

# Imperial College London

## Regulations for the award of MD (Res)

*These Regulations are effective from 1 October 2011 for all MD (Res) students*

### 1 Admission and Registration

- 1.1 The normal minimum entrance requirement for registration for the MD (Res) degree is:
  - (a) a registrable qualification appropriate to the course to be followed awarded by a UK university in Medicine, or a qualification of an equivalent standard appropriate to the course to be followed awarded by a university outside the UK; and
  - (b) be eligible for full registration or hold limited registration with the General Medical Council.
- 1.2 The College may, at the discretion of the Graduate School, register for the MD(Res) degree a person who meets the requirements in 1.1 (a) above but who does not hold registration with the General Medical Council providing that the research project does not involve contact with patients.
- 1.3 English language and other tests may be prescribed by the College.
- 1.4 Every applicant must make application to the College in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the College.

### 2 Progression

- 2.1 Assessment of a student's research ability to determine whether registration for the MD (Res) degree can continue will be determined by a confirmation examination, held 9 months (18 months for part-time students) after the date of initial registration. Students are required to submit a report, typically between 20 and 30 pages and including a literature review, results to date and a plan for future work. Students are given a viva on this report by at least one assessor in addition to or other than the supervisor. If the College determines that the student's progress is such that they cannot continue, the student may be required to withdraw from College at this stage.
- 2.2 Save as otherwise prescribed in 2.3 below, a further review of a student's research ability will be undertaken between 18 and 24 months (between 30 and 36 months for part-time students) after the date of initial registration, the form of review to be determined by the student's Department. Subject to progress the College may at this stage permit the student to continue, or may require the student to withdraw from College.
- 2.3 A candidate who enters for the examination by submitting an entry form between 18 and 24 months (between 30 and 36 months for part-time students) after the date of initial registration may be exempted from the review described in 2.2 above.

- 2.4 A candidate who enters for the examination under the arrangements in paragraph 2.3 above is required to attend the requisite training courses before submitting an entry form.

### **3 Attendance and Course of Study**

- 3.1 Every student is required to pursue a regular course of study at the College under the direction of their supervisor(s).
- 3.2 The programme of study will require attendance at training courses and lectures as prescribed by a student's Department and by the Graduate School. Failure to complete the requisite training courses may prevent a student from entering the MD (Res) examination.
- 3.3 The minimum length of course for the degree of MD (Res) shall be 24 months for full-time students, College staff and NHS staff having a contract with a hospital affiliated to the College.
- 3.4 The minimum length of course for the degree of MD (Res) for students other than those designated in 3.3 above shall be the equivalent in part-time study of 24 months' full-time study (normally 48 months).
- 3.5 A course of study must be pursued continuously except by permission of the College authorities.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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 3.6 above.
- 3.8 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 appropriate College committee.
- 3.9 Full-time students must submit their thesis for examination within 48 months of the date of the initial registration.
- 3.10 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 approved by the College authorities.
- 3.11 Part-time students must submit their thesis for examination within 72 months of the date of the initial degree registration.
- 3.12 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 3.8 and 3.10 above.

## 4 Requirements of a Thesis

4.1 A thesis for the MD(Res) degree will deal with any branch of medicine, or surgery or medical science.

4.2 It is a condition of the award of the degree that the clinical research involved in the thesis shall conform to high ethical standards. If the College is not satisfied on this point the degree will not be awarded irrespective of the merit of the thesis in other respects.

4.3 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;

(f) and not exceed 50,000 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).

- 4.4 The greater proportion of the work submitted in a thesis must have been done after the initial registration for the degree.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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 4.7).
- 4.7 A candidate must submit with the thesis a signed 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 4.6).
- 4.8 A thesis must be presented for examination in a final form in an electronic format conforming to the instructions issued by the Academic Registrar.  
(See <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/exams/thesisandvivas>).
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 Every candidate is required to present a short (final) 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.

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

- 5.1 The decision to submit a thesis rests with the candidate alone.
- 5.2 A candidate shall be examined in accordance with the regulations in force at the time of his/her entry or re-entry.
- 5.3 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, subject to the requirements set out in 2.2 and 2.4 above.

