

**ORDINANCE 57(A)ii: Degree of Doctor in Philosophy (applicable to students who commenced their studies in 2014-15 and subsequently and submit their initial thesis on or after 2 September 2019)**

**Award and authority to award**

1. This Ordinance applies to the full-time and part-time degrees of Doctor in Philosophy (PhD) leading to awards at FHEQ level 8 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 PhD must be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Postgraduate Research (PGR) Code of Practice.
3. The degree of PhD 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 100,000 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 50,000 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 PhD may be undertaken in collaboration with an approved institutional partner and may be studied as a single University of Liverpool award or as part of a dual or joint doctoral award, subject to the approval, by or on behalf of the Senate, of a formal agreement between the partner institutions. All institutions with which the University of Liverpool forms such collaborative partnerships will be approved as 'recognised institutions'.
5. The degree of PhD 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.
6. 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 clause 34 of this Ordinance.

## **Admission**

7. In order to be admitted onto a PhD 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.
8. Candidates may be admitted to study on a PhD programme having requested to transfer into this programme from another equivalent institution, having satisfied the normal entrance qualification as provided for in clause 7 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**

9. Candidates may be admitted to study on a PhD programme on a full-time or part-time basis. The mode of study of the candidate will be determined on admission.
10. Candidates studying on a full-time basis shall normally be expected to submit their thesis within four calendar years of their initial registration (excluding any periods of suspension of studies). Candidates studying on a part-time basis shall normally be expected to submit their thesis within six years of their initial registration (excluding any periods of suspension of studies).
11. The minimum period of registration permitted before submission of the thesis shall normally be no less than two calendar years for full-time study and no less than four calendar years for part-time study. Candidates or their sponsors will be liable to pay full tuition fees for at least the minimum period of their registration.
12. The maximum period of registration for candidates studying on a PhD programme includes any period of suspended study, extensions to the expected submission date, writing up (thesis submission pending) and re-submission. For full-time study the maximum period shall be seven calendar years and for part-time study the maximum period shall be nine calendar years.
13. Candidates studying on a Student visa shall be deemed to have completed their studies upon submission of the final thesis, including any period specified by the Examiners for final corrections. The final thesis should be submitted to the online repository.
14. 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 a PhD 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**

15. Candidates shall register as a student 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. Candidates on approved joint or dual PhD degree programmes shall register at both partner institutions for the joint or dual award.

16. Candidates are required to complete appropriate postgraduate research development activities, in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice.
17. Candidates may request a suspension or extension of studies, including for the purposes of enabling candidates to achieve work/life balance, in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice.
18. 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**

19. 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 11 above.
20. 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.
21. 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 will be two calendar years from the date of their initial registration for full-time candidates and four years for part-time candidates, in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance governing MPhil programmes.

### **Supervision**

22. All supervision of candidates on PhD programmes will be undertaken in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice, Policy on Research Student Supervision.
23. 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 EPVC, or their nominee.
24. 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**

25. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. Candidates shall submit their thesis) to the University (Research Degree Administration Team), for examination in accordance with the PGR Code of Practice. In the case of joint or dual degree programmes candidates shall submit the appropriate number of copies of their thesis in accordance with the institutional partnership agreement.

### **Examination**

29. 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.
30. 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.
31. 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.
32. Where deemed appropriate, and in all re-submission *viva voce* examinations, a member of academic staff will be appointed as chair of the Examiners by the relevant Faculty, and will normally be a member of staff of the University.
33. 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.
34. The Examiners shall recommend one of the following:

- a) that the degree of PhD be conferred;
- b) that the degree of PhD 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 PhD 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 PhD 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 PhD 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 must be held;
- e) that the degree of Master of Philosophy be conferred upon the candidate, subject to minor modifications being made to the thesis, if required, within three months of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* by the University, to the satisfaction of one or more of the Examiners, as may be agreed between them;
- f) 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 an MPhil award, 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;
- g) 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 must be held;

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

35. Following the re-examination of a thesis for the award of PhD, the Examiners are permitted to recommend only outcomes (a) (b) (e) or (h) as listed above. Candidates will not be allowed a further period of re-submission. Where the candidate was invited to submit a revised thesis in pursuit of an MPhil award, Examiners should refer to the re-submission examination recommendations provided in the corresponding MPhil ordinance.

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

**SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS MADE TO ORDINANCE 57(A) (FROM JULY 2019 57(A)i AND 57(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 15) that stated:

*Full-time candidates who are admitted to study on a PhD programme should not normally be registered for any other programme of study leading to a different award.*
3. Amendment approved by Senate and Council January/February 2017 in order to define completion of studies for Student visa holders, in accordance with UKVI requirements (new clause 13).
4. 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.
5. 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 57(A), Ordinances 57(A)i and 57(A)ii were introduced to replace 57(A).
6. Amendments approved on behalf of Senate and Council August 2021 to make the language more gender neutral, to replace out of date references to Tier 4 visas, and to reflect the change of name of the PGR Student Team to LDC Student Experience Team.
7. 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.