Policy on Submission of a Research Degree Thesis for Examination
1. Introduction

1.1 This Policy forms part of the University’s Postgraduate Research (PGR) Code of Practice. In addition to the PGR Code of Practice and its other Appendices, other University of Liverpool (UoL) policies, procedures and documents which may be relevant to this Policy are as follows:
   - Ordinances governing Postgraduate Research degrees listed in 1.2 below
   - PGR Student Handbook
   - Student Complaints Procedure

1.2 This Policy covers the following research programmes:
   - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
   - Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
   - Doctor of Medicine (MD)
   - Campus-based Professional Doctorates (the research element)

1.3 Online Professional Doctorate programmes are governed by the Online Professional Doctorate Framework.

1.4 Joint or dual awards are governed by the individual award agreement

1.5 The value of a UoL research degree award is underpinned by the quality of the research experience provided to candidates studying on the respective degree programme. UoL is responsible for the academic quality and standards of all study within its research degree programmes, including those offered under a collaborative agreement with an institutional partner.

2. General Principles

2.1 This Policy covers the preparation and submission of a research degree thesis for the purpose of examination only. The specific requirements governing a candidate’s depositing of a successfully examined thesis to the UoL Library Repository are covered by a separate guidance document provided by the UoL Library.

2.2 The normal minimum and maximum periods permitted for submission of a research degree thesis shall be as stipulated in the relevant research degree Ordinance in place at the time of a candidate’s first registration for the degree. Candidates should be made aware by their Primary Supervisor that if, exceptionally, they are permitted to submit their thesis early they will still be required by UoL to pay fees for the normal minimum period of registration.

2.3 The normal minimum and maximum periods permitted for registration for a research degree shall be as stipulated in the relevant research degree Ordinance in place at the time of a candidate’s first registration for the degree. If, in exceptional circumstances, an extension to the maximum period of registration is required, the School must make a case to the Director of the Liverpool Doctoral College, through the Faculty Student Experience Manager, for approval of this, notwithstanding the relevant Ordinance, Regulations, Code of Practice or Policies.

2.4 The student will be examined on the material that has been submitted and the context within which the research is conducted. The student may not submit further material after initial submission of the thesis.
3. Preparation of the thesis prior to submission

3.1 More detailed guidelines on UoL’s requirements regarding the format and style of a candidate’s thesis submission are attached as Annexe 1 to this Policy. Further advice and guidance regarding good practice for presentation of the thesis can also be obtained from the PGR Development Team.

3.2 Whilst all candidates should also consult their Supervisors prior to preparation and submission of their thesis, the following key requirements should be observed:

a) **Word count:** The maximum word count for the thesis is specified in the relevant Ordinance or Framework governing the research degree and should not normally be exceeded. If, in exceptional circumstances, the candidate wishes to exceed the relevant maximum word count, they should contact their Primary Supervisor, who will make application for approval by the relevant School/Institute Director of PGR or their designated representative. Approval will only be given in exceptional circumstances and if such approval is given it shall be communicated to the Examiners by the PGR Student Administration Team.

Criteria for approval of an application to exceed the word count include:
- Extensive primary material
- Translation of primary material
- Extensive data.

The maximum word count includes footnotes and appendices but not the bibliography.

b) **Formatting:** See Annexe 1.

c) **References:** References to published work should be given and all sources appropriately acknowledged. See Annexe 1.

d) **Abstract:** Each copy of the thesis must contain an Abstract. See Annexe 1.

e) **Published Papers:** Where the Ordinances permit a candidate to submit a thesis as a series of published papers embodying the results of their research, the following should be observed:
- The papers must be integrated into the thesis in a coherent and structured manner, with formatting in accordance with Annexe 1. It is not acceptable to integrate a published article in its original published format into the thesis.
- There must be a conventional ‘Introduction’ chapter that carefully explains and justifies the background and rationale for the approach taken.
- Each paper should be called a chapter and have an introductory section that explains how it links to preceding and following chapters.
- The thesis must contain a ‘Conclusion’ chapter that integrates the different strands presented in the results chapters.

It is expected that normally the candidate will be the primary author of the majority of the papers submitted. Where joint authorship does occur, a statement must be provided, in the introduction, of the contribution made by the candidate together with the status of the other authors.

f) **Language of thesis:** The thesis must be written in English, except for quoted material, which may be in the original language.
g) **Academic Integrity:** There are conventions of academic practice, such as established referencing and citation protocols, which both display and ensure academic integrity. Failure to adhere to these conventions can result in poor academic practice or, if there is a clear intention to deceive examiners, in unfair and/or dishonest academic practice. The PGR Academic Integrity Policy sets out the University’s approach to promoting academic integrity and the courses of action which will be pursued when academic misconduct is suspected. Acts that would be subject to UoL’s Disciplinary or Fitness to Practise procedures will be dealt with under those procedures.

h) **Binding of the thesis:** Printed copies of the thesis submitted for examination must be soft-bound; further detailed guidance is provided in Annexe 1.

