

**ORDINANCE 56(B)ii: Degree of Master of Philosophy (applicable to students who commenced their studies between June 2011 and April 2015 and submit their initial thesis on or after 2 September 2019)**

The University of Liverpool, for the encouragement of graduate research study, has established a degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in the Faculties of Humanities and Social Science, Science and Engineering and Health and Life Sciences.

The degree of Master of Philosophy can be undertaken in collaboration with an approved institutional partner, leading to a joint or dual award, subject to the approval of a formal agreement between the two institutions by the Senate. All institutions with whom the University of Liverpool forms such collaborative partnerships shall be approved as a recognised 'Affiliated Institution'.

In the following Ordinance and Regulations some arrangements are identified as being 'exceptional'. In such cases, approval for these arrangements must be obtained from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact<sup>1</sup> prior to initial registration for the degree.

The degree of Master of Philosophy may be conferred upon:

A graduate of this or any other approved University or Institution, or a candidate who holds a qualification deemed by the University to be equivalent to an Honours Degree of this University who has submitted one of the following:

- a thesis embodying the results of their individual research. The thesis may contain published papers, in which case these must be integrated into the thesis in a coherent and structured manner; or
- a published book or books describing a coherent line of research; or
- a substantial collection of original creative material developed specifically in pursuit of the degree, together with a written thesis which contextualises that work within an academic framework;

which is adjudged to make a contribution to learning; which is coherently structured and clearly presented; and which shows evidence of systematic study and of ability to relate the results of such study to the general body of knowledge in the subject.

Candidates for the degree will comply with the conditions contained within one of the following clauses:

1. they have pursued full-time research in the University or in an affiliated institution approved by the Council for the purposes of this clause, for not less than one calendar year;
2. they are a member of the full-time academic staff of this University, or a member, recognised by the Council as a teacher of the University, of the full-time staff of an affiliated institution which has been approved by the Council for the purposes of this clause, who has pursued part-time research for a minimum of two years. The evidence on which the application is based shall be presented no later than two years after the applicant has left the service of the University or affiliated institution;

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<sup>1</sup> From 2015-16, the Director of the Liverpool Doctoral College represents the PVC for Research and Impact in relation to PGR student matters.

3. they have pursued part-time research for not less than two years; the time spent studying during this period being equivalent to not less than one year's full-time study;
4. they hold a temporary post as a Research Fellow, Research Assistant, Senior Research Assistant, or Research Associate in a Department of the University or an affiliated institution approved by the Council for the purposes of this clause, who has, whilst holding their appointment, pursued research for not less than one year and six months; at least twelve months of which must be spent in the University or affiliated institution;
5. they have pursued full-time research in the University and in an approved affiliated institution leading to a joint or dual award as part of an approved collaborative partnership agreement between the two institutions.

For candidates registered under each of the above clauses the following further conditions apply:

- a) the research must be carried out under the supervision of at least two members of the academic staff of the University or affiliated institution appointed by the appropriate Dean of School (or equivalent);
- b) the University may exceptionally permit a part or all of the research to be pursued outside the University under approved conditions;
- c) before the commencement of the programme, each candidate must have submitted evidence satisfactory to the University, and, where appropriate to the partner institution within a collaborative agreement, of adequate training and ability to pursue the proposed programme of research;
- d) the final submission for the degree shall not include work for which a degree or other qualification has already been awarded, except that for the sake of completeness where some previous work has been substantially further developed. In that case, all such work shall be clearly identified;
- e) 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;
- f) applications for the degree based on the submission of a collection of original creative material together with a written thesis shall be accepted, on an exceptional basis, when the subject area of the submitted work is within Fine Art and the Performing Arts.

## **REGULATIONS**

Within these Regulations the word 'thesis' is used generally to represent the total submitted work to be examined for the degree.

*All candidates should refer to Regulations 6-20.*

### **For candidates under clause 1 of the Ordinance (i.e. full-time candidates)**

1. A candidate who proposes to pursue their research study outside the University will need:

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- a) normally, an approved local co-supervisor who should normally hold a permanent post and have a suitable research record;
- b) to undertake successfully appropriate postgraduate research development activities, or obtain exemption on the grounds of suitable prior experience or accreditation.

Each case must be submitted for approval by the relevant Faculty Director of Postgraduate Research.

2. Every candidate is required during their course of study to devote the whole of their time to their research. They may, however, be allowed to undertake other work for not more than fifteen hours a week (or the equivalent of fifteen hours per week when averaged across a given academic session), unless otherwise restricted by the terms and conditions of sponsorship agreements, subject to the discretion of the Head of the Department.
3. Upon application to the relevant Faculty Director of Postgraduate Research, a student registered under this clause may exceptionally be permitted to transfer their registration from full-time to part-time study. If a student is permitted to transfer their registration from full-time to part-time after one year, the thesis may not normally be presented for examination before the end of the second year of registration or later than the fifth year of registration. Transfers to part-time registration requested after more than one year of full-time registration will not be permitted.
4. A thesis will normally be submitted for examination within two calendar years of first registration for the degree (excluding any periods of suspension of studies). The maximum period of registration for full-time MPhil candidates, including any periods of suspended study, extensions to the expected submission date, writing up (thesis submission pending) and re-submission, shall be five calendar years. Notice of intention to submit a thesis shall be given on the prescribed form to the University (Research Degree Administration Team) or affiliated institution not less than two months before the date of submission.

