

# Imperial College London

## Regulations for the award of MPhil and PhD

### 1 Admission and Registration

- 1.1 The normal minimum entrance requirement for registration for the MPhil degree or the PhD degree is:
- (a) a second class honours degree (normally at least an Upper Second Class Honours) or a taught Master's degree awarded by a UK university institution or a degree of an equivalent standard awarded by a university institution overseas, in a subject appropriate to that of the programme to be followed<sup>1</sup>; or
  - (b) a registrable qualification appropriate to the programme to be followed awarded in Medicine by a UK university, or a qualification of an equivalent standard awarded by a university institution overseas; or
  - (c) a professional or other qualification obtained by written examinations and approved by the College.
- 1.2 Applicants possessing alternative qualifications may also be considered by the College.
- 1.3 A candidate for a research degree will be registered initially for the MPhil degree except where the College has given permission for initial registration for the PhD degree.
- 1.4 The College may register for the MPhil or PhD degree with exemption from part of the course of study a person who has commenced a course of study for the MPhil or PhD degree (or equivalent degree) of another university in the UK.
- 1.5 An applicant for registration may be required to pass a qualifying examination (see Section 2) and may also be required to meet, in respect of certain fields and subjects, additional qualifications for admission as determined by the College.
- 1.6 English language and other tests may be prescribed by the College.
- 1.7 Every applicant must make application to the College in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the College.

### 2 Qualifying Examinations

- 2.1 A student who is required to satisfy qualifying conditions before being eligible to proceed to the MPhil degree may, at the discretion of the College, be permitted to register before these conditions are satisfied.

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<sup>1</sup> The College will normally expect a Master's, or equivalent, qualification or relevant postgraduate experience as a prerequisite for research degree study with effect from entry in October 2010.

- 2.2 Except with the special permission of the College a candidate who fails to pass a qualifying examination prescribed for him/her will not be permitted to re-enter for the qualifying examination; if re-entry to the qualifying examination is permitted, a candidate will be limited to one re-entry.

### **3 Transfer of Registration**

- 3.1 The College may permit a student to transfer from a Postgraduate Taught degree to the MPhil degree, from the MPhil degree to the PhD degree or the PhD degree to the MPhil degree in accordance with the conditions specified by the College, provided that no transfer of registration is permitted after entry to the examination for any one of these degrees. Registration for the degree to which transfer has been made may date from initial registration for the degree from which transfer has been made.
- 3.2 On transfer of registration, the registration for the original degree will lapse.
- 3.3 Assessment of a student's research ability to determine whether registration shall be transferred from MPhil to PhD will be determined by a transfer examination, held no earlier than 9 months and normally no later than 15 months (30 months for part-time students) after the date of initial registration for the MPhil. Students are required to submit a written transfer report, normally of no more than 20-40 pages, on the work to date on which they are given a viva by at least one assessor in addition to, or other than, the supervisor. Work submitted for the report at the end of the first year of study may form part of this transfer examination.
- 3.4 The purpose of the transfer examination is to confirm that the student:
- (a) understands the problem;
  - (b) is aware of the associated literature;
  - (c) has demonstrated capability to conduct the research;
  - (d) has a realistic research plan and schedule;
  - (e) is of PhD calibre.

### **4 Attendance and Course of Study**

- 4.1 Every student is required to pursue a regular course of study at the College under the direction of their supervisor(s).
- 4.2 The programme of study may require attendance at training courses and lectures as prescribed by a student's Department/Division and by the Graduate Schools.
- 4.3 Save as otherwise prescribed in 4.4 below, the minimum length of course for the degrees of MPhil and PhD shall be 24 months of full-time study or the equivalent (normally 48 months) in part-time study.
- 4.4 A student accepted under transfer credit arrangements in paragraph 1.4 above may be exempted from part of the course of study for the MPhil or PhD degree provided that the course of study followed at the College is not less than 12 months full-time or 24 months part-time.