4. **Submission of the thesis to the PGR Student Administration Team**

Candidates must submit two soft-bound printed copies and a single electronic copy of their thesis to the PGR Student Administration Team in the Student Administration Centre for examination. In the case of joint or dual degree programmes candidates must submit the appropriate number of copies of their thesis in accordance with the relevant institutional partnership agreement. The thesis submission form can be found here.

5. **Copyright**

5.1 The copyright in a PGR thesis will belong to the candidate, unless ownership of copyright is transferred. However the candidate’s thesis may be embargoed where it is required by third-party funding terms or in cases where UoL is pursuing evaluation, exploitation or protection of intellectual property.

5.2 In accordance with normal academic custom, the results of the PGR project may be publishable by UoL and the supervisor(s). The candidate engaged in the project shall be permitted to present and to publish the methods and results of the project, provided that UoL shall have advance notice of any disclosure and will enjoy discretion to delay proposed publication or presentation if, in its reasonable opinion, such delay is necessary to secure protection of intellectual property rights.

5.3 A candidate registered under an agreement with a partner for joint supervision of a PGR project is subject to UK copyright law and those laws pertaining to the Partner Institution. Further guidance is provided in the link in section 12 below.

6. **Intellectual Property**

6.1 The candidate will be subject to UoL’s Intellectual Property Policy, which reserves ownership of new intellectual property arising from the candidate’s research to UoL.

6.2 Intellectual property ownership and exploitation rights arising from jointly supervised postgraduate research will be agreed on a case by case basis and will be informed by the inventive contribution of each institution’s supervisor and the candidate.

6.3 UoL’s right of ownership may be subordinated by third-party agreements with funders or collaborators and as such the intellectual property ownership and exploitation position will vary on a case by case basis.
6.4 When possible, joint supervision agreements will include provision for the ownership, protection and exploitation rights to intellectual property developed in the course of a PGR project.

6.5 In the event that a PGR project is not subject to funder or collaboration agreement terms which impede intellectual property ownership, the default position will be that UoL will own the arising intellectual property and will, where appropriate, secure a licence to access any intellectual property owned by the Partner Institution on fair and reasonable terms.

7. Confidentiality of material

7.1 The Examiners will treat the thesis as privileged and confidential information. The full thesis must be submitted to the examiners for examination. Where a candidate or their sponsor considers that elements of the thesis are particularly confidential, the candidate should inform the PGR Student Administration Team prior to submission of the thesis, in order for the Examiners to be informed of the particularly sensitive nature of the material.

7.2 Following a successful defence at the viva examination, where a candidate or their sponsor considers that elements of the thesis are confidential they may request restricted access by third parties to the thesis deposited in the UoL Library (see section 9.1 below).

8. Requirements for minor modifications or full re-submission following first examination of the submitted thesis

8.1 For PhD, MPhil, MD and campus-based Professional Doctorate degrees the possible outcomes of the examination(s) are defined in the relevant Ordinances and Frameworks governing these degrees.

8.2 Details of required minor modifications or requirements for full re-submission will be provided to the student by the Examiners, in accordance with the Policy on Research Degree Examinations and Examiners.

8.3 The PGR Student Administration Team will monitor deadlines for re-submission or minor modifications and notify the appropriate School/Institute PGR professional services staff of re-submission deadlines. The School/Institute will be responsible for handling students’ non-compliance with the academic requirement to comply with re-submission/minor modifications deadlines, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Policy on PGR Student Progress.

8.4 Minor modifications

a) Normally candidates are expected to submit their minor modifications to the designated Examiner to the satisfaction of the Examiner within a period of three months from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of their viva by the PGR Student Administration Team.

b) If a student requires a short extension to the three-month period they may request an extension through their School/Institute or Faculty DPR.

8.5 Re-submission of thesis

a) Normally candidates are expected to provide any re-submission to the PGR Student Administration Team within a period of one calendar year from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of their viva by the PGR Student Administration Team. A
candidate re-submitting their thesis is subject to the normal PGR progress procedures.

b) If a student requires an extension or suspension to the one calendar year period they may request it through their School/Institute or Faculty DPR.

