

**ORDINANCE 56(A)i: Degree of Master of Philosophy (applicable to students who commenced their studies from April 2015 onwards and submit their initial thesis prior to 2 September 2019)**

**Award and authority to award**

1. This Ordinance applies to the full-time and part-time degrees of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Science and Engineering and Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.
2. Research programmes leading to the degree of MPhil must be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Postgraduate Research (PGR) Code of Practice.
3. The degree of MPhil will be conferred upon candidates who have demonstrated the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality, as adjudged by peers, to extend the forefront of the discipline, by submitting for assessment a substantial body of original work, in the form of one of the following:
  - a) a thesis of no more than 60,000 words containing the results of the candidate's original research, which may contain published papers integrated into the thesis in a coherent and structured manner. Only papers or book(s) written during the period of registration for the degree will be admissible and the papers or book(s) submitted should have a common theme with an identifiable link; or
  - b) a substantial collection of original, creative material developed specifically in pursuit of the degree, together with a written thesis of no more than 25,000 words which contextualises that work within an academic framework.

The University's full definition of research is provided in the PGR Code of Practice.

4. The degree of MPhil may be undertaken either wholly at a University of Liverpool campus or wholly or partly outside the University under approved conditions, as defined in the PGR Code of Practice.
5. Candidates who fail to meet the criteria for the award of the degree of PhD may be awarded the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil), in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance governing the degree of Doctor in Philosophy.

**Admission**

6. In order to be admitted onto an MPhil programme, a candidate must provide evidence of entrance qualifications of a type and standard deemed appropriate by the University and, where appropriate, its institutional partners. This is normally a good honours degree or equivalent in a relevant subject and an appropriate standard of English language.
7. Candidates may be admitted to study on an MPhil programme having requested to transfer into this programme from another equivalent institution, having satisfied the normal entrance qualification as provided for in clause 6 of this Ordinance and having provided evidence of previous satisfactory progress in their research. Candidates will

be admitted onto the programme on a designated year of study and their expected completion date will be established on entry.

### **Mode of study**

8. Candidates may be admitted to study on an MPhil programme on a full-time or part-time basis. The mode of study of the candidate will be determined on admission.
9. Candidates studying on a full-time basis shall normally be expected to submit their thesis within two calendar years of their initial registration (excluding any periods of interruption of studies). Candidates studying on a part-time basis shall normally be expected to submit their thesis within four years of their initial registration (excluding any periods of interruption of studies).
10. The minimum period of registration permitted before submission of the thesis shall normally be no less than one calendar year for full-time study and no less than two calendar years for part-time study. Candidates or their sponsors will be liable to pay the tuition fees for at least the appropriate minimum registration period.
11. The maximum period of registration for candidates studying on an MPhil programme includes any period of interrupted study, extensions to the expected submission date, writing up (thesis submission pending) and re-submission. For full-time study the maximum period shall be five calendar years and for part-time study the maximum period shall be seven calendar years.
12. Unless otherwise restricted to fewer hours by the terms of any sponsorship agreement, and subject to any restrictions on a student's visa, full time candidates whilst on an MPhil programme may undertake other work for up to an average of 15 hours per week (including teaching duties, which are subject to approval by the relevant Dean of School/Institute or Department).

### **Registration and academic progress**

13. Candidates shall register as students of the University at the beginning of their programme and shall be re-registered at the beginning of each academic session, subject to their satisfactory academic progress as defined in the PGR Code of Practice.
14. Candidates are required to complete appropriate postgraduate research development activities, in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice.
15. Candidates may request an interruption or extension of studies, including for the purposes of enabling them to achieve work/life balance, in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice.
16. Candidates must obtain ethical approval for their research where appropriate, in accordance with University guidelines as set out in the PGR Code of Practice.

### **Registration transfers**

17. Candidates may be granted exceptional permission by the relevant Faculty to transfer from full-time to part-time study. Where permitted, the number of years of study undertaken at full-time intensity will be converted as if studied at part-time intensity for the purposes of a re-calculation of both the expected submission date

and the permitted minimum period for submission of the thesis as provided for in clause 10 above.

18. Candidates may be granted exceptional permission by the relevant Faculty to transfer from part-time to full-time study. Where permitted, the number of years of study elapsed at part-time intensity will be converted as if studied at full-time intensity for the purposes of a re-calculation of the expected submission date. The minimum and maximum submission periods will then apply as for full-time study.
19. Where a candidate's registration is transferred from PhD to MPhil, either as a result of decisions made under Annual Progress Procedures or following approval of a request by the candidate, the maximum period permitted for submission of the thesis for the MPhil degree, excluding any period of interruption of studies, will normally be two calendar years from the date of their initial registration for the PhD for full-time candidates and four years for part-time candidates, in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.
20. A candidate who has been accepted for a programme for the degree of MPhil may be permitted, by the relevant Faculty, to transfer to registration for the degree of PhD, so far as Ordinances permit, provided that:
  - a) such transfer takes place after the first year of registration for a full-time candidate or the second year of registration for a part-time candidate, and before giving notice of intention to submit a thesis; and
  - b) there is clear evidence of adequate training and ability to pursue doctoral study.

