



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES (COVENTRY UNIVERSITY)

Effective from 1st March 2013

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Preamble

All University formal documents relate to the policies, strategies, procedures and regulations of the University having been approved by the appropriate formally recognised and constituted body. All University staff and students are required to adhere to the formal processes and regulations of the University.

This document should not be read in isolation as other University processes/formal documents could be relevant. A full listing of all formal documents is available on the University's website.

Any interpretation of the content of this formal document will be at the discretion of the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.

All previous versions of this document as approved by Senate before 1st November 2008 shall be rescinded.

The names of committees and titles of posts may change from time to time. This shall not invalidate the powers of the equivalent successor committees or post holders.

If required this formal document is available in an alternative format eg Braille, tape, disc, email or a larger font size. Please contact Student and Academic Services

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Practice:
- a) applies to all research degrees where assessment is by thesis and a *viva voce* examination and which may lead to the following awards:
 - Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
 - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
 - b) is aimed at:
 - enhancing academic standards and the quality of research degree programmes;
 - encouraging and enabling research students to complete their research degrees within the normal period of registration;
 - c) sets out a minimum set of requirements to promote good practice in the appointment, supervision, training, monitoring and examination of research students and supplements the Buckinghamshire New University (the University) regulations contained in:
 - Regulations for Research Degrees
 - Academic Appeals – Research Degrees
 - Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Committee
 - Academic Misconduct.
- 1.2 All research students who enrol with the University will have their research degrees validated by Coventry University (Coventry).
- 1.3 Students are enrolled with the University and registered with Coventry with the former being responsible for supervision and support.
- 1.4 Regulations specific to the University pertaining to research degrees will be governed by and from time to time, amended or substituted by Senate on the advice of the Research Degrees Committee.
- 1.5 With the approval of Senate, study for research degrees, including the arrangements for the supervision of the postgraduate research students, is organised by the Faculties. The Heads of Research oversee all aspects of research degrees in their respective Faculties.
- 1.6 This Code of Practice adheres to the good practice and reference points established in the *Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes - September 2004*.
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp>.

2 Academic Standards

2.1 Under the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QAA 2008) the standards that must be reached for an MPhil and a PhD are as follows:

2.2 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7: Master's degree

The descriptor provided for this level of the framework is for any master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full.

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems. They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments. The learning outcomes of most master's degree courses are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year and are taken by graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours (or equivalent achievement).

2.3 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8: Doctoral degree

The descriptor provided for this level of the framework is for any doctoral degree which should meet the descriptor in full.

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 applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Doctoral degrees are awarded for the creation and interpretation, construction and/or exposition of knowledge which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research.

Holders of doctoral degrees will be able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctoral degrees will have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields and an innovative approach to tackling and solving problems.

Achievement of outcomes consistent with the qualification descriptor for the doctoral degree normally requires study equivalent to three full-time calendar years.

3 Terminology

- 3.1 **Enrolment:** the process by which a student declares an intention to study for a research degree during a continuous period of twelve calendar months. Enrolment constitutes an agreement to pay all fees due and to abide by the rules and regulations of the University.
- 3.2 **Normal Period of Registration:** the normal permitted duration of a student's registration, which is calculated by reference to the length of the programme of studies as specified at the time of admission. Permitted periods of suspension of studies do not count towards the normal period of registration.
- 3.3 **Mode of Study:** Students may be registered for full-time or part-time study, where full-time normally means working for a minimum of 35 hours per week for 45 weeks per year.
- 3.4 **Registration:** the process by which a student declares an intention to follow a research degree through Coventry.
- 3.5 **Research Degree:** A higher education qualification at levels 7 and 8- Masters by Research and Doctoral Degrees. These are programmes of postgraduate student research projects covering

cognate themes, within an appropriate research environment, leading to the award of either Master or Doctor of Philosophy.

- 3.6 **Thesis:** A substantial piece of work in which the student is required to demonstrate a sound knowledge and critical appreciation of his/her discipline. The thesis for the award of PhD shall make a distinct and original contribution to knowledge in that discipline. The submission may take the form of a wholly written dissertation, or one, which comprises original, creative work, supplemented by adequate documentation in written, aural, practical and visual form indicating its originality and contribution to knowledge within the discipline. All submissions involving creative work should include a means of storage, access and retrieval of work.
- 3.7 **viva voce:** a defence by the candidate of the thesis in an oral examination conducted by two or more examiners.

