

**Regulations for the Awards of MPhil and PhD  
2023-24**

# Contents

<b>PART 1: CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Section 1: Introduction to the Regulations.....	1
Section 2: Scope of the Regulations .....	1
Section 3: Principles .....	1
<b>PART 2: ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Section 4: General Entrance Requirements.....	2
Section 5: Registration.....	3
Section 6: Programme Transfers .....	3
<b>PART 3: PROGRAMME OF STUDY AND PROGRESSION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Section 7: Attendance.....	4
Section 8: Progression.....	5
Section 9: Submission of Thesis .....	7
Section 10: Intercalated PhD Students .....	8
Section 11: Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) Students.....	8
<b>PART 4: REQUIREMENTS OF A THESIS AND EXAMINATION.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Section 12: Requirements of a Thesis .....	8
Section 13: Availability of Theses .....	11
Section 14: Conduct of Examinations .....	12
Section 15: Notification of Results of Examinations .....	17
Section 16: General.....	17

## **PART 1: CONTEXT**

### **Section 1: Introduction to the Regulations**

- 1.1 These Regulations apply to doctoral programmes for registered students of Imperial College London (hereinafter referred to as 'the College'). These Regulations apply except where specific exemptions (either to specific regulations or to the Regulations as a whole) have been approved in advance of employment by the College Senate.
- 1.2 These Regulations should be read in conjunction with the College's related policies and procedures and other supporting documentation published by the College.
- 1.3 These Regulations do not apply to taught undergraduate or postgraduate programmes (including MRes) or to the taught elements of integrated CDT programmes, which are covered by the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study.
- 1.4 The procedures and information given in any accompanying appendices are considered to have the full authority of the Regulations contained within the main document. However, appendices or footnotes may be amended or withdrawn as appropriate by the College without reference to Senate.
- 1.5 These are applicable to all students within the scope of these Regulations until rescinded by the College Senate.
- 1.6 It is a student's responsibility to ensure they have read and understood the Regulations. A student's misinterpretation or lack of awareness of these Regulations will not be considered a valid reason for non-compliance.
- 1.7 In the case of any dispute about the interpretation of these Regulations, the decision of the Academic Registrar shall be final.

### **Section 2: Scope of the Regulations**

- 2.1 These Regulations apply to the awards listed below and to students registered at the College on programmes of study leading to these awards:
  - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
  - Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- 2.2 These Regulations apply to students registered for an Intercolated PhD as part of the MBBS programme.
- 2.3 The Doctor in Engineering (EngD) and the Doctor of Medicine (Research) (MD(Res)) are covered by separate regulations.

### **Section 3: Principles**

- 3.1 The College's academic frameworks are designed to:

- Ensure the College is able to manage and maintain academic standards.
- Ensure consistency in the ways in which students experience the delivery of a programme of study.

3.2 The College's academic framework operates within the parameters of both the national Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) and the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).

3.3 Research degrees are not credit-rated but will be aligned with the academic levels of the FHEQ and the QF-EHEA as follows:

Qualification	FHEQ Level	QF-EHEA cycle
PhD	8	Third cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
MPhil	7	Second cycle (end of cycle) qualifications

## PART 2: ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

### Section 4: General Entrance Requirements

- 4.1 The normal minimum entrance requirements for registration for postgraduate research degree programmes are:
- Normally, at least an upper second class honours degree and a Master's degree from an approved UK university / institution, or degrees approved by the College as of comparable standards awarded by recognised overseas universities / institutions in subjects deemed appropriate for the programme to which admission is sought; or
  - An MSci or MEng degree awarded with at least upper second class honours; or
  - A qualification at FHEQ Level 7 such as; a registrable qualification in Medicine or a Master's degree, awarded by an approved UK university / institution, or qualifications approved by the College as of comparable standards awarded by recognised overseas universities / institutions in subjects deemed appropriate for the programme to which admission is sought; or
  - A professional or other qualification obtained by written examinations and approved by the College for admission; and
  - The minimum English language entry requirement as set out for the programme of study.
- 4.2 The entry requirements for the Intercolated PhD programme taken as part of the MBBS award are:
- (a) Satisfactory Performance in the early year(s) of the MBBS programme with no previous examination resits; and
  - (b) A BSc classification of at least an Upper Second Class Honours.
- 4.3 All programmes of study in the College are conducted in English. All students must fulfil the English Language requirements for admissions. Any specific Departmental requirements above the College minimum set out in 4.1 should be specified to students in advance of application.
- 4.4 Every applicant must make an application to the College in accordance with the procedure set out in the College's [Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy](#).