- 4.5 A course of study must be pursued continuously except by permission of the College authorities.
- 4.6 Students are required to undertake the majority of their research at the College except where these requirements make provision for study elsewhere: in such cases there is a minimum attendance of 12 months at the College.
- 4.7 Students may be granted permission to have study leave so that they may undertake field work or aspects of their research away from College, subject to the requirements set out in 4.6 above.
- 4.8 Students may be permitted to register for a research degree at an institution approved by the College for the purpose under the Partner Research Institution scheme.
- 4.9 Students may be permitted to register for a research degree under split PhD arrangements subject to the requirements set out in 4.6 and 4.7 above.
- 4.10 Full-time students are required to submit a research degree examination entry form no later than 44 months after initial registration for the research degree. No entry will be permitted later than 44 months after initial registration unless mitigating circumstances for late submission have been considered and agreed by the College authorities.
- 4.11 Full-time students must submit their thesis for examination within 48 months of the date of the initial degree registration.
- 4.12 Part-time students are required to submit a research degree examination entry form no later than 68 months after initial registration for the research degree. No entry will be permitted later than 68 months after initial registration unless mitigating circumstances for late submission have been considered and agreed by the College authorities.
- 4.13 Part-time students must submit their thesis for examination within 72 months of the date of the initial degree registration.
- 4.14 After completing their course of study, students are normally required to present themselves for examination within 12 months, subject also to the requirements set out in 4.10 and 4.12 above.

## **5 Requirements of a Thesis**

### **5.1 Thesis for the PhD degree**

#### 5.1.1 The thesis shall:

- (a) consist of the candidate's own account of his/her investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree;

*[The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the candidate and certified by the supervisor.]*

- (b) and 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;
- (c) and be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;

*[A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis.*

*Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the candidate alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of the thesis, but may be adapted to form an integral part of the thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of the thesis.*

*Publications derived from the work in the thesis may be attached as supplementary material to the thesis.]*

- (d) and give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, include discussion on those findings and indicate in what respects they appear to the candidate to advance the study of the subject; and, in so doing, demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study, (the candidate being able to place the thesis in a wider context), objectivity and the capacity for judgment in complex situations and autonomous work in that field;
- (e) and be written in English and the literary presentation shall be satisfactory, although a candidate may make application for a thesis in the field of modern foreign languages and literatures only to be written in the language of study, to be considered on an exceptional basis by the Graduate School for Life Sciences and Medicine; in such cases the thesis shall include additionally a submission of between 10,000 and 20,000 words which shall be written in English and shall summarise the main arguments of the thesis;
- (f) and not exceed 100,000 words;

*[Note: the bibliography is excluded from the word count; footnotes are included within the word count; appendices are excluded from the word count and should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish.]*

- (g) and include a full bibliography and references;
- (h) and demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented;
- (i) and be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals).

## **5.2 Thesis for the MPhil degree**

### **5.2.1 The thesis shall:**

- (a) consist of the candidate's own account of his/her investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree;

*[The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the candidate and certified by the supervisor.]*

- (b) and be either a record of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and shall provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly;
- (c) and be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;

*[A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis.*

*Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the candidate alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of the thesis, but may be adapted to form an integral part of the thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of the thesis.*

*Publications derived from the work in the thesis may be attached as supplementary material to the thesis.]*

- (d) and give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings and include a discussion on those findings;
- (e) and be written in English and the literary presentation shall be satisfactory, although a candidate may make application for a thesis in the field of modern foreign languages and literatures only to be written in the language of study, to be considered on an exceptional basis by the Graduate School for Life Sciences and Medicine; in such cases the thesis shall include additionally a submission of between 10,000 and 20,000 words which shall be written in English and shall summarize the main arguments of the thesis;
- (f) and include a full bibliography and references;
- (g) and shall not exceed 60,000 words;

*[Note: the bibliography is excluded from the word count; footnotes are included within the word count; appendices are excluded from the word count and should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish.]*

### **5.3 Requirements applicable to Theses submitted for the Degrees of MPhil and PhD**

5.3.1 The greater proportion of the work submitted in a thesis must have been done after the initial registration for a research degree, except that in the case of a student accepted under paragraph 1.4 there shall be allowance for the fact that the student commenced his/her registration at another institution.

