrolment are outlined in the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees*.

6.   Examination

6.1   PhD examination by thesis only

A successful thesis for PhD Award must meet the following requirements:

(a) not exceed 100,000 words, excluding bibliography and appendices. Appendices must only include material which the examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis but to which they may refer if they wish

(b) be written in English

(c) consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of enrolment at the School

(d) form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power

(e) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument

(f) demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented

(g) satisfy the examiners with regard to literary presentation

(h) merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form

6.2   PhD examination by thesis and portfolio

A successful submission for the PhD by thesis and portfolio must meet the following requirements:

(a) The thesis must be a minimum of 25,000 words and not exceed 75,000 words, excluding bibliography and appendices. Appendices must only include material which the examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis but to which they may refer if they wish

(b) The portfolio should include the original creative work of the candidate, recorded/printed in the format agreed at the point of upgrade.

(c) The thesis must be written in English. The portfolio work, if it contains verbal or written elements, should normally be in English, but with approval may be in another language with an English translation provided

(d) Consist of the candidate's own account of their investigation and their own creative work, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of enrolment at the School

(e) Form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical and creative power

(f) Be an integrated whole and together the thesis and portfolio should present a coherent argument

(g) Demonstrate research and creative skills relevant to the thesis being presented

(h) Satisfy the examiners with regards to literary and creative presentation

(i) Merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form.

6.3   MPhil examination

A successful thesis for MPhil award must meet the following requirements:

(a) not exceed 60,000 words excluding bibliography and appendices. Appendices must only include material which the examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis but to which they may refer if they wish

(b) be written in English

(c) consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of enrolment at the School

(d) be a record either of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and shall provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly

(e) give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings and include a discussion on those findings

(f) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument

(g) satisfy the examiners with regard to literary presentation.

6.4   Entry to examination

In order to move into the examination phase of study, the doctoral candidate must complete an Entry to Examination request no later than two months before submission of the thesis for examination via PhD Manager.

6.5   Nomination of examiners

The School will appoint examiners following a candidate's entry to examination. The examination will be undertaken by at least two examiners, at least one of whom will be external to SOAS.

6.6   Submission of thesis

Submission forms and an electronic copy of the thesis must be submitted to the Doctoral School via PhD Manager as set out in the *Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research* or *Code of Practice for Distance and Blended Research Degrees* by the candidate's deadline for submission.

A non-electronic version of the thesis may be requested by either examiner, in which case the candidate is required to provide two soft copies to the Doctoral School.

6.8   Viva voce examination

Following submission, a date will be arranged for the candidate to undertake a viva voce examination as part of the examination and confirmed to the candidate, supervisor, examiners and relevant depts.

6.9   Outcome of the first viva for PhD by thesis only, and PhD by thesis and portfolio

At the first viva for PhD, eight outcomes are possible:

(a) Pass
(b) Pass with minor corrections to be made within 3 months of the release of the result.
(c) Not pass, but resubmission with major corrections permitted within 12 months of the release of the result
(d) Not pass, but with recommendation of award of MPhil
(e) Not pass, with a recommendation of MPhil to be awarded upon satisfactory completion of minor corrections within 3 months of the release of the result
(f) Not pass, with a recommendation of MPhil to be awarded upon satisfactory completion of major corrections within 12 months of the release of the result
(g) Fail

6.10   Outcome of the first viva for MPhil

At the first viva for MPhil four outcomes are possible:
(a) Pass
(b) Pass with minor corrections to be made within 3 months of the release of the result
(c) Not pass, but resubmission with major corrections permitted within 12 months of the release of the result
(d) Fail

6.11   Re-entry for examination

Candidates for research degrees who are 'Not pass, but with major corrections' are permitted one re-entry to examination on resubmission of the corrected work. There are six possible outcomes for candidates re-entered for examination:
(a) Pass
(b) Pass with minor corrections to be made within 3 months of the release of the result
(c) Award of MPhil
(d) Award of MPhil with minor corrections to be made within 3 months of the release of the result
(e) Not pass, with a recommendation of MPhil to be awarded on satisfactory completion of major corrections within 12 months of the release of the result
(f) Fail

6.12   Confirmation of results

Advice and instruction may be given by the Examiners at or following the viva, but results are not confirmed until they are released by the Doctoral School. All results are provisional until confirmed by the Doctoral School.

6.13   Failure and no right to re-enter

Should the outcome be 'Fail', a candidate is not permitted to re-enter for examination.

6.14   Re-entry procedure

Candidates who are 'Not pass, but with major corrections' are required to submit re-entry forms two months before the date of re-submission.

6.15   Award of degree

Candidates will be awarded the degree only when they have satisfied the examiners, *and* submitted to the Doctoral School one hard-bound copy for the SOAS Library (in accordance with the *SOAS Binding Notes for Research Degree Theses*) along with one electronic copy and a completed E-thesis Access Agreement Form.

7.   Appeals

7.1   Further information can be found in the *General and Admissions Regulations* and in the School's *Appeals Policy*.

Document Version

Valid from	Author	Changes	Date
2016/17	Marcus Cerny, Doctoral School Manager		September 2016
2018/19	Rebecca Harrison, Academic Registrar	Terminology updates in line with restructuring. Addition of information regarding distance/blended research degrees (1.4; 4.4.2; 4.4.3; 6.2; 6.8; 6.10). Removal of doctoral candidate logbook requirement (3.5). Information on extended deadlines (3.7). Information relating to PhD by thesis and portfolio (3.7.1; 3.8; 6.2; 6.8). Supervisory committee reduced to two members (4.2). Clarification of submission requirements (6.6). Approved by Valerie Amos taking Chair's Action on behalf of Academic Board 26.07.2018.	August 2018
2019/20	Jenni Rhodes, Academic Registrar, in consultation with the Doctoral School Management Group chaired by Professor Alfredo Saad-Filho, Head of Doctoral School and Professor Richard Fardon, Interim Head of the Doctoral School	Terminology and job title updates in line with restructuring Additional outcome for PhD examination (6.9) Removal of examination fee for resubmission following corrections (6.14)	January 2020