- 4.5 Research degree students may be permitted to transfer their research degree registration status from another university or institution to Imperial College with exemption from part of the programme. Applicants accepted under these arrangements are required to follow a programme of study at the College of not less than 12 months (full-time mode of study) or 24 months (part-time mode of study). For further details governing the transfer of registration review the relevant: [Transfer of Registration Status Policy - Research Degrees](#).

#### Special Case Admissions

- 4.6 The College will consider applications where the individual's qualifications are at the required level, but where the grades achieved do not meet the College's normal minimum entry requirements. In such circumstances, it will be at the discretion of the admitting Department to make a special case, which will only be valid for someone who has considerable work experience that compensates for the degree grades being below the minimum requirement. If the Department wishes to offer a place to such an applicant, the Programme Director will make a case to the Director of Postgraduate Studies (or Department equivalent) for consideration. Once a decision has been made it will be conveyed to the Programme Director and Department Administrator, who will submit the decision to Admissions for approval. Subject to these requirements being fulfilled, Admissions will then issue the offer.

#### Section 5: Registration

- 5.1 Research degree students must be registered on their target award and for the full length of their programme of study, including any approved Interruptions of Study.
- 5.2 PhD students may be permitted to undertake research at an institution approved by the College under the Partner Research Institution (PRI) scheme subject to the requirements set out in 7.8.
- 5.3 PhD students may be permitted to undertake research at a university approved by the College under Split PhD arrangements subject to the requirements set out in 7.9.
- 5.4 Students will remain registered on their programme until completion, which would include any additional time for amendments.

#### Section 6: Programme Transfers

- 6.1 A student registered directly for the award of the MPhil degree may be permitted to transfer to the PhD degree following an examination which includes a written report and an oral examination of that report. The assessment panel will include an external assessor, a member of College academic staff other than the supervisor(s) and may also include an assessor from another College department, division or institution. A transfer from MPhil to PhD can only be considered at least 12 months from the date of the initial MPhil registration.
- 6.2 The College may permit a student to transfer from the MD(Res) degree to the PhD degree, or from the PhD degree to the MD(Res) degree, in accordance with the conditions specified by the College, provided that no transfer is permitted after entry to the examination for either one of these degrees.

- 6.3 The transferred registration will be dated from the date of the initial registration for the degree from which transfer has been made.
- 6.4 On transfer of registration, the registration for the original degree will lapse.
- 6.5 Any request to change mode of study, full-time to part-time of vice versa, must be approved by the Supervisor and the Director of Postgraduate Studies.