- 5.3.2 A candidate will not be permitted to submit as his/her thesis one which has been submitted for a degree or comparable award of the College or any other university or institution, but a candidate shall not be precluded from incorporating in a thesis covering a wider field work which he/she has already submitted for a degree or comparable award of the College or any other university or institution provided that he/she shall indicate on his/her entry form and also on his/her thesis any work which has been so incorporated.
- 5.3.3 A candidate may submit the results of work done in conjunction with his/her supervisor and/or with fellow research workers provided that the candidate states clearly his/her own personal share in the investigation and that the statement is certified by the supervisor (see also paragraph 5.3.4).
- 5.3.4 A candidate must submit with the thesis a declaration that the work presented in the thesis is his/her own and that it is the one upon which he/she expects to be examined (see also paragraph 5.3.3).
- 5.3.5 A thesis must be presented for examination in a final form in an electronic format conforming to the instructions issued by the Academic Registrar (<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/exams/thesisandvivas>).
- 5.3.6 After the examination has been completed, and before the degree is awarded, successful candidates are required to submit to the Academic Registrar, for depositing with the College Library, one copy of the thesis in electronic format conforming to the instructions issued by the Academic Registrar and one hard copy bound to the specification in the instructions issued by the Academic Registrar.
- 5.3.7 Every candidate is required to present a short abstract of his/her thesis of not more than 300 words and bound with each copy of the thesis submitted to the College. One additional loose copy of the abstract must also be provided.

## **6 Entry to Examination and Submission of Thesis**

- 6.1 The decision to submit a thesis rests with the candidate alone.
- 6.2 A candidate shall be examined in accordance with the regulations in force at the time of his/her entry or re-entry.
- 6.3 A candidate enters for the examination by submitting an entry form no earlier than six months before the completion of the prescribed course and at least four months before the submission of the thesis.
- 6.4 A candidate is required to submit with his/her entry form a short description of the content of the thesis in about 300 words to assist in the appointment of suitable examiners.
- 6.5 If the candidate has not submitted his/her thesis for examination within 18 months from the submission of the entry form for the examination, the entry will be cancelled.
- 6.6 A candidate will be required to submit a copy of his/her thesis in accordance with instructions obtainable from the Academic Registrar (see paragraph 5.3.5 above).

- 6.7 A candidate for the MPhil or PhD degree is required to bring to the oral examination a hard copy of his/her thesis paginated in the same way as the copies submitted electronically to the College.

## 7 Availability of Theses

- 7.1 It is a requirement for the award of the degree that copies of successful theses, as specified in 5.3.6, are deposited in the College Library<sup>2</sup>. The electronic copy shall be the archival copy and shall be deposited in the College Digital Repository which is managed by the College Library.

- 7.2 Subject to paragraph 7.3 below, candidates for the MPhil and PhD degrees will at the time of entry to the examination be required to sign a declaration in the following terms:

- (a) I authorise that the thesis presented by me in [year] for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the Imperial College shall, if a degree is awarded, be deposited in the College Digital Repository, and, if required, in the National Thesis Service, where it will be made available for public reference.
- (b) I authorise the College authorities to copy the submission, or, without changing the content, translate it to any medium or format, for the purpose of security, back up and preservation.
- (c) I authorise the College authorities to supply a copy of the abstract of my thesis for inclusion in any published list (hard copy or electronic) of theses offered for higher degrees in British universities.
- (d) I understand that before my thesis is made available for public reference and copying, the following statement will have been included at the beginning of my thesis:

*The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author.*

- (e) I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.
  - (f) I understand that in the event of my thesis not being approved by the examiners, this declaration will become void.
- 7.3 A candidate may apply to the College for restriction of access, for a period not exceeding two years, to his/her thesis and/or the abstract of the thesis on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting or in very exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the procedure adopted by the College for consideration of such applications.

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<sup>2</sup> Provided that where, in the opinion of the College, the thesis includes material that is of significance for national security, arrangements may be made, with the agreement of the graduate concerned, so that the copies of the thesis placed in the public domain may have certain parts excised from them; in such cases the copies of the thesis placed in the public domain shall include an accompanying statement indicating by whom and at what location the full thesis on which the award was made may be consulted.