4 Staff Responsibilities

4.1 Head of Research Degrees

- 4.1.1 The Head of Research (HoR) is the person designated by Senate as having formal responsibility for the administration of research degrees in a faculty.
- 4.1.2 The HoR has prime responsibility for:
- a) identifying potential new research projects
 - b) the admission of any student onto a research degree and ensuring that:
 - the student is appropriately qualified for admission
 - the student is able to make the commitment of at least 35 hours per week for at least 45 weeks per year if a full-time student or for a part-time student about half that expected for a full-time student
 - appropriate & adequate supervision is available and that this can be sustained;
 - the proposed research topic is appropriate and can be completed within the normal period of registration
 - any necessary equipment and other resources for the duration of the proposed programme can be provided
 - the student has an appropriate working environment
 - c) the students undertaking a research degree in respect to the academic aspects of:
 - MPhil/PhD transfer
 - annual review
 - training
 - changes in supervisory arrangements
 - appointment of external examiners
 - ensuring that full-time students undertaking teaching should receive formal training before undertaking such duties
 - the training of supervisors
 - the continuity of supervision in any prolonged absence of a supervisor and
 - for producing annual programme reports
- 4.1.3 The HoR is a member of the University Research Degrees Committee (RDC)

4.2 Research Degrees Committee (RDC)

- 4.2.1 Membership of the RDC is:
- a) Heads of Research or nominees
 - b) A representative from Brunel University;

- c) Up to two representatives from Coventry;
- d) A representative from Learning and Information Services;
- e) One or two co-opted members, from the academic community external to the University
- f) Student representative (Research)
- g) Senior Registrar – Research Unit
- h) Registrar – Research Unit (Secretary)
- i) One co-opted member from each faculty
- j) Student Union Representative

4.2.2 The RDC reports to the University's Senate.

4.2.3 The RDC is responsible for:

- a) ensuring that the regulations of Coventry and the University pertaining to the quality assurance of research degrees are complied with
- b) ensuring that each HoR has carried out their responsibilities with regard to the admission of research students
- c) the annual review of students' progress
- d) both the supervisor and research student training programmes
- e) recommending potential changes in research degree regulations
- f) ensuring that examination procedures are followed

4.3 Research Unit

The RU is part of the Academic Quality Directorate (AQD) and has responsibility for:

- a) the administration of:
 - admissions
 - enrolments
 - registrations
 - annual reviews
 - MPhil/PhD transfers
 - examinations of all research students
- b) the direct link with Coventry on the above
- c) the administration of the supervisor and generic research student training programmes
- d) acting as the Secretariat for the RDC
- e) the provision of information to University staff on matters of University research policy and procedure
- f) the pastoral well being of research students
- g) acting as a mediator in any dispute between student and supervisor;
- h) acting on the student's behalf before appropriate University bodies.

5 Supervisors

5.1 Each research student will be assigned a supervisory team, appointed by the HoR, who together will be experienced in the conduct of research in the broad subject area of interest.

5.2 The roles of each supervisor will have been discussed with the student at the time of interview and subsequently confirmed in the offer letter sent to the student.

5.3 One member of the supervisory team will be designated the Main Supervisor and specifically allocated to supervise the student's project. This supervisor will normally have:

- a) experience of the specific research topic
- b) supervised at least one research student through to successful completion of a PhD
- c) a doctorate