### **PART 3: PROGRAMME OF STUDY AND PROGRESSION**

#### **Section 7: Attendance**

- 7.1 Students are required to pursue a regular programme of study at the College under the direction of their supervisor(s), and in line with the [Mutual Expectations for the Research Degree Student Supervisor Partnership](#).
- 7.2 The MPhil programme of study will require attendance at training courses and lectures as prescribed by the Graduate School and a student's Department (see 8.15 to 8.18).
- 7.3 The PhD programme of study will require attendance at training courses and lectures as prescribed by the Graduate School and a student's Department. Failure to complete the requisite training courses may result in a student's registration being transferred from PhD to MPhil or prevent a student from entering the PhD or MPhil examination (see 8.15 to 8.18).
- 7.4 A student accepted under transfer of registration arrangements in paragraph 4.5 above may be exempted from part of the programme of study for the PhD degree provided that the programme of study followed at the College is not less than 12 months full-time or 24 months part-time.
- 7.5 A programme of study must be pursued continuously except where a student has been granted an Authorised Interruption of Studies.
- 7.6 Students are required to undertake the majority of their research at the College except where their registration makes provision for study elsewhere (see 7.7 to 7.9): in such cases there is a minimum attendance of 12 months at the College for PhD students. MPhil students should normally spend a minimum of 6 months in attendance at the College.
- 7.7 Students may be granted permission to have external study leave so that they may undertake field work or aspects of their research away from College.
- 7.8 The attendance requirement for students registered under the Partner Research Institution (PRI) scheme will be a minimum of two months each academic year regardless of whether the PRI is based in the UK or overseas.
- 7.9 For students registered under the split PhD scheme, the minimum attendance requirement is 12 months over the duration of the programme.

- 7.10 In line with the College's [Research Degree Student Leave Policy](#), MPhil and PhD students, including international students with a Student Visa, are entitled to a minimum of 30 days to a maximum of 40 days per year (including public holidays and College closure days) of annual leave (pro rata for part-time students).

## **Section 8: Progression**

- 8.1 The College has identified a number of milestones for research degree students to achieve through their programme of Study. The College requires that a student's progress during PhD registration must be formally monitored at key stages after the date of initial registration: Early Stage Assessment (ESA) by 12 months and Late Stage Review (LSR) by 24 months. In addition, a Progress Review must be held by 36 months.
- 8.2 Some Departments also require students to submit an Initial Research Plan within three months of starting their degree programme. Where this is a requirement, the Department is responsible for ensuring that students are made aware of this.

### **Early Stage Assessment**

- 8.3 The College requires that assessment of a student's PhD research potential, to determine whether registration for the PhD can continue, will be determined by an examination. The ESA must be completed by 12 months (full-time students) and 24 months (part-time students), which will normally include one opportunity for re-assessment. Any extension to this deadline would require approval. The assessment involves the submission of a written report and an oral examination on the report. The assessment panel will include at least one independent academic assessor (a member of academic staff independent from the research 'group', i.e. from the project and the supervisor) in addition to the supervisor(s).
- 8.4 Students who started their postgraduate research degree on or after 24 September 2019 will need to follow the College's policy on using Turnitin as part of the ESA submission process.
- 8.5 The decision to allow a student's PhD registration to continue must be based on the following factors: (a) the student must submit a written report (b) the written report must be submitted to Turnitin (c) the student must be orally examined on the report. These arrangements apply to all students whether full-time or part-time, registered under the Partner Research Institute (PRI) Scheme or for Split PhDs, for Joint PhDs (unless a variation has been approved by the College).
- 8.6 If the College determines that the student's PhD progress is such that they cannot continue, the student may be required to withdraw from the College at this stage; alternatively the College may transfer their registration to the degree of MPhil. The date of MPhil registration will, in this case, be backdated to the date of the initial PhD registration.

### **Late Stage Review**

- 8.7 The College requires that a review of a student's PhD research ability will be undertaken to determine whether registration of the PhD can continue. The form of the review will be determined by the student's department and approved by the College. The LSR must be completed by 24 months (full-time students) and 48 months (part-time students), which will normally include one opportunity for re-

assessment. Any extension to this deadline would require approval. The assessment panel will include at least one independent academic assessor (a member of academic staff independent from the research 'group', i.e. from the project and the supervisor) in addition to the supervisor(s).

