

Appendix 2

Administrative procedures for the research degrees (PhD/MPhil and other doctoral degrees)

1 Admission

- 1.1 Pre-application inquiries will be directed by the Registry to the research degree contact person(s) in the relevant School. The contact person may in turn direct the prospective applicant to the potential supervisor who may be a member of the School or a member of staff in any other unit.
- 1.2 Applicants will be encouraged to submit their applications for admission to the research degree together with a brief research proposal, preferably after consulting the potential supervisor. Guidelines for the preparation of the research proposal may be given by the potential supervisor. Where the potential supervisor is not a staff member of a School, the applicant concerned will be required to seek an affiliation with a School with the support of the potential supervisor before submission of his/her application.
- 1.3 One set of formal applications received by the Registry will be forwarded to the relevant School. The School Research Degrees Committee (SRDC) will consider the applications and make recommendations to the RDC by forwarding the Application Summaries to the Secretary of the RDC after completing the sections relating to the nomination of a supervisor(s), recommendation of the Dean/potential supervisor, decision of the SRDC and other remarks, if any. Terms of Reference of the SRDC are available in Appendix 7.
- 1.4 The RDC will consider the SRDC's recommendations with respect to all applicants. On the basis of the RDC's decisions, the Registry will issue letters of offer of admission or rejection. Letters of offer of admission will include the language in which the thesis is to be presented.
- 1.5 The RDC's decisions on admissions/rejections will be reported to the Senate.
- 1.6 Where the applicants are *prima facie* not eligible for admission, or where admission is sought on the strength of professional qualifications or other scholarly achievements, Schools recommending admission should provide supporting reasons together with any evidence relating to the applicants' suitability for pursuing research studies.
- 1.7 Applications will normally be considered in batches four times a year — February, May, August and November.

2 Special Conditions

- 2.1 The RDC, upon recommendation from the SRDC, may approve or prescribe special conditions for any applicant, including undertaking a preliminary course of study and/or performing satisfactorily in an examination, oral or written, either before the date of commencement, or during the period of, the programme of study and research.
- 2.2 Schools should also consider carefully any conditions they attach to offers of admission to ensure fairness to the candidates in terms of the impact such conditions may have on the duration of their candidature.
- 2.3 Offers so made will be reported to the Senate.

3 Termination of Registration

- 3.1 The Principal Research Supervisor may recommend to the RDC, through the relevant SRDC, termination of registration of any student due to lack of progress of the student's studies and research or failure to comply with the Regulations.
- 3.2 The RDC will consider the recommendation and, if appropriate, request the Senate to terminate registration. The Registry will issue a notice of termination to the student concerned in accordance with the decision of the Senate.
- 3.3 A student who wishes to appeal against the decision of the Senate to terminate registration shall do so in writing to the Registrar within 10 calendar days of the date of notice of termination.
- 3.4 The Registrar shall direct the appeal to the Dean of the School or, if the Dean is a supervisor, to a senior academic appointed by the RDC for investigation. The appeal shall be considered only if there has been a material administrative error, or some other material irregularity. The Registrar will report the matter to the Senate for consideration together with the Dean/Senate nominee's recommendation. The decision of the Senate shall be final.

4 Re-registration

- 4.1 A registered student shall, subject to the approval of the SRDC, re-register annually throughout the period of further study and research in accordance with arrangements prescribed by the Registrar.
- 4.2 A registered student may not register or enroll for any other research degree of the University or of any other institution during the period of study and research, unless the express permission of the RDC is obtained.
- 4.3 The student shall be informed at the time of re-registration of the latest date for notification of intention to graduate in any year. Students who intend to graduate will need to serve notice by the stipulated deadline.