- 5.4 A candidate is required to submit with his/her entry form to the examination a short description of the content of the thesis in about 300 words to assist in the appointment of suitable examiners.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 A candidate will be required to submit a copy of his/her thesis in accordance with instructions obtainable from the Academic Registrar (see paragraph 4.8 above).
- 5.7 A candidate for the MD(Res) degree is required to bring to the oral examination a copy of his/her thesis paginated in the same way as the copies submitted electronically to the College.

## 6 Availability of Theses

- 6.1 It is a requirement for the award of the degree that copies of successful theses, as specified in 4.9, are deposited in the College Library. The electronic copy shall be the archival copy and shall be deposited in Spiral, the College Digital Repository which is managed by the College Library.
- 6.2 Subject to paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 below, candidates for the MD (Res) degree 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 MD (Res) degree of the Imperial College shall, if a degree is awarded, be deposited in the Spiral, 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 is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives licence. Researchers are free to copy, distribute or transmit the thesis on the condition that they attribute it, that they do not use it for commercial purposes and that they do not alter, transform or build upon it. For any reuse or distribution, researchers must make clear to others the license terms of this work.*

- (e) I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party. I attach copies of all permission documents to my thesis. Where I have not been able to obtain the necessary rights or permissions for the inclusion of certain material in my thesis I hereby affirm that I have exercised my best endeavours to secure these and have appended copies of my letters/emails seeking these to the thesis.

(f) I understand that in the event of my thesis not being approved by the examiners, this declaration will become void.

6.3 A candidate, together with their supervisor, may apply to the College for an embargo to their thesis (both electronic and hard bound) and/or the abstract for an appropriate period, on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting or in other appropriate circumstances and in accordance with the procedure adopted by the College for consideration of such applications.

6.4 All theses submitted between 1 March 2012 and 28 February 2013 will be available to members of Imperial College only in Spiral, save that during this period any candidate, together with their supervisor, may opt to have their thesis made publicly available in Spiral. From 1 March 2013 all theses will be automatically open access in Spiral save where the candidate, together with their supervisor, applies for an embargo.

## **7 Conduct of Examination**

7.1 A candidate for the MD(Res) degree must submit a thesis and be examined orally, save as prescribed otherwise in paragraphs 7.11-7.15 below.

7.2 The outcome of the examination is determined by two or more examiners acting jointly.

7.3 Examiners will be appointed for each candidate in accordance with the Procedure for Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees.

7.4 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.

7.5 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 paragraph 7.13(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. The joint final report will be released routinely to candidates for their personal information.

7.6 Each joint final report of the examiners shall indicate whether the thesis meets the requirements specified in paragraphs 4.1-4.3 and shall include a reasoned statement of the examiners' judgment of the candidate's performance.

7.7 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.

- 7.8 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 MD(Res) 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 and also in the early stages of a joint or collaborative degree programme, the Rector may appoint an independent observer to attend a candidate's viva.
- 7.9 The oral examination must normally be conducted at one of the College's campuses. The College may, however, exceptionally agree that the examination be conducted elsewhere if there are circumstances which make this expedient.
- 7.10 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.
- 7.11 Except as provided in paragraphs 7.13(c) the examiners, after reading the thesis, shall examine the candidate orally.
- 7.12 Candidates are required to present themselves for the examination at such place and times as the College may direct and to bring with them to the oral examination an additional copy of their thesis, as stated in paragraph 5.7 above.
- 7.13 There are five options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination as follows:
- (a) if the thesis fulfils the requirements set out in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 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 MD(Res) degree;
  - (b) if the thesis otherwise fulfils the requirements set out in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 above, 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) 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.

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

- 8.1 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 4.9 above).
- 8.2 A diploma under the seal of the College shall be subsequently delivered to each candidate who has been awarded a degree.
- 8.3 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.

## **9 General**

- 9.1 Except insofar as paragraph 4.6 applies, the work in the thesis submitted by the candidate must be his/her own and submission of a thesis for examination for the MD(Res) degree will be regarded as a declaration of this fact.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 Allegations of plagiarism will be considered in accordance with the Cheating 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.

9.4 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>.)