9. Submission of the successfully examined thesis to the Library Repository

9.1 Guidance on depositing a successfully examined thesis to the UoL Library Repository is covered by a separate document provided by the UoL Library (see section 2a above). It should be noted that:

- Candidates registered prior to 1st August 2008 must submit two hard-bound copies of their thesis to the library. They may also submit an electronic version.
- Candidates registered after 1st August 2008 must submit an electronic copy only of their thesis to the e-thesis repository.

Where a candidate or their sponsor considers that elements of the thesis are confidential they may request restricted access to the thesis in accordance with the Library's guidance document.

9.2 Candidates must deposit their thesis with the UoL Library within four weeks of the date of the communication from the PGR Student Administration Team notifying them of their success in their examination. This communication will be sent to the candidate's University email account only. Candidates should note that they will not be permitted to graduate until they have deposited their thesis with the Library.

10. Responsibilities of the Supervisors

The responsibilities of the Supervisors are outlined in detail in the PGR Policy on Student Supervision.

11. Responsibilities of the candidate

Additional responsibilities of the candidate relating to the formatting and presentation of their thesis are provided in further detail in Annexe 1.

12. Sources of further information

- The PGR Code of Practice
- PGR Student Administration Team
- PGR Development Team
- University Library information regarding copyright
- Information regarding submission to the University Library
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Guild of Students Advice Service
Policy on Submission of a Research Degree Thesis for Examination
Annexe 1

Guidelines for formatting and presentation of a PGR degree thesis to UoL for examination

This Annexe provides additional guidance to candidates and should be read in conjunction with the Policy on Submission of a Research Degree Thesis for Examination.

1. Number of copies required for the examination
   Three printed copies of the thesis and any supporting papers plus one electronic version are normally required. The electronic and two printed copies should be deposited with the PGR Student Administration Team in the Student Administration Centre, who will make arrangements for the examination of the thesis. The candidate should retain one copy. However, if three Examiners are appointed, three printed copies must be submitted to the PGR Student Administration Team.

2. Formatting.
   A common font and style should be used throughout the thesis, with clear text, illustrations and pagination. The main body of the text should be in black ink on white paper. Pages should be numbered consecutively and the position of page numbers (candidate’s choice or as advised by the supervisor) should be consistent throughout.

3. Sources
   Candidates must state generally in the preface and specifically in the body of the thesis the sources from which their information is derived with the appropriate acknowledgement of the work of others.

4. References
   References to published work should be provided in a consistent format that is currently accepted in the field covered by the thesis. If in doubt, candidates should consult their supervisors about the most appropriate approach. Further guidance about referencing systems can be found on the University Library website.

5. Title page
   The following format should normally be observed:
   (Centred) Title of thesis
   ‘Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy (or other degree as appropriate) by full forenames and surname.’
   (Centred) Date (month and year) with suitable line spacing.

6. Table of contents
   The table of contents must include chapter headings and page numbers. All separate sections of the thesis, such as bibliography, lists of abbreviations, supporting papers etc. must also be identified on the contents page.

7. Abstract
   Each copy of the thesis must contain an Abstract indicating the aims of the investigation and the results achieved. It should be no longer than one side of an A4 sheet using single-spaced font (normally about 450 words) and should include a heading indicating the author and title of the thesis.
8. **Paper**
   A4 white paper of at least 80g/m² weight must be used for both originals and photocopies, except for any endpapers which carry no text. Paper may be printed on both sides or on one side.

9. **Margins and line spacing**
   1½ line spacing is advised, but at least double line spacing should be used for text that contains many subscripts and superscripts. Quotations may be indented. Candidates should check the text carefully and it is strongly advised to make full use of error-checking facilities.

   On the binding edge the margin must be 40mm. Other margins must be 25mm minimum.

10. **Binding**
    Printed copies of the thesis submitted for examination must be soft-bound and the binding of all volumes must be identical. The thesis should be presented in such a way that the pages cannot be readily removed. Accordingly, ring binders and spiral binding are not permitted. The candidate’s surname, initials, the date (month and year) and the degree must be displayed on the outside front cover.

11. **Supporting material**
    Diagrams, maps and illustrations should be placed as near to the relevant text as possible. If it is necessary to place illustrations in a separate volume, the binding must match that of the text. Images must be of good quality and adequate size. Where material is fixed in the thesis it must be securely mounted in each copy.

    Essential material that cannot be easily included within the bound thesis (e.g. large charts, CDs, etc.) must be placed securely in a pocket attached to the inside back cover of each copy.

12. **Original Creative Material**
    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.