- 5.4 The Main Supervisor shall be a suitably qualified member of staff of the University. A probationary member of staff or one funded on a contract of lesser duration than the programme may be appointed as a second supervisor.
- 5.5 If a supervisory team does not include at least one supervisor who meets the latter two requirements in 5.3 support from the broader research expertise within the Faculty will be utilised. Exceptionally, a first supervisor may be appointed without holding a doctorate. In this case the second supervisor should be qualified to PhD level.
- 5.6 Where a Main Supervisor is proposed for the first time who does not hold a doctorate, a detailed justification must be forwarded to the RU for approval by Coventry.
- 5.7 An excessive supervisory loading places the University and its students at risk. It also suggests that research is not sustainable in the area where the excessive loading exists. The University requires that supervisors who hold full-time teaching posts should not supervise more than six students, allowance being made for first/second supervision and full/part time students. For all other post holders their supervisory loadings must be appropriate to their post and any exceptions must be approved by the Chair, RDC.
- 5.8 External supervisors who are not employed by the University, may be appointed, and will normally act as second supervisor. These would provide specific expertise not available within the University to a student, or for a student based away from the University, would serve as a more accessible point of reference.
- 5.9 Where a supervisor is appointed without experience of supervision, it is the responsibility of the HoR to ensure that the supervisor undertakes appropriate training.
- 5.10 A Research Supervisor Development Programme consisting of a number of development sessions is run every year. All supervisors are required to attend at least 2 of the development sessions every 2 years.
- 5.11 The responsibilities of the supervisors include:
- a) giving guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, about the planning of the research programme, about literature and sources and about the problem of plagiarism
 - b) maintaining contact through the establishment of regular tutorial and seminar meetings
 - c) being accessible to the student at other appropriate times when advice may be needed or making arrangements for another member of staff to be available
 - d) giving detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time
 - e) requesting written work as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism in reasonable time
 - f) arranging, as appropriate, for the student to talk about his/her work to staff or at graduate seminars, which might provide a good opportunity to prepare for the *viva voce* examination
 - g) ensuring that the student is made aware of inadequate progress or of standards of work below that generally expected, through the annual review and also through structured discussion at regular intervals
 - h) providing general advice and support of a pastoral nature and seeking feedback regularly from the student on his/her experience as a student of the University
 - i) ensuring that his/her research students have adequate opportunities to write for publication
 - j) ensuring that adequate cover is arranged if the supervisor is going to be absent for a significant period
 - k) ensuring that prior to submission of the thesis, the student considers whether it contains any material capable of commercial exploitation, or of being patented
- 5.12 A student and his/her supervisory team should, on the day that the student starts (or shortly thereafter), agree a working agreement that details:
- a) a schedule of regular meetings

- b) the role of the individual members of the supervisory team
 - c) a proposed date for the submission of the thesis outline
 - d) access to supervisors outside of scheduled meetings
 - e) the students training requirements
 - f) a proposed date for the submission of the completed thesis, which should aim to comply with the normal period of registration
- 5.13 The Main Supervisor will establish, with the student, annual programme objectives. Progress against these objectives will be reviewed at least annually.
- 5.14 A written record of the discussions and outcomes of each supervisory meeting will be agreed by both supervisor and student. The supervisor will ensure that the student receives a copy of the record and that the record is placed on the student's file in the Faculty.
- 5.15 If after examination the examiners recommend that the student re-submits the student should be entitled to an appropriate level of supervision which will be agreed between the supervisors and the HoR.
- 5.16 Students and supervisors are responsible for identifying matters of concern at any time during the academic year. Such matters should be addressed promptly and not be postponed to be dealt with during the annual review process.
- 5.17 Supervisors should make additional arrangements, if necessary, to support students from overseas who may require more advice, including assistance with the language, in the early stages of their work.
- 5.18 If the Main Supervisor is likely to be absent from the University for a period of more than two months the HoR, following discussion with the student, should, prior to the period of absence and within a period of one month propose alternative supervisory arrangements.
- 5.19 If a supervisor is to leave the University the HoR, following discussion with the student, should within a period of one month propose alternative supervisory arrangements. Such arrangements are to be approved by the HoR. If the period is likely to exceed one month the Chair, RDC must be informed.
- 5.20 If a student requests a change in his/her supervisory team he/she must make a formal application to his/her HoR who, following discussion with the student, should within a period of one month propose alternative supervisory arrangements. Such arrangements are to be approved by the HoR. If the period is likely to exceed one month the Chair, RDC must be informed.
- 5.21 If problems arise between a student and his/her supervisor, an informal resolution to the problems should be sought with every effort being made to establish the reasons and, if possible, resolve any difficulties that have arisen. If the problems cannot be resolved informally the HoR should be advised and asked to seek a resolution satisfactory to both parties. If the supervisor is the HoR the Dean of Faculty should be advised and asked to seek a resolution satisfactory to both parties. If the problems continue to persist, the Dean of Faculty should seek, in conjunction with the Chair, RDC (where necessary), a resolution satisfactory to both parties.
- 5.22 Where a student is close to completing his/her programme and his/her supervisor leaves the University the supervisor may be appointed to the Associate Staff of the University and, together with a new supervisor, may continue to provide supervision to the student.
- 5.23 Changes in supervisory arrangements must be endorsed by the Faculty HoR and then approved by the RDC.
- 5.24 The RU must be informed of any changes in supervisory arrangements.