### **Supervision**

21. All supervision of candidates on MPhil programmes will be undertaken in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice – Policy on Research Student Supervision.
22. All candidates' research must be supervised by at least two suitably qualified members of academic staff appointed by the relevant University Dean of School/Institute. Under normal circumstances, at least one supervisor must be a member of University staff. Under specific institutional agreements, the University may accredit appropriately qualified non-University staff with the status of 'Recognised Supervisor'. Approval of this form of accreditation is the responsibility of the relevant Faculty Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor or their nominee(s).
23. All candidates must have a clearly-identified Primary Supervisor who will be their main point of contact. The Primary Supervisor, who would normally have the most appropriate expertise in the area of the individual project, may, under certain circumstances, be a 'Recognised Supervisor'. Where this is the case, the University Dean of School/Institute must be satisfied that the supervisory arrangements for an individual student are appropriate and can be maintained for the duration of the research degree.

### **Thesis submission**

24. The thesis must be written in English. In cases where candidates are working in the discipline of languages, the University may accept a thesis written in a language

other than English but this must be approved on behalf of the University by the relevant Faculty prior to admission.

25. Notice of intention to submit a thesis must be given not less than two months before the date of submission and in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice.
26. The final submission of the thesis for the degree must not include work for which a degree or other qualification has already been awarded except, for the sake of completeness, where some previous work has been substantially further developed, in which case all such work must be clearly identified.
27. Candidates shall submit their thesis to the University (Research Degree Administration Team), for examination in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice.

### **Examination**

28. Following submission of the thesis, a *viva voce* examination will be held, at which the candidate will be required to defend the subject of the thesis, or other submitted work, and matters relevant thereto.
29. There must be a minimum of two Examiners to examine the thesis, one Internal Examiner and one External Examiner, appointed in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice. Normally, a candidate's supervisors shall be consulted before the Examiners are appointed.
30. A second External Examiner will be appointed where the candidate (studying full or part-time) is a member of University staff or a member of staff of a recognised institution.
31. Where deemed appropriate, and in all re-submission *viva voce* examinations, a further member of academic staff will be appointed as an Independent Chair of the Examiners by the relevant Faculty, and will normally be a member of staff of the University.
32. The Examiners shall examine the thesis in accordance with the requirement of the PGR Code of Practice – Policy on Research Degree Examinations and Examiners. Where the Examiners cannot agree on a recommendation, a further External Examiner will be appointed and will examine the thesis in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice – Policy on Research Degree Examinations and Examiners.
33. The Examiners shall recommend one of the following:
  - a) that the degree of MPhil be conferred;
  - b) that the degree of MPhil be conferred subject to the candidate making minor modifications to the thesis within three months of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* by the University, which do not alter the substance of the thesis in any significant or fundamental manner, to the satisfaction of one or more of the Examiners, as may be agreed between them;
  - c) that the candidate be permitted to make a subsequent application for the degree of MPhil on one occasion only, provided that the application is made no later than one calendar year from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* by the University. A thesis may only be re-

presented for the award of MPhil as the result of a recommendation made in accordance with this provision, and shall be revised having due regard to the Examiners' observations. A second *viva voce* examination will normally be held, but this may be waived at the discretion of the Examiners;

- d) that the candidate be deemed not to have attained the standard required for the degree of MPhil and that no further opportunity for examination be allowed.

The PGR Code of Practice can be found at: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/agrd/academic-codes-of-practice/pgr-code-of-practice/>

**SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS MADE TO ORDINANCE 56(A) (FROM JULY 2019 56(A)i AND 56(A)ii)**

1. Original amended Ordinance approved on behalf of Senate and Council October/November 2015.
2. Amendment approved by Senate and Council March/May 2016 to remove the clause (the former clause 14) that stated:  
  
*Full-time candidates who are admitted to study on an MPhil programme should not normally be registered for any other programme of study leading to a different award.*
3. Amendments approved on behalf of Senate and Council February 2018 to:
  - Correct a typographical error that appeared in relation to maximum available registration periods for students who transfer from PhD or MD to MPhil.
  - Add a sentence to confirm that any books or published papers submitted as part of the student's research degree thesis should have been written during the student's period of registration.
4. Amendments approved by Senate and Council June/July 2019 to establish a suite of new PGR Programme Ordinances which reflect the introduction of the new pass with major modifications examination outcome. The relevant Ordinances have been divided in two, reflecting that two distinct cohorts of PGR candidates exist, whose eligibility to receive a pass with major modifications *viva* examination outcome is determined on the basis of their initial thesis submission date, and therefore, the Ordinance that they are enrolled under. To reflect the splitting of the Ordinance 56(A), Ordinances 56(A)i and 56(A)ii were introduced to replace 56(A).
5. Amendments approved on behalf of Senate and Council August 2021 to make the language more gender neutral and to reflect the change of title of Head of School to Dean and the change of name of the PGR Student Team to LDC Student Experience Team.
6. Amendments approved on behalf of Senate and Council August 2023:
  - Replacement of the LDC Student Experience Team with Research Degree Administration Team to reflect the realignment of the Liverpool Doctoral College.
  - Removal of reference to the soft-bound thesis to reflect that the thesis is submitted electronically (updates are included in document titles and footers as well as the main body of the ordinances).
  - Removal of reference to submission of physical/electronic copies of the thesis to reflect that the thesis is submitted electronically.
7. Amendments approved by Senate November 2024 to replace references to 'suspension' of studies with 'interruption' of studies.