## **8 Conduct of Examinations**

### **8.1 General**

- 8.1.1 Candidates for the Degrees of MPhil and PhD degree must submit a thesis and be examined orally, save as prescribed otherwise in sections 8.2 and 8.4 below.
- 8.1.2 The outcome of the examination is determined by two or more examiners acting jointly.
- 8.1.3 Examiners will be appointed for each candidate in accordance with the Procedure for Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees.
- 8.1.4 All matters relating to the examination must be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of previously unpublished material contained in a candidate's thesis until such time as any restrictions on access to the thesis, which have been granted by the College, are removed.
- 8.1.5 The examiners shall prepare independent preliminary written reports on the thesis to assist in conducting the oral examination (or the preparation of the joint report in those cases where no oral examination is held - *see paragraphs 8.2.3(c) and 8.4.3(c) below*). Copies of the preliminary reports should be submitted to the Academic Registrar together with the joint report. The preliminary reports will not normally be released to candidates but will be made available to the members of an appellate committee in the case of an appeal against the result of the examination for consideration at an appellate committee hearing. In such an event the preliminary reports will also be provided to the candidate. After any oral examination, a joint final report shall be prepared for submission to the Rector of the College. The joint final report will be released routinely to candidates for their personal information.
- 8.1.6 Each joint final report of the examiners shall indicate whether the thesis meets the requirements specified in paragraph 5.1 or 5.2 as appropriate and shall include a reasoned statement of the examiners' judgment of the candidate's performance.
- 8.1.7 Examiners have the right to make comments in confidence to the College in a separate report. Such comments should not normally be concerned with the performance of the candidate but may cover, for example, matters which they wish to draw to the attention of the College.
- 8.1.8 The supervisor shall not be invited, unless the candidate indicates otherwise at the point of entry to the examination, to attend the oral examination of his/her MPhil or PhD candidate. If invited to attend as an observer, the supervisor does not have the right to participate in the examination of the candidate but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners. Otherwise the oral examination shall be held in private. In exceptional circumstances, the Rector may appoint an independent observer to attend a candidate's viva.
- 8.1.9 The oral examination must normally be conducted at one of the College campuses. The College may, however, exceptionally agree that the examination be conducted elsewhere if there are circumstances which make this expedient.



8.1.10 The examiners may, at their discretion, consult the supervisor before completing their report, particularly if they have doubts relating to the appropriate decision to be made.

## 8.2 Conduct of PhD Examination

8.2.1 Except as provided in paragraphs 8.2.3(c) the examiners, after reading the thesis, shall examine the candidate orally on the subject of the thesis and, if they see fit, on subjects relevant thereto.

8.2.2 Candidates are required to present themselves for the examination at such place and time as the College may direct and to bring with them to the oral examination an additional copy of their thesis, as stated in paragraph 6.7 above.

8.2.3 There are six options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination as follows:

- (a) if the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in paragraph 5.1 above) and the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination for the PhD degree.
- (b) if the thesis otherwise fulfils the criteria but requires minor amendments and if the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the candidate to make within three months amendments specified by them. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners or one of their number nominated by them for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
- (c) if the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present his/her thesis in a revised form within 18 months. Examiners shall not, however, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of his/her thesis, a candidate who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
- (d) if the thesis satisfies the criteria for the degree, but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 18 months.
- (e) if, after completion of the examination including the oral examination or re-examination for the PhD degree, the examiners determine that a candidate has not reached the standard required for the award of the degree nor for the re-presentation of the thesis in a revised form for that degree, they shall consider whether the thesis does or might be able to satisfy the criteria for the award of the MPhil degree. If they so decide, the examiners shall submit a report which demonstrates either (a) how the criteria for the MPhil degree are satisfied, or (b) what action would need to be taken in order for these criteria to be satisfied<sup>3</sup>. Thereafter the following conditions and procedures will apply:

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<sup>3</sup> In reporting they shall have regard to the different normal maximum lengths of the thesis for the PhD and MPhil degrees but shall have discretion to waive the thesis length for the degree if appropriate.

*Either*

- (i) the candidate will be informed that he/she has been unsuccessful at the examination for the PhD degree, but that his/her examiners have indicated that he/she has reached the standard required for the award of the MPhil degree or with minor amendments to his/her thesis he/she will satisfy the criteria for the degree, and that he/she may be considered for the award of the MPhil degree if he/she indicates within two months that he/she wishes to be so considered. Any minor amendments required shall be made within three months and the amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners or one of their number nominated by them for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
- (ii) a candidate who indicates that he/she wishes to be considered for the award of the MPhil degree under this Regulation will not be required to submit the thesis, as may be required under the Regulations for the MPhil degree, or to undergo an oral examination thereon, but will be required to fulfil the requirements for the MPhil examination in all other respects.
- (iii) a candidate who has reached the standard for the award of the MPhil degree who does not indicate that he/she wishes to be considered for the award of that degree within the period given in paragraph (i) above will be informed that he/she has failed to satisfy the examiners for the PhD degree and that he/she may no longer be considered for the award of the MPhil degree.