**For candidates under clauses 2, 3 and 4 of the Ordinance (i.e. part-time candidates)**

5. A thesis must be submitted for examination within six years of first registration for the degree. The maximum period for which a candidate under this Regulation may be registered, including any periods of suspended study, extensions to the expected submission date, writing up (thesis submission pending) and re-submission, shall be seven calendar years. Notice of intention to submit a thesis shall be given on the prescribed form to the University (Research Degree Administration Team) or affiliated institution not less than two months before the date of submission.

**For all candidates**

6. A candidate who has been accepted for a programme for the degree of MPhil may be permitted by the relevant Faculty Director of Postgraduate Research to transfer to the programme for the degree of PhD so far as Ordinances and Regulations 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;

- b) there is clear evidence of adequate training and ability to pursue doctoral study.
7. Every candidate shall register as a student of the University at the beginning of their programme, and again at the beginning of each subsequent year of the programme, subject to the submission of a satisfactory report on the progress of their study.
  8. A student who is registered for the degree of MPhil shall not be registered for any other degree, diploma or certificate.
  9. There shall be a minimum of two Examiners to assess an application for the degree of MPhil. There shall always be an Internal Examiner and an External Examiner. A candidate's supervisors shall normally be consulted before the Examiners are appointed. A supervisor may not be appointed as an Internal Examiner. In the case of clause 2 candidates, a second External Examiner shall also be appointed.
  10. Every candidate shall be required to complete appropriate postgraduate research development activities.
  11. A candidate shall state generally in the preface and specifically in the body of the thesis, the sources from which their information is derived and the extent to which they have availed themselves of the work of others.
  12. Where submission is by written thesis alone, the thesis should be as concise as possible and in no circumstances may a thesis be submitted should the number of words exceed 60,000, including footnotes and appendices without written permission being obtained from a candidate's supervisors and the Dean of School (or equivalent) concerned. Where the written thesis accompanies the submission of a collection of original creative material, the thesis should not exceed 25,000 words.
  13. The written thesis, whether it is the whole submission or part of a submission, must be written in English. In the case of candidates working in the discipline of Modern Languages, the University may, exceptionally, allow a thesis to be submitted in a language other than English provided that such approval is sought and granted at the time of initial registration.
  14. It will normally be expected that the candidate is the primary author of the majority of the papers or the book(s) submitted. Where joint authorship does occur, a statement of the contribution made by the applicant shall be provided, together with the status of the other authors.
  15. The thesis shall be submitted to the Research Degree Administration Team or to the affiliated institution in accordance with the provisions of the PGR Code of Practice: Policy on the Submission of a Research Degree Thesis for Examination.
  16. When, exceptionally, a book or books are submitted in place of a thesis, each copy of the application must contain a summary stating the aims of the investigation, the results achieved and the main contribution to learning of the work submitted in the application; clear photocopies are acceptable.
  17. Where a collection of original creative material is also submitted for examination, the archival record should include photographic, video, cd-rom or dvd evidence, which encompasses the material submitted and any artefacts or documentation

integral to the creation of the work. A short inventory with brief descriptions should also be included.

18. An oral examination of the candidate shall be held, when the Examiners shall examine the candidate on the subject of the thesis, and on matters relevant thereto. Supervisors may **not** be present at the oral examination but should be readily available to the Examiners for consultation before, during and after the oral examination.
19. Each Examiner shall prepare an independent written report before the oral examination. After the oral examination, a joint report should be prepared, including, when appropriate, an agreed recommendation. If the Examiners are unable to agree on a recommendation, an additional External Examiner may be appointed, who shall be required to act independently of the other Examiners.
20. The Examiners may recommend:
  - 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 degree of MPhil be conferred subject to the candidate making major modifications to the thesis within six months of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* by the University. Whilst the Examiners agree that the submission is generally of the standard required for the award sought, some re-structuring of the thesis and/ or clarification of arguments is required in order to merit the award. The required amendments must not materially alter the conclusions of the thesis nor stipulate that the candidate undertake additional research beyond the scope of the original thesis. Modifications must be carried out to the satisfaction of all of the Examiners and a second *viva voce* examination will not be held;
  - d) that the thesis does not currently meet the standard required for the award sought, however, it has the potential to do so following a period of significant revision and re-working, which might include re-conceptualisation of arguments, amendment to the conclusions and/ or additional research beyond the scope of the original thesis. The candidate is permitted to make a subsequent application for the degree of MPhil on one occasion only, provided that the application is made not more 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 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 oral examination must be held;

- e) that the candidate be deemed not to have attained the standard required for the degree of MPhil and that no further opportunity be allowed for examination.
21. Following the re-examination of a thesis, the Examiners are permitted to recommend only outcomes (a) (b) or (e) as listed above. Candidates will not be allowed a further period of re-submission.

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

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

1. Original amended Ordinance approved on behalf of Senate and Council October/November 2015.
2. 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(B), Ordinances 56(B)i and 56(B)ii were introduced to replace 56(B).
3. Amendments approved on behalf of Senate and Council August 2021 to make the language more gender neutral and to reflect the change of name of the PGR Student Team to LDC Student Experience Team.
4. 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.