5 Period of Study and Research

- 5.1 Submission of the thesis for examination for the part-time MPhil and doctoral degrees shall normally be subject to the following time frame:

Programme	Time frame for submission of thesis
MPhil (part-time)	No less than two and no more than five years after a student's first registration for the thesis of the MPhil degree
PhD (part-time)	No less than two and no more than five years after a student's first registration for the thesis of the PhD degree
Other doctoral degrees with coursework components (part-time)	No less than two and no more than five years after a student's first registration for the thesis of the doctoral degree with coursework components

- 5.2 Submission of the thesis for examination for the full-time MPhil/doctoral degrees shall normally be subject to the following time frame:

Programme	Time frame for submission of thesis
MPhil (full-time)	No less than one and no more than two years after a student's first registration for the thesis of the MPhil degree
PhD (full-time)	No less than one and no more than three years after a student's first registration for the thesis of the PhD degree
Other doctoral degrees with coursework components (full-time)	No less than one and no more than two years after a student's first registration for the thesis of the doctoral degree with coursework components

- 5.3 The period of study and research from admission to the programme to the satisfactory completion of the thesis, including periods of leave of absence and/or suspension of studies (if any), shall normally be subject to the following time frame:

Programme	Period of study and research from admission to completion
MPhil	Full-time: no more than three years Part-time: no more than six years
PhD	Full-time: no more than four years Part-time: no more than eight years
Other doctoral degrees with coursework components	Full-time: no more than four years Part-time: no more than eight years

- 5.4 Any period outside the range prescribed in 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 above should require the approval of the RDC after taking into account the recommendation of the SRDC and the Principal Research Supervisor.
- 5.5 Applications for extending the maximum period or shortening the minimum period should be made by students with the support of the Principal Research Supervisor (endorsed by the relevant SRDC) to the RDC at least three months ahead of time. The RDC will consider such applications and decide on behalf of the Senate. Where an extension of the maximum period is permitted, the RDC will stipulate the final date after which extension of the period of study and research will not be permitted. Students will be informed of the outcome of their applications by the Registry.
- 5.6 Interruption of Candidature — applications for leave of absence should be submitted by the students to the Registrar. Approval for interruption of candidature would be granted on valid grounds.

6 Programme of Study and Research

- 6.1 Upon registration a student shall follow under supervision a prescribed programme of study and research for a specified period in a field approved by the RDC.
- 6.2 During the course of study and research, a student can apply to the RDC, with the support of the Principal Research Supervisor endorsed by the relevant SRDC, for a change of programme of study and research. The RDC will consider each application taking into account the recommendations of the SRDC and the Principal Research Supervisor. Students will be notified of the outcome of their applications by the Registry.

- 6.3 A student can apply to the RDC, with the support of the Principal Research Supervisor endorsed by the relevant SRDC, for a change in the study mode of the programme of study. The change, if approved, shall take effect from the commencement of the Autumn, Spring or Summer term of an academic year in which part-time studies shall be counted as 50% of full-time studies for the conversion.

7 Supervision

- 7.1 At the time of registration, the RDC shall appoint a full-time member of the academic staff, or another person other than a full-time staff of the University approved by the Senate for this purpose, as the Principal Research Supervisor of the student.
- 7.2 The RDC may in addition appoint an Associate Research Supervisor in connection with the student.
- 7.3 In the case that the supervisor(s) nominated is/are not (a) full-time member(s) of academic staff, the RDC will forward the nomination to the Senate for approval together with its recommendation.
- 7.4 Where the Principal Research Supervisor is absent from the University for a period of three months or more, the RDC may make alternative arrangements for the period of absence.
- 7.5 The duties of the Supervisor(s) are set out clearly in Appendix 5 Research Degree Supervision: A Code of Practice.
- 7.6 It shall be the responsibility of the student to report regularly to the Principal Research Supervisor and the Associate Research Supervisor, if any.
- 7.7 A student will be required to submit an interim report (IR) by the end of the tenth month of each year of the student's period of study and research based on which an assessment of the student will be made by the Principal Research Supervisor.
- 7.8 The Principal Research Supervisor shall present to the RDC through the SRDC in which the programme of study and research is being conducted not later than the eleventh month of each year of the student's period of study and research a progress report (PR) on the student's work during the previous year and a recommendation on whether the student should be permitted to re-register. The student shall be given the opportunity to comment on the PR.
- 7.9 Three months before the PR is due, the Secretary of the RDC will remind the student and the appropriate Principal Research Supervisor of the due date for the IR and PR respectively. The student should submit two copies of the IR directly to the Principal Research Supervisor who should inform the Secretary, RDC.
- 7.10 The SRDC will consider the IR in conjunction with the recommendations of the Principal Research Supervisor in the PR and make appropriate recommendations to the RDC on the annual progress of candidates by the end of the twelfth month of the student's period of study and research.
- 7.11 The Principal Research Supervisor need not wait for an annual Progress Report if he/she wishes to recommend termination of studies due to lack of progress of a candidate's studies and research. Any recommendation for termination should be submitted to the RDC via the SRDC.