*or*

- (iv) if the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to enter the examination for the MPhil degree and re-present his/her thesis in a revised form within 12 months. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of his/her thesis, a candidate who under these regulations has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
- (f) The examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination. The examiners shall not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination.

8.3.4 If the examiners are unable to reach agreement, their reports shall be referred to a panel comprising the Director of the appropriate Graduate School, a Dean for the appropriate Faculty and the Academic Registrar (or their nominees), which shall determine the action to be taken.

8.3.5 A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners will not be permitted to re-enter for the examination. A candidate may however apply to the College to register for another course of study leading to the submission of a thesis on a different topic.

#### **8.4 Conduct of MPhil Examination**

8.4.1 Except as provided in paragraph 8.4.3.(c) the examiners, after reading the thesis, shall examine the candidate orally on the subject of the thesis and, if they see fit, on subjects relevant thereto.

8.4.2 Candidates are required to present themselves for the examination at such place and time as the College may direct and to bring with them to the oral examination an additional copy of their thesis, as stated in paragraph 6.7 above.

8.4.3 There are five options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination as follows:

- (a) if the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in paragraph 5.2 above) and the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination for the degree of MPhil.
- (b) if the thesis otherwise fulfils the criteria but requires minor amendments and if the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the candidate to make within three months amendments specified by them. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners or one of their number nominated by them for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
- (c) if the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present his/her thesis in a revised form within 12 months. Examiners shall not, however, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of his/her thesis, a candidate who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
- (d) if the thesis fulfils the criteria but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 12 months.
- (e) the examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination. The examiners shall not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination.

8.4.4 If the examiners are unable to reach agreement, their reports shall be referred to a panel comprising the Director of the relevant Graduate School, the Dean for the relevant Faculty and the Academic Registrar (or their nominees), which shall determine the action to be taken.

8.4.5 A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners will not be permitted to re-enter for the examination. A candidate may however apply to the College to register for another course of study leading to the submission of a thesis on a different topic.

## **9 Notification of Results of MPhil and PhD Examinations**

9.1 After the examiners have reached a decision, the candidate shall be notified by the Academic Registrar of the result of his/her examination. The degree shall not be awarded until an electronic version of the successful thesis has been deposited in the College Digital Repository and one hard copy has been lodged with the Academic Registrar (*see paragraph 5.3.6*).

- 9.2 A diploma under the seal of the College shall be subsequently delivered to each candidate who has been awarded a degree.
- 9.3 The diploma for the degree will bear the names of the candidate in the form in which they appear in the records of the College at the date of issue.

## **10 General**

- 10.1 Except insofar as paragraph 5.3.3. applies, the work in the thesis submitted by the candidate must be his/her own and submission of a thesis for examination for the MPhil or PhD degree will be regarded as a declaration of this fact.
- 10.2 All work submitted as part of the requirements for any examination of the College must be expressed in the candidate's own words and incorporate his/her own ideas and judgments. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as though they were the candidate's own and is an examination offence. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished work of another must always be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and a full reference to their source must be provided in the proper form. A series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Equally, if another person's ideas or judgments are summarised, the candidate must refer to that person in his/her text, and include the work to which reference is made in the bibliography.
- 10.3 Allegations of plagiarism will be considered in accordance with the Examination Offences Policy and Procedures, which are available from the Academic Registrar, as will any other allegations of examination misconduct, including, but not limited to:
- (a) deliberate attempts to represent falsely or unfairly the ideas or work of others;
  - (b) the invention or fabrication of data;
  - (c) the submission of work commissioned from another person.
- 10.4 The College has approved a Procedure for Consideration of Appeals by Candidates for Research Degrees, which is available from the Academic Registrar. An application under the Procedure must be made within two months of notification of the result of the examination to the candidate. (See <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/policiesandprocedures.>)