- 8.8 The purpose of the Late Stage Review is to confirm that the student (a) has an adequate understanding of the research problem, (b) has the capacity to pursue research, (c) has a critical awareness of the relevant literature on the subject and (d) has a realistic research plan and schedule for completion within the registration period. These arrangements apply to all students whether full-time or part-time, registered under the Partner Research Institute (PRI) Scheme or for Split PhDs, for Joint PhDs (unless a variation has been approved by the College).
- 8.9 If the College determines that the student's progress is such that they cannot continue, the student may be required to withdraw from the College at this stage; alternatively, the College may transfer their registration to the degree of MPhil. The date of MPhil registration will, in this case, be backdated to the date of the initial PhD registration.

#### Professional Skills Development Requirements

- 8.10 As part of their programme of research, the College requires all doctoral students to achieve a minimum of four Graduate School professional skills credits and to complete the compulsory online plagiarism awareness course as follows:
- By the Early Stage Assessment (ESA) – 2 credits plus the plagiarism awareness course
  - By the Late Stage Review (LSR) – a further 2 credits
- 8.11 Students who are direct entry MPhil, or those required to transfer to an MPhil having first registered for a PhD, must complete a minimum of two professional skills credits plus the plagiarism awareness course.
- 8.12 If a PhD student has not achieved a minimum of two professional skills credits and completed the plagiarism awareness course by the date of their ESA, then provided they pass the academic requirements of the ESA, the student can still progress with their research programme. However, a condition of their progression will be to set a deadline for achieving the required number of professional skills credits and if not already completed, the plagiarism awareness course. This deadline will be set by the Department, in agreement with the Graduate School.
- 8.13 If a PhD student has not achieved a minimum of four professional skills credits and completed the plagiarism awareness course by the date of their LSR, then provided they pass the academic requirements of the LSR, the student can still progress with their research programme. However, a condition of progression will be to set a deadline for achieving the required number of professional skills credits and if not already completed, the plagiarism awareness course. This deadline will be set by the Department, in agreement with the Graduate School.

#### Doctoral Academic Communication Requirement

- 8.14 Students must fulfil the Imperial College Doctoral Academic Communication Requirement (DACR) where they have not met the exemptions specified by the College's Centre for Academic English.



- 8.15 Students who are not exempt must take the DACR Assessment 1 within three months of their initial registration date. Students who scored level 1 or 2 on DACR Assessment 1 will then be required to have a progress check through the DACR Assessment 2 as part of the Early Stage Assessment.

#### Writing Up Period

- 8.16 PhD students must normally have completed 36 months (full-time students) or 72 months (part-time students) of continuous study from the initial date of registration to enter the Writing Up Period and must be able to demonstrate that they will be in a position to submit their thesis within 12 months (full-time students) or 24 months (part-time students). Students remain registered during the Writing Up Period.
- 8.17 A formal monitoring point must be completed by 36 months to ensure that the student's research is progressing and can be completed within the expected timescales. At this point students are normally expected to demonstrate that they are on track to complete all experimental work or collection of material related to their thesis. At this Progress Review students should submit a timetable of remaining work to be completed in order to meet the expected thesis submission deadline. The plan must be recommended by the Main Supervisor and approved by the Director of Postgraduate Studies (or nominee) who will confirm that the milestone has been completed.
- 8.18 A student can request to enter the Writing Up Period earlier than 36 months. Except in circumstances as set out in 4.5 and 6.1, a student must have completed 24 months of full-time study or 48 months of part-time study at the College before entering the Writing Up Period. The request must be recommended by the Main Supervisor and approved by the Director of Postgraduate Studies (or nominee). This would not reduce the maximum period of registration permitted for that student but would bring forward the expected thesis submission deadline. Any extension to this deadline would require an approved [thesis submission deadline extension request](#).

#### Examination Entry

- 8.19 PhD students must submit a research degree examination entry form no later than 44 months (full-time student) and 88 months (part-time students) after initial registration for the research degree. Entry to examination will not be permitted in cases where the thesis has not been submitted by the given thesis submission deadline, unless a [thesis submission deadline extension request](#) has been approved by the College.
- 8.20 MPhil students are required to submit a research degree examination entry form no later than 20 months (full-time) and 40 months (part-time). Entry to examination will not be permitted in cases where the thesis has not been submitted by the given thesis submission deadline, unless a [thesis submission deadline extension request](#) has been approved by the College.