- 5.25 Supervisors are urged to ensure that the RU is notified promptly of any information relating to individual students, e.g. leave of absence and notice of withdrawal.

6 Students – Responsibilities and Entitlements

6.1 – Responsibilities

- 6.1.1 Students are expected to approach their research studies in a mature manner, taking responsibility for their own progress and learning.
- 6.1.2 In order to obtain a PhD in the normal period a full-time student will be expected to work for a minimum of 35 hours per week and 45 weeks per year.
- 6.1.3a) A full-time student may not enter into full-time employment but may enter into some part-time employment subject to the approval of his/her supervisor and the HoR. A part-time student may enter into both full-time and part-time employment but the student should seek advice from his/her supervisor as to the level of employment.
- 6.1.3b) International students should consult the latest UKBA regulations in relation to employment and also seek the advice of the University's International Administration Office. The UKBA website can be found at <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>
- 6.1.4 At the start of his/her research the student and his/her supervisors must complete the student/supervisor working agreement. This should be updated:
- at each annual review and
 - if a supervisor leaves the University
- 6.1.5 It is the student's responsibility to:
- keep a record of meetings with his/her supervisors
 - attend the Research Student Training Programme as agreed with his/her supervisors
 - take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties with his/her supervisor as and when they arise
 - maintain the progress of work in accordance with the stages agreed with his/her supervisors
 - prepare for and attend each Annual Review interview
 - undergo the MPhil/PhD transfer at the recommended time
 - decide when he/she wishes to submit his/her thesis for examination within the normal registration period
 - comply with UK Data Protection legislation and the University's Data Protection Policy
 - inform his/her HoR and the RU immediately if he/she is prevented from working on his/her research project because of illness – if the student is in receipt of a University bursary he/she must submit a medical certificate
 - provide self-certified absence forms for periods of illness up to 5 working days and a medical certificate for periods greater than or equal to 6 working days.
 - discuss with their Main Supervisor any medical, absence or other circumstances which may prevent them from completing their programme of study in the agreed timescale.
 - inform his/her supervisors in advance of the holidays to be taken which should be compatible with the agreed research plan. Full-time students are entitled, with the approval of their supervisor, to take up to seven weeks holidays (including University and public holidays) in a period of 12 months
 - enrol every twelve months as a student of the University

6.2 – Entitlements

The following sets out the minimum entitlement for a student:

- a. Contact with the Main Supervisor should conform to that established in the Working Agreement.
- b. E-mail communication, documentation and other work submitted by the student should normally be responded to within 10 working days by the Main Supervisor.
- c. An appointment arranged during normal office hours to discuss problems, issues or complaints related to the student's programme of study or relationship with the supervisory team.
- d. With the prior agreement of the Main Supervisor up to 35 working days holiday per year may be requested by a full-time student. A part-time student should notify their Main Supervisor of their holiday arrangements. Holiday entitlement is in addition to any working days during which the University is closed.
- e. A safe environment in which to work.
- f. Adequate space in which to work: for full-time students in regular attendance, a personal desk and adjacent space for storing files and books in a quiet environment.
- g. If appropriate, access to an adequately-equipped laboratory and without unreasonable delay to shared items of equipment.
- h. Libraries with an adequate supply of documents and other information sources in his/her discipline and appropriate support.
- i. Access to a PC of adequate specification.
- j. Access to a programme of formal training and research seminars relevant to his/her discipline and, where appropriate, initial training in information/learning research methods to develop their underpinning research and subject skills.
- k. The opportunity to comment on the supervision and training received.
- l. Secure storage on the University Servers which is automatically and regularly backed up.
- m. Access to appropriate office and e-mail software to facilitate research activity.
- n. Access via the Library or on-line to appropriate reference and research materials to facilitate research.
- o. Access to individual careers advice, workshops or events to help prepare for future employment or the development of the next stage in their research career.