7.12 RDC's recommendations for progression will be conveyed to the students by the Registry when a report will also be made to the Senate. Any recommendation for termination will be submitted to the Senate for approval.

8 Place of Study and Research

8.1 A candidate may, subject to the recommendation by the Principal Research Supervisor, undertake all or part of the programme of study and research elsewhere than at the University provided that:

8.1.1 the place where the study and research is to be conducted is considered appropriate by the RDC;

8.1.2 the Principal Research Supervisor is able to effect proper control of the student's study and research.

9 Presentation of Thesis

9.1 A registered student who wishes to be examined for the research degree shall give notice to the Registrar of his/her intention to present a thesis and shall at the same time indicate the proposed title of the thesis, which shall be subject to the approval of the RDC via the SRDC, and submit a short summary of 200 to 300 words of its proposed contents. The notice shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee, if any.

9.2 A registered student shall give notice of the intended presentation of a thesis at least three months in advance of the intended date of presentation.

9.3 A registered student may present a thesis only after the expiry of the minimum period of the submission of the thesis for examination.

9.4 A student who anticipates that the thesis cannot be submitted by the expiry of the maximum period of the submission of the thesis for examination should apply for extension of the period at least three months in advance. The application should be submitted via the Principal Research Supervisor (endorsed by the relevant SRDC) who will fill in his/her recommendations. The RDC will consider such applications and decide on behalf of the Senate. The RDC will stipulate the final date after which presentation of the thesis will not be permitted.

9.5 On receipt of notice of intention to present a thesis, the Registrar shall request the Principal Research Supervisor to complete a certificate on whether the thesis is prima facie worthy of examination. The Principal Research Supervisor may so confirm in writing or dissociate himself/herself from the thesis. The Principal Research Supervisor will also be requested to certify that the student has complied with any conditions laid down at registration or re-registration. The Registry will then inform the Dean and arrange for the thesis to be examined.

9.6 Having given proper notice, a student shall subsequently submit to the Registrar four unbound copies of a thesis embodying the results of the study and research undertaken during the programme. For this purpose, 'unbound' means that the pages need not be bound with a hard cover, but must be fastened in a manner which is secure and in which the pages will not detach. The thesis shall include:

- 9.6.1 a certificate from the Principal Research Supervisor to the effect that the thesis is prima facie worthy of examination;
 - 9.6.2 a short abstract of 200 to 300 words summarizing the contents of the thesis;
 - 9.6.3 a certificate signed by the student to the effect that the thesis embodies the results of the programme of study and research, has been composed by him/herself and has not been presented for a higher degree or any other award to any other institution.
- 9.7 Each copy of the thesis presented shall be in the form prescribed in the Guidelines for the Format of Theses (Appendix 3).