### Section 9: Submission of Thesis

- 9.1 The decision to submit a thesis rests with the student alone.
- 9.2 A student shall be examined in accordance with the regulations in force at the time of their entry or re-entry.

- 9.3 A student will be required to submit a copy of their thesis in accordance with College guidelines.
- 9.4 A student for the PhD or MPhil degree may bring to the *viva voce* examination a copy of their thesis paginated in the same way as the copies submitted electronically to the College.
- 9.5 PhD students must submit their thesis for examination within 48 months (full-time students) and 96 months (part-time students) of the date of the initial degree registration.
- 9.6 MPhil students must submit their thesis for examination within 24 months (full-time students) and 48 months (part-time students) of the date of the initial degree registration. Where a student has had their registration transferred from PhD to MPhil following an Early Stage Assessment they should normally complete the MPhil within 12 months (full-time students) and 24 months (part-time students) of the date of that Early Stage Assessment. Where a student has had their registration transferred from PhD to MPhil following a Late Stage Review they should normally complete the MPhil within six months (full-time students) and 12 months (part-time students) of the date of that Late Stage Review.

### **Section 10: Intercalated PhD Students**

- 10.1 Students undertaking the MBBS at the College who opt to take an Intercalated PhD follow the progression requirements and submission deadlines for ESA and LSR as set out in 8.3, 8.7 and 8.10.
- 10.2 Students must normally submit their thesis for examination within 36 months of the date of the initial PhD degree registration. Entry to examination will not be permitted in cases where the thesis has not been submitted by the given thesis submission deadline, unless a [thesis submission deadline extension request](#) has been approved by the College.

### **Section 11: Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) Students**

- 11.1 Students undertaking a PhD as part of a CDT follow progression requirements and submission deadlines for ESA and LSR as set out in their CDT programme handbooks.
- 11.2 Entry to examination will not be permitted in cases where the thesis has not been submitted by the given deadline, as set out in the CDT programme handbook, unless a [thesis submission deadline extension request](#) has been approved by the College.

## **PART 4: REQUIREMENTS OF A THESIS AND EXAMINATION**

### **Section 12: Requirements of a Thesis**

#### 12.1 Thesis for the PhD degree

##### 12.1.1 The thesis shall:

- (a) consist of the student's own account of their 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 student in any work undertaken jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the student 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 student 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 student to advance the study of the subject; and, in so doing, demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study, (the student 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 student 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; 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;

*[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).

## 12.2 Thesis for the MPhil degree

### 12.2.1 The thesis shall:

- (a) consist of the student's own account of their 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 student in any work undertaken jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the student 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 which represents a contribution to learning;

*[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 student 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 evaluation of current research and advanced scholarship in the field of study, 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 student 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; 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;

*[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.]*

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

- 12.3.1 The greater proportion of the work submitted in a thesis must have been undertaken after the initial registration for a research degree, except that in the case of a student accepted under paragraph 4.5 there shall be allowance for the fact that the student commenced their registration at another university or institution.
- 12.3.2 A student will not be permitted to submit as their thesis one which has been submitted for a degree or comparable award of the College or any other university or institution, but a student shall not be precluded from incorporating in a thesis covering a wider field work which they have already submitted for a degree or comparable award of the College or any other university or institution provided that they shall indicate on their entry form and also on their thesis any work which has been so incorporated.
- 12.3.3 A student may submit the results of work undertaken in conjunction with their supervisor and/or with fellow research workers provided that the student states clearly their own personal share in the investigation and that the statement is certified by the supervisor (see also paragraph 12.2.1 (a)).
- 12.3.4 A thesis must be presented for examination in a final form in an electronic format conforming to the [College's thesis submission and viva examination procedures](#). Students must include a short statement in their words, that the work is their own and that all else is appropriately referenced. If students refer to material within a published work where they are a co-author, it must be made clear in this originality statement what their contribution to the work was. Additionally, direct use of text from the published work should be specifically limited to text that students made a major contribution to the writing of. For advice on ensuring students have permission to reuse their work in their thesis, please refer to the College's guidance on [Reproducing your own published work](#).
- 12.3.5 After the examination has been completed, and before the degree is awarded, successful students are required to submit to the College, for depositing with the College Library, one copy of the thesis in electronic format conforming to the instructions issued by the College.
- 12.3.6 Every student is required to submit an abstract with their thesis of not more than 300 words.