7 Admission

- 7.1 The admissions process for selecting students to study for postgraduate research degrees must be balanced, independent and transparent and must be uniform across all faculties.
- 7.2 An applicant may seek admission to study for the postgraduate research degree of either MPhil or PhD, either full-time or part-time.
- 7.3 Before an applicant can be enrolled and registered for a research degree, the proposed programme of study and the supporting arrangements must be subject to appropriate academic judgement to determine the viability and acceptability of the proposal and the appropriateness of the applicant to undertake the proposed programme. In particular, the following requirements must be satisfied:
 - a) the applicant must be appropriately qualified;
 - b) the proposed programme of study must be viable;
 - c) the arrangements for supervision must be appropriate and sustainable;
 - d) the research environment(s) and facilities must be satisfactory.
- 7.4 An applicant may be admitted to study for a postgraduate research degree if he/she holds:
 - a) an appropriate Masters Degree; or
 - b) at least an upper second class honours degree in a relevant subject of a university or any other institution of higher education in the United Kingdom with degree awarding powers granted by the responsible Secretary of State; or
 - c) a qualification, which is regarded by the University as equivalent to such an honours degree

- 7.5 An applicant holding qualifications other than those in paragraph 7.4 above will be considered on his/her merits and in relation to the nature and scope of the proposed research. In considering an applicant in this category, the HoR will seek evidence of:
- a) previous training
 - b) professional experience
 - c) published work
 - d) background knowledge in relation to the proposed research and/or
 - e) other appropriate evidence of accomplishments
- 7.6 Prior to interview an applicant is required to complete the University Research Degrees Application Form RES1 and provide:
- a) details of two referees, at least one of the referees must have direct knowledge of the applicants academic work but only one can be from the University– and neither referee should be a partner or family member;
 - b) a copy of their first degree certificate (if applicable);and
 - c) if English is not the mother tongue, a copy of their certificate of English language competence.
- 7.7 An applicant must complete the form RES1 in full – the career and education history of the gaps. A curriculum vitae is not an acceptable substitute and there must not be any reference to a curriculum vitae in the RES1.
- 7.8 The completed referee forms that are submitted must be originals – photocopied or faxed forms are not acceptable.
- 7.9 The applicant must also submit a project proposal of up to 2500 words. The project proposal is an important and integral part of the assessment:
- a) of the applicants potential to obtain a research degree through undertaking research and writing a thesis and
 - b) of whether the project can be studied to the depth required
- 7.10 If the applicant is being considered under paragraph 7.5 above he/she will be required to submit a professional portfolio in addition to the completed RES1 form.
- 7.11 All applicants for a higher degree must have a sufficient command of the English language to be able to complete satisfactorily the programme of study and to prepare and defend the thesis in English. Applicants may be required to demonstrate their competence through attainment of a notified minimum IELTS score (or equivalent) and/or attendance at a pre-sessional English course or any other requirement laid down by the University.
- 7.12 At least two people (preferably three), one being the HoR and the other being the proposed first supervisor, should interview the applicant. If the HoR is to be the Main Supervisor an additional person from the research degree programme who has supervised to completion should be on the panel. Overseas applicants should be interviewed by telephone interview if possible where a face-to-face interview is not practicable.
- 7.13 Staff involved in the admissions process will have received instruction in respect of selection and admissions procedures and the legal requirements relating to such procedures.
- 7.14 At the interview the role of both supervisors must be defined and discussed with the applicant.
- 7.15 If the applicant has any criminal convictions he/she may be asked to provide additional information about the nature of the convictions. Provision of this information will not affect the academic consideration of the application.
- 7.16 At the time of interview the checklist at the back of RES1 must be completed and signed by the applicant.

- 7.17 The application form, copy of degree certificate, checklist and references of the successful student will be forwarded to the RU for examination on behalf of the RDC and the Chair, RDC.
- 7.18 Prior to an offer letter being sent to the applicant, the original of the applicant's first degree certificate and, if applicable, the applicant's certificate of English Language competence must be submitted to the Faculty. Certified copies of the certificates may be submitted by the applicant but these must be obtained by the applicant at his/her own expense.
- 7.19 If an applicant is a non-EU national and does not have a visa to enter/reside in the UK they should be advised not to apply for a visa until they have received a written offer from the University.
- 7.20 A formal offer of admission to the University and a postgraduate research student agreement will be prepared by the RU which must be approved by the Chair, RDC.
- 7.21 The offer letter and the postgraduate research student agreement will include:
- a) the area of research
 - b) the names and roles of the supervisors appointed to support the student, as detailed at the time of the interview
 - c) the start date for the research
 - d) the registration period relevant to the mode of study
 - e) the terms of the bursary (if applicable)
 - f) liability for fees (if applicable)
 - g) the requirement for the student to attend an MPhil/PhD transfer interview and the annual reviews
 - h) any conditions which the student is required to meet before he/she can register
 - i) the campus at which the student will be based
 - j) a statement that the offer is subject to:
 - ethics approval if the proposed research project involves human subjects and
 - acceptance by the UK Government of the student's application for a visa to enter and remain in the UK for the duration of the programme of study if the student is not a resident of European Economic Area.
- 7.22 The offer letter and the postgraduate research student agreement will be sent to the student with the following:
- a) Research Student Handbook;
 - b) A copy of this Code of Practice – Postgraduate Research Degrees (Coventry University);
 - c) Regulations for Research Degrees;
 - d) Code of Good Research Practice;
 - e) The University Enrolment Form (S5);
 - f) Bank/Building Society Details Form (if applicable);
 - g) Guidance for overseas students (if applicable).
- 7.23 The offer letter should be sent to the student within 10 working days of the interview.
- 7.24 The student must return to the RU a copy of the signed agreement, the completed University Enrolment Form and a passport photograph.
- 7.25 If the student is self-funded or sponsored the student must provide an acceptable financial guarantee.
- 7.26 As part of the admissions process to the University, the student should be given:
- a) information about the University, including advice on residential accommodation, if appropriate
 - b) information about research activity of which the student will be a part, including the research interests of staff and, in particular, of the supervisors