10 Contents and Length of Thesis

- 10.1 The length of the thesis for research degrees shall comply with the following guidelines:
- 10.1.1 MPhil thesis: 20,000 to 40,000 English words or a maximum of 60,000 Chinese characters (excluding references, tables and appendices)
 - 10.1.2 Doctoral thesis: 50,000 to 100,000 English words or a maximum of 150,000 Chinese characters (excluding references, tables and appendices)
- 10.2 If the length of the thesis is not in line with the above guidelines, flexibility will be allowed with good justifications, subject to the judgement of the Supervisor. Any deviation from the above guidelines will require the approval of the RDC based on the recommendation of the SRDC and the Supervisor.
- 10.3 A student may not present, as the main content of the thesis, work previously accepted for a degree or other award of the University or any other institution, but may incorporate such work or material in the thesis if he/she specifies the work or material which has been so incorporated.
- 10.4 If any of the work presented has been carried out in collaboration with another person, the student should state clearly and fully the extent of the collaboration, and shall clearly identify in the thesis the parts of the thesis which are not the result of his/her own work.
- 10.5 The thesis shall include a detailed statement of the sources of information which the student has made use of in the preparation of the thesis, the extent to which they have been used and the nature of the use made of them. Where written material directly attributable to others has been incorporated, this shall be specified in the statement.

11 Appointment of Examiners

- 11.1 After the candidate has given notice of his/her intention to present a thesis, the RDC, on the recommendation of the SRDC shall appoint an Award Committee. The Award Committee should be chaired by the Dean of the School (except where the Dean is Principal Research Supervisor, in which case, a senior academic shall be appointed as Chair by the RDC) in which the programme has been offered and consist of at least three examiners nominated by the School, including two internal examiners one of whom shall be the candidate's Principal Research Supervisor, and one external examiner who has had no supervisory relationship with the student. If the appointed External Examiner is based overseas and cannot attend the oral examination, an additional examiner appointed locally may be appointed to act for the External Examiner on that occasion.

11.2 The School should also identify the subject area of research of the student and the proposed thesis title for inclusion in the award certificate.

12 Examination

- 12.1 The Examiners shall consider the thesis presented by the student.
- 12.2 Each Examiner shall submit a report on the thesis to the Award Committee Chairman, through the Registrar, within approximately four to six weeks in normal circumstances, upon receipt of the thesis.
- 12.3 The Examiners shall normally jointly examine the student orally on the subject of the thesis and on the area of study within which the thesis falls.
- 12.4 The Examiners may at their discretion require a student to present him/herself for a written or practical examination or other test.
- 12.5 After the Examiners' reports on the thesis are received, the Registry will arrange an oral examination for the student. The oral examination can take the form of telephone conferencing or tele-conferencing, where possible, if the External Examiner is overseas and no local examiner has been appointed in place of the External Examiner for the purpose of the examination. The Award Committee will meet and the student may be required to amend the thesis.

13 Report of the Award Committee

- 13.1 After the examination has been completed, the Award Committee shall report to the RDC via the SRDC.
- 13.2 If the Examiners are unanimous in their recommendation, the Award Committee's report will be given to the SRDC, which will make a recommendation on the examination results to the RDC for approval.
- 13.3 If there is disagreement amongst the Award Committee concerning the performance of the candidate, the Examiners should submit individual reports to the SRDC. An additional External Examiner may then be appointed who will be required to make a report and recommendation to the SRDC.
- 13.4 After considering the report of the Award Committee and of the additional External Examiner, the SRDC will make a final recommendation on the examination result for consideration by the RDC.
- 13.5 In its report, the Award Committee shall make one of the following recommendations:
 - either
 - 13.5.1 that the degree be awarded; or
 - 13.5.2 that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate making minor corrections to the thesis (where the corrections are not so substantial as to justify a recommendation that the student should submit a revised thesis); or
 - 13.5.3 that the degree be not awarded but that the candidate be permitted to submit a revised thesis and to present him/herself for examination again on a subsequent occasion; or
 - 13.5.4 that the degree be not awarded and that the Registration be terminated.