### **Section 13: Availability of Theses**

- 13.1 It is a requirement for the award of the degree that copies of successful theses, as specified in 12.3.5, are deposited in the College Library in electronic format. The electronic copy shall be deposited in Spiral, the College Digital Repository.
- 13.2 Subject to paragraphs 13.3 and 13.4, students for the MPhil or 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 PhD/MPhil 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 relevant statement regarding copyright licence<sup>1</sup> is included at the beginning of my thesis.
- (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.

13.3 A student, together with their supervisor, may apply to the College for an embargo to their thesis 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.

13.4 From 1 March 2013 all theses will be automatically open access in Spiral save where the student, together with their supervisor, applies for an embargo. All theses submitted between 1 July 2007 and 28 February 2013 will become, retrospectively, open access in Spiral, save where an existing embargo is in place. All theses submitted prior to 1 July 2007 will be digitised and will become, retrospectively, open access in Spiral, save where an existing embargo is in place.

## **Section 14: Conduct of Examinations**

### 14.1 General

14.1.1 Students for the degrees of MPhil and PhD must submit a thesis and be examined orally, save as prescribed otherwise in sections 14.2 and 14.4.

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

14.1.3 Examiners will be appointed for each student in accordance with the [Procedure for Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees](#).

14.1.4 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 student's thesis until such time as any restrictions on access to the thesis, which have been granted by the College, are removed.

---

<sup>1</sup> From 1 October 2018, a student may choose which Creative Commons copyright licence shall be applied to their thesis, subject to any requirements set by the funding body. The exact wording of the statement with regards to each type of licence is in the handbook and must be added to the beginning of the thesis. NB prior to 1 October 2018 all theses are published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial No Derivatives licence.

- 14.1.5 The examiners shall prepare independent preliminary written reports on the thesis to assist in conducting the *viva voce* examination (or the preparation of the joint report in those cases where no *viva voce* examination is held). Copies of the preliminary reports should be submitted together with the joint report. The preliminary reports will not normally be released to students but will be made available to the members of an Appeal Committee in the case of an appeal against the result of the examination for consideration at an Appeal Committee hearing. In such an event the preliminary reports will also be provided to the student. After any *viva voce* examination, a joint final report shall be prepared. The joint final report will be released routinely to students for their personal information.
- 14.1.6 In their preliminary discussions, the examiners will discuss whether they have any concerns relating to the integrity of the research, including suspected plagiarism. Where the examiners have no concerns, the *viva* shall proceed. Where the examiners have minor concerns, the student and supervisor will be informed that these will be explored during the *viva*. Where the examiners have major concerns, the student and supervisor will be informed that the *viva* will be postponed and the procedures for the investigation of research misconduct will be initiated. The outcome of the procedures for the investigation of research misconduct will confirm whether the *viva* can proceed or not.
- 14.1.7 Each joint final report of the examiners shall indicate whether the thesis meets the requirements specified in paragraph 12.1 or 12.2 as appropriate and shall include a reasoned statement of the examiners' judgment of the student's performance.
- 14.1.8 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 student but may cover, for example, matters which they wish to draw to the attention of the College.
- 14.1.9 The supervisor shall not be invited unless the student indicates otherwise at the point of entry to the examination. If invited to attend as an observer, the supervisor does not have the right to participate in the examination of the student but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners. The *viva voce* examination shall be held in private. In exceptional circumstances and also in the early stages of a joint or collaborative degree the Academic Registrar may appoint an independent observer to attend a student's *viva*.
- 14.1.10 The *viva voce* examination will normally be conducted at one of the College campuses with both examiners present. The College may, however, exceptionally agree that the examination be conducted elsewhere and/or remotely via video conferencing facilities if there are circumstances which make this expedient. The positive consent of the student should be obtained for the *viva* to be conducted in these exceptional circumstances.
- 14.1.11 The examiners may, at their discretion, consult the supervisor before completing their report.
- 14.2 Conduct of PhD Examination
- 14.2.1 Except as provided in paragraphs 14.2.3(d) and where the outcome of the procedures for the investigation of research misconduct determines that a *viva* should not take place, the examiners, after reading the thesis, shall examine the student orally on the subject of the thesis and, if they see fit, on subjects relevant thereto.