- c) the opportunity to visit the Faculty where the student will be carrying out his/her research
- d) the opportunity to discuss with the first supervisor the identification of any special facilities or support that might be required to complete the research programme successfully
- e) a statement of the fees for the duration of the student's studies, and, if from overseas, guidance on living costs
- f) details of the student's first formal meeting with the main supervisor and the induction arrangements made
- g) a statement of what, if any, financial support (other than a bursary) or research consumables (for example Inter-Library Loan cards, photocopying cards or laboratory equipment), will be provided to the student to enable the student to undertake his/her research project

7.27 A student may be permitted to pursue the whole or part of their programme of research at a specified place away from the University. Permission will only be granted provided the HoR is satisfied that:

- a) the proposed place of research is appropriate
- b) the programme remains under the control of the HoR
- c) suitable arrangements have been made for the supervisor to visit the student
- d) an appropriate person, who has experience in the relevant academic field and also of supervising research students, has been appointed to act as a local supervisor
- e) the student has confirmed that he/she will attend the University:
 - for his/her MPhil/PhD transfer interview
 - for annual reviews
 - for his/her examination and
 - normally for forty days annually

7.28 On enrolment, students are provided with a multi-functional ID card that serves as a library card, and enables access to the University buildings and premises.

7.29 Applications shall be treated in strict confidence.

8 Enrolment

8.1 Each student shall be required to enrol annually with the University, until an award is made or unless taking an authorised suspension of studies.

8.2 The RU will send enrolment reminders to students however it is the responsibility of the student to enrol on the due date.

8.3 If a student has submitted their thesis to the RU and is waiting for the formalities of examination to be completed, he or she is still required to enrol.

8.4 If a student, following examination, is required to re-submit the thesis or be re-examined orally, then enrolment is required.

9 Registration

9.1 The registration period determines the period in which the thesis must be submitted.

9.2 A student may be registered for a research degree from the start of any month.

9.3 A student for a research degree will normally be registered initially for an MPhil.

9.4 Exceptionally, research students may be registered for a PhD, subject to confirmation, where funding is conditional on PhD registration.

9.5 The normal and maximum duration of registration for a research programme is as follows:

| | Normal duration (months) | Maximum duration (months) |
|-----------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Full-time | | |
| PhD | 36 | 48 |
| MPhil | 12 | 24 |
| Part-time | | |
| PhD | 48 | 96 |
| MPhil | 24 | 48 |

- 9.6 Both the normal and maximum periods of registration shall be determined from the first day of the month in which the student first registered for a research degree.
- 9.7 If the registration period is likely to exceed the 'normal' duration, a formal request for an extension must be made by the student and supported by the Main Supervisor. The request must be approved by the RDC. A maximum extension of one year can be requested at a time. Registration will lapse at the end of the appropriate maximum period.
- 9.8 Registration is not permitted to continue beyond the 'maximum' duration, except to allow for the formalities of the examination to be completed.
- 9.9 A student whose registration has lapsed or been terminated for whatever reason will not be entitled to supervision, nor to present a thesis for examination nor to attend the University.
- 9.10 The RDC may, in exceptional circumstances, consider an application for re-registration or for an extension beyond the maximum duration, for a specified period for completion of the work, if the HoR supports it.
- 9.11 Students may not normally be registered and enrolled simultaneously for more than one degree. However, exceptional circumstances may apply, e.g. where a student registered on a postgraduate course has submitted his/her final dissertation which has not been formally examined, but where the student wishes to register for a programme of research.

