



Postgraduate Research Code of Practice 2024-25

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Appendices:

This Code of Practice and the following appendices can be accessed electronically from the Academic Quality and Standards Division's webpage at [PGR Code of Practice](#)

1	PGR Admissions Policy and Procedures
1.1	Annexe 1: Procedures for Postgraduate Research Students transferring to or from the University of Liverpool
1.2	Annexe 2: Standard Operating Procedures: Conducting interviews
2	Policy on Research Student Supervision
3	Policy and Procedures on the Academic Progress of Postgraduate Research Students
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- 6.4 [Annexe 4: Extenuating Circumstances Process Flowcharts](#)
- 7 [Policy on Submission of a Research Degree Thesis for Examination](#)
 - 7.1 [Annexe 1: Guidelines for Formatting and Presentation of a PGR Degree Thesis to UoL for Examination](#)
 - 7.2 [Annexe 2: Guidelines on Presentation of Publications within a PGR Thesis](#)
- 8 [Policy on Research Degree Examinations and Examiners](#)
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- 9 [Policy and Procedures for Conducting Remote Viva Voce \(Viva\) Examinations for Research Degrees](#)
- 10 [Research Degree Appeals Procedure](#)
 - 10.1 [Annexe 1: Procedure for Convening a Research Degree Appeals Board](#)
 - 10.2 [Annexe 2: Guidelines for Staff \(Section One Appeals\)](#)
- 11 [Policy on Off-site and Split-site Research Degree Study \(for a Single University of Liverpool Award\)](#)
 - 11.1 [Annexe 1: Agreement for Off-Site Joint Supervision of Research Programme Leading to a Single University of Liverpool Award](#)
 - 11.2 [Annexe 2: Agreement for Split-Site Joint Supervision of Research Programme Leading to a Single University of Liverpool Award](#)
- 12a [Framework for Online Professional Doctorates for candidates who submitted their initial thesis prior to 2nd September 2019](#)
- 12b [Framework for Online Professional Doctorates for candidates who submitted their initial thesis on or after 2nd September 2019](#)
 - 12.1 [Annexe 1 Procedures on the Academic Progress of Students Registered for an Online Professional Doctorate](#)
 - 12.2 [Annexe 2 Guidelines on Submission of a Research Degree Thesis for Examination for Online Professional Doctorates](#)
- 13 [PGR Policy and Procedures for Visiting Research Students](#)
 - 13.1 [Annexe 1 Application Form for Visiting PGR Research Students](#)
 - 13.2 [Annexe 2 Visiting Research Students Offer Letters and Reply Slip](#)

- 13.3 [Annexe 3 Guidance for the UoL School/ Institute Staff Hosting the VRS](#)
- 13.4 [Annexe 4 Visiting Research Student Confirmation of Attendance](#)
- 14 [Policy for PhD Research by Design](#)
- 15 [Policy on *Aegrotat* and Posthumous Awards for Postgraduate Research Students](#)
- 16 [Policy on PhD by Prior Publication](#)
- 17 [Framework for Professional Doctorates](#)

The following Ordinances can be accessed electronically from the University Calendar section on [Ordinances](#) on the Governance webpage.

- 18 Ordinance for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy
- 19 Ordinance for the Degree of Master of Philosophy
- 20 Ordinance for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine
- 21 Ordinance for the Degree of Doctor of Clinical Psychology
- 22 Ordinance for the Degree of Doctor of Dental Science
- 23 Ordinance for Online Professional Doctorate Degrees
- 24 Ordinance for Higher Doctorates
- 25 Ordinance for Integrated Degree of Doctor in Philosophy and Master of Science
- 26 Ordinance for PhD by Prior Publication
- 27 Ordinance for Professional Doctorates

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The PGR Code of Practice (including its appendices) provides an authoritative institutional framework for the delivery of the University's postgraduate research degrees.
- 1.2 The Code covers all University of Liverpool research degrees, including Doctor in Philosophy (PhD), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Professional Doctorates, Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Higher Doctorates.
- 1.3 The Code covers all modes of research, including off-site and split-site arrangements, arrangements for research visits and online provision.
- 1.4 The Code is intended to inform staff and students, as well as individuals from outside the University, such as external examiners, off-site and split-site supervisors and institutional partners.
- 1.5 The Code refers to external reference points such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* and the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

THE CODE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The PGR Code of Practice provides an authoritative institutional framework for the delivery of the University's postgraduate research degrees. It sets out the University's expectations of quality and standards in relation to the range of activities associated with postgraduate research provision. It has a number of appendices containing substantive policies and procedures and refers to other University codes, ordinances and regulations. In formulating this Code, consideration has been given to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* and the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.
- 1.2 The PGR Code of Practice has the force of ordinances and therefore the authority of the Senate and Council, falling as it does under Ordinance 26 (Students' Admission, Studies and Conduct). It is also cited in the Annual Annexe of the Student Charter and, therefore, constitutes a part of the overall student contract.
- 1.3 The University of Liverpool needs to be able to assure itself that the standards of its research environment and of its awards are consistent with the general expectations for such an environment and awards within the higher education sector nationally and internationally. The Code uses as its reference point for the standards of the University's research degree awards the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*.
- 1.4 This Code will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to reflect developments in the higher education sector nationally and internationally and the need to comply with the terms of relevant legislation.
- 1.5 This Code and its associated Policies reflect the University's Diversity and Equality Policies and Action Plans. See <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/hr/diversityandequality/policies/>

2. Definitions

- 2.1 The University of Liverpool embraces two recognised definitions of research:
 1. The Frascati definition of research from the relevant Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) manual:¹

'Research and experimental development (R&D) comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.'
 2. The Research Excellence Framework (REF2014) definition:

'For the purposes of REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.'

See: <http://www.ref.ac.uk>

¹Frascati Manual 2002
Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development, Chapter 2

- 2.2 In addition, the FHEQ qualification descriptor states that for any doctoral degree (level 8):

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- A detailed understanding of the applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

See the [QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#).

- 2.3 A further reference point is the 'Dublin Descriptors' (from the *Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area- FQ-EHEA*) for the third cycle (doctoral level) which state:

Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:

- have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;
- have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;
- have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;
- are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
- can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;
- can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge-based society. See: <http://ehea.info/page-qualification-frameworks>

- 2.4 In examining research degree theses (or other outputs of research submitted for examination for a research degree), Examiners will use their academic and professional knowledge and judgement and the reference points referred to in 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 above to determine whether the candidate has achieved the standard required for the award to be made. In the case of Professional Doctorates, Examiners shall have regard to the specific criteria set out in the relevant programme specification. In the case of MPhil degrees (whether the intended outcome of the research programme or made as an exit award), the Examiners' expectations with regard to the originality of the research and/or the scope/size of the thesis will be appropriately moderated.

3. Research environment

- 3.1 The University fosters a research environment in which students are supported in learning about and doing research, in acquiring a range of research and personal skills, and in which they may actively contribute to the demonstrable research

achievement of interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or single-disciplinary teams. In creating such an environment, the University refers to and adopts the expectations and indicators of sound practice as set out in the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*.

4. Regulatory Framework and Coverage of the Code

- 4.1 This Code applies to the following University programmes and is underpinned by the relevant programme Ordinances as follows:
- Doctor in Philosophy (PhD)
 - Master in Philosophy (MPhil)
 - Doctor of Medicine (MD)
 - Professional Doctorates
 - Higher Doctorates
 - Dual or joint research degrees in collaboration with institutional partners
- 4.2 This Code is aligned with other University Ordinances, codes of practice, policies and procedures which are relevant to all students and staff of the University.