14.2.2 Students are required to present themselves for the examination at such place and time as the College may direct.

14.2.3 The following options are open to examiners in determining the result of the examination:

- (a) Pass: The student is permitted to submit typographical amendments within one month which can be reviewed by the examiners, or nominees.
- (b) Pass, subject to minor amendments: The student must submit amendments within six months, which must be reviewed by the examiners, or nominees.
- (c) Not pass, further *viva voce* examination required: If the thesis meets the criteria for the award, but the student fails to satisfy the examiners at the *viva voce* examination, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further *viva voce* examination within six months.
- (d) Not pass, major amendments required: If the thesis does not meet the required criteria for the award, but the examiners consider there is sufficient merit in the work, the student is permitted to re-present their thesis following revision and resubmit within 18 months for examination by the same examiners. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further *viva voce* examination, on re-presentation of their thesis, a student who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form. This outcome is only available to examiners at the first examination of the student.
- (e) Fail PhD: If, after completion of the examination including the *viva voce* examination or re-examination for the PhD degree, the examiners determine that a student 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>2</sup>. Thereafter the following conditions and procedures will apply:

*Either*

- (i) a student will be informed that they have been unsuccessful at the examination for the PhD degree, but that their examiners have indicated that they have reached the standard required for the award of the MPhil degree or with minor amendments to their thesis they will satisfy the criteria for the degree, and that they may be considered for the award of the MPhil degree if they indicate within two months that they wish to be so considered. Any minor amendments required shall be made within three months of the student indicating that they wish to be considered for the MPhil, and the amended thesis shall be

---

<sup>2</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.



submitted to the examiners, or nominee, for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.

- (ii) a student who indicates that they wish 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 a *viva voce* examination thereon, but will be required to fulfil the requirements for the MPhil examination in all other respects.
- (iii) a student who has reached the standard for the award of the MPhil degree who does not indicate that they wish to be considered for the award of that degree within the period given in paragraph (i) above will be informed that they have failed to satisfy the examiners for the PhD degree and that they 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 student be permitted to enter the examination for the MPhil degree and re-present their thesis in a revised form within 12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time). The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further *viva voce* examination, on representation of their thesis, a student who under these Regulations has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
- (b) Outright Fail. The examiners may determine that the student has not satisfied them in the examination and that there is no reassessment opportunity available to the student. The examiners shall not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the student to a *viva voce* examination.

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

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

### 14.3 Conduct of MPhil Examination

14.3.1 Except as provided in paragraph 14.3.3(d) and where the outcome of the procedures for the investigation of research misconduct determines that a viva should not take place, the examiners, after reading the thesis, shall examine the student orally on the subject of the thesis and, if they see fit, on subjects relevant thereto.