10 Fees

10.1 Tuition fees:

- a) must be paid annually at enrolment
- b) will be charged according to the enrolment status of the student and whether the student is classified as a home student, a resident of the European Economic Area or an overseas student
- c) normally rise in line with inflation.

Current rates are posted on the Research page of the University website

- 10.2 In addition to tuition fees a bench fee may be charged by some faculties.
- 10.3 The University Finance Office may consider payment by instalments in cases of hardship.
- 10.4 Where a student has financial support for fees from an employer or other organisation the student must supply proof of sponsorship at enrolment, otherwise he/she will be assumed liable for payment of tuition fees. The student is ultimately responsible for all and any payment owing to the University in the case of default by the sponsor.

- 10.5 Students who have completed their research and require minimal supervision, but who are still writing up their thesis can be placed in Continuation status and charged a Continuation Fee rather than the full tuition fee. This fee is charged at the beginning of each new session for students in Continuation status. The fee is not reduced or waived to take account of early submission but is charged to all students who have not submitted by the beginning of the new session.
- 10.6 If a student, following examination, is required to re-submit their thesis or be re-examined orally enrolment and payment of a 'Revisions Fee' is required. The Revisions Fee will be charged in full without exception.
- 10.7 All home and EU students should consult the formal document Student payment and debt procedures – Home/EU: Effective from August 2009 regarding fees regulations. International students should seek the advice of both the Finance Office and the International Administration Office for clarification of the requirements for payment of fees.
- 10.8 A student will not be permitted to enter an examination of his/her thesis nor be awarded a degree unless he/she has paid the fees prescribed and any other sums due to the University.

11 Bursaries

- 11.1 University bursaries are:
- a) for full-time students only
 - b) for three years only; and
 - c) subject to satisfactory progress
- 11.2 Support may be available for part-time students who can be awarded fee remission and a contribution to incidental costs.
- 11.3 The value of bursaries is set every year, and is intended to contribute towards the cost of maintenance. The bursary includes £500 to be used by the student for stationery, book purchases, computer consumables and thesis printing and binding. The requirement to pay fees is also waived.
- 11.4 No bursary may be considered as definite until the University has sent the student formal confirmation of an offer and this has been signed and returned by the student.
- 11.5 A student who is in receipt of an award from another source (such as an employer or is otherwise financially supported by another organisation or by a foreign government) which the University considers to be sufficient to cover maintenance and tuition fees, will not be eligible for a bursary from the University.
- 11.6 If a University bursary holder is subsequently granted an additional award or an equivalent form of support, the entitlement to the University bursary will be re-assessed and adjusted from the date on which the new award/form of support starts.
- 11.7 Certain types of scholarships and other awards may be exempted. These are:
- a) prizes awarded competitively and not directly related to the work carried out by the student during the tenure of the award
 - b) scholarships or similar payments made to the student by professional or industrial institutions in respect of the training being received but which are not intended to cover maintenance and fee costs
 - c) academic bursaries funded from private monies and obtained in competition
- 11.8 The private income of a student will normally have no effect on the entitlement to an award or its value except where that income is derived from another award as detailed in paragraph 11.5.

- 11.9 Where a student is in receipt of scholarship, a prize and another award from sources other than the University he/she must inform the University.
- 11.10 A bursary normally starts on the same day as the registration start date, which can be the 1st of any month. The bursary is paid monthly, in advance, into the student's bank or building society account, on the last working day of each month.
- 11.11 Each student in receipt of a bursary will need to complete a bursary credit form, giving details of their bank account or building society into which the bursary payments will be made. This must be sent to the Research Unit to forward onto the Payroll Office a fortnight before the student is due to start.
- 11.12 Bursary holders wishing to transfer from full-time to part-time registration may do so with the support of their supervisors and their HoR by applying to the RU. In all such cases of transfer, the bursary holder will no longer receive his/her bursary and will be expected to pay the part-time tuition fees.
- 11.13 A bursary holder will:
- be required to work on his/her research programme for at least 35 hours per week; and
 - be entitled to 7 weeks holiday (to include University and public holidays) per twelve month period.
- 11.14 A University bursary is not regarded as income for income tax purposes. However, earnings from sources such as teaching and demonstrating received during the final year of the award will be aggregated with income from post-award employment