- 13.6 The Report of the Award Committee shall be confidential to the SRDC and to the RDC.
- 13.7 Where a recommendation is made under para 13.5.2, the Chair of the Award Committee shall be responsible for confirming to the SRDC that the corrections required by the Award Committee have been satisfactorily carried out.
- 13.8 In the event of the SRDC recommending to the RDC that a student be permitted to present a revised thesis and to present himself/herself for examination again on a subsequent occasion in the terms of para 13.5.3, the SRDC shall also recommend the further work required and shall specify the period, which shall normally be no longer than 18 months, within which the thesis may be represented. The Registrar shall make the decision of the RDC known to the student.
- 13.9 The SRDC shall not recommend to the RDC that the degree be awarded unless the Award Committee has reported:
- 13.9.1 that the student possesses a sound general knowledge of the area of study within which the subject of the thesis falls; and
 - 13.9.2 that the candidate has critically investigated and evaluated the approved topic, has acquired competence in the methods of research and scholarship, has displayed sustained independent effort and has lucidly presented the results of his/her work in the thesis; and
 - 13.9.3 that the candidate has satisfied the examiners in the oral examination; and
 - 13.9.4 that, in the opinion of the award committee, the award of the degree is merited.

14 Re-examination

- 14.1 Where a student has been permitted to present a revised thesis and to present him/herself for examination again on a subsequent occasion, the arrangements and rules for the re-examination shall be as if the candidate were being examined for the first time, unless the RDC has, on the original recommendation of the Award Committee and the SRDC, excused the student from a further oral examination.
- 14.2 The Examiners for the re-examination shall be the same as for the first examination unless otherwise determined by the RDC on the recommendation of the SRDC.
- 14.3 A candidate for re-examination shall pay the prescribed re-examination fee, if any, at the time of giving notice of intention to submit a revised thesis.
- 14.4 The re-examination should follow the procedures as given in para 9.5-9.6, 12 and 13.1-13.4 above unless specified otherwise by the RDC.
- 14.5 If the candidate is required to make minor corrections to the thesis prior to the granting of the award, the Chair of the Award Committee shall be responsible for confirming to the SRDC that the corrections required by the Award Committee have been satisfactorily carried out.
- 14.6 A candidate who has failed to satisfy the Examiners in re-examination shall not be permitted to present him/herself for re-examination on a further occasion.

15 Appeals

- 15.1 A student who wishes to appeal against the decision of the RDC in an examination or re-examination shall do so in writing to the Registrar, within 10 calendar days of the date of the publication of the results. The Registrar shall report the matter to the RDC.
- 15.2 In case of appeal, the Registrar shall direct the appeal to the Dean or, where the Dean is a supervisor, to a senior academic appointed by the RDC for investigation. The appeal shall be considered only if there has been a material administrative error, or some other material irregularity. The Registrar will report the matter to the RDC for consideration together with the Dean/RDC nominee's recommendation. The decision of the RDC shall be final.

16 Disposal of and Access to the Thesis

- 16.1 After the candidate has amended the thesis to the satisfaction of the Examiners, he/she is required to submit two hard copies and a soft copy in the prescribed format to the Registrar. The soft copy and one hard copy of the thesis will be deposited with the University Library. The second hard copy will be deposited with the School in which the programme was conducted.
- 16.2 It may be appropriate for a further copy or copies to be presented by the candidate to any collaborating or cooperating establishments.
- 16.3 The thesis submitted by a candidate for the degree has the status of an unpublished manuscript. The author remains the copyright holder and deposit of a copy in the Library or the School does not transfer the copyright.
- 16.4 Consultation of the theses should follow the policies of the University. However, the author of a thesis for the degree deposited in the University Library may apply to the RDC for the imposition of a period of restriction of up to two years in the first instance during which time the author's permission is necessary for access to the thesis. Such an application must contain specific reasons to support it. The period of restriction may be extended for further periods each not exceeding one year at the RDC's discretion provided that the total period of restriction does not normally exceed five years.

17 Conferment of the Degree

- 17.1 The date of conferment of the degree shall be the date of its award by Senate.