14.3.2 Students are required to present themselves for the examination at such place and time as the College may direct.

14.3.3 The following options are open to examiners in determining the result of the examination:

- (a) Pass: The student is permitted to submit typographical amendments within one month which can be reviewed by the examiners, or nominees.
- (b) Pass, subject to minor amendments: The student must submit amendments within three months, which must be reviewed by the examiners, or nominees.
- (c) Not pass, further *viva voce* examination required: If the thesis meets the criteria for the award, but the student fails to satisfy the examiners at the *viva voce* examination, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further *viva voce* examination within six months.
- (d) Not pass, major amendments required: If the thesis does not meet the required criteria for the award, but the examiners consider there is sufficient merit in the work, the student is permitted to re-present their thesis following revision and resubmit within 12 months for examination by the same examiners. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further *viva voce* examination, on re-presentation of their thesis, a student who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form. This outcome is only available to examiners at the first examination of the student.
- (e) Outright Fail: The examiners may determine that the student has not satisfied them in the examination and that there is no reassessment opportunity available to the student. The examiners shall not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the student to a *viva voce* examination.

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

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

#### 14.4 Posthumous and Aegrotat Award Provisions

14.4.1 In line with the College's [Policy for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Postgraduate Research Degrees](#), examiners may recommend that a posthumous MPhil or PhD should be made following the death of a candidate.

14.4.2 In line with the College's [Policy for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Postgraduate Research Degrees](#), examiners may recommend the award of an aegrotat MPhil or PhD if it is considered that a candidate's diagnosis of a terminal/debilitating illness or their incapacitation would preclude them from making the final submission of the thesis, undertaking the viva, amendments to the thesis or a resubmission of the thesis.

## **Section 15: Notification of Results of Examinations**

- 15.1 After the examiners have reached a decision, the student shall be notified by the Academic Registrar of the result of their examination. The degree shall not be awarded until an electronic version of the successful thesis has been deposited with the College Library (see paragraph 12.3.5).
- 15.2 A degree certificate under the seal of the College shall be subsequently delivered to each student who has been awarded a degree.
- 15.3 The degree certificate will bear the names of the student in the form in which they appear in the records of the College at the date of issue.
- 15.4 A student registered for the award of MPhil or PhD shall automatically be awarded the Diploma of Imperial College London (DIC) upon successful completion of that programme.

## **Section 16: General**

- 16.1 Except insofar as paragraph 12.3.3 applies, the work in the thesis submitted by the student must be their own and submission of a thesis for examination for the PhD or MPhil degree will be regarded as a declaration of this fact.
- 16.2 All work submitted as part of the requirements for any examination of the College must be expressed in the student's own words and incorporate their own ideas and judgments. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as though they were the student'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 student must refer to that person in their text, and include the work to which reference is made in the bibliography.
- 16.3 Allegations of plagiarism will be considered in accordance with [Procedures for the investigation of research misconduct](#), 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.

16.4 The College has approved an [Academic Appeals Procedure for Research Programmes](#). Students must submit their academic appeal to the Registry within 20 working days of the formal publication of the result(s) against which they are appealing.

<b>Document title:</b>	Regulations for the Awards of MPhil and PhD		
<b>Version:</b>	1	<b>Date:</b>	July 2021
<b>Location and filename:</b>	Z:\7.Quality Assurance\2. Regulations\01. Academic Regulations\Academic Regulations 2021-22		
<b>Approved:</b>	Senate July 2021		
<b>Effective from:</b>	October 2021 (for new and continuing students)		
<b>Originator:</b>	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team		
<b>Contact for queries:</b>	Deputy Director (Academic Quality and Standards)		
<b>Cross References:</b>	Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy Transfer of Registration Status Policy - Research Degrees Mutual Expectations for the Research Degree Student Supervisor Partnership Thesis submission deadline extension request College's thesis submission and viva examination procedures Reproducing your own published work Procedure for Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees Procedures for the investigation of research misconduct Academic Appeals Procedure for Research Programmes		
<b>Notes and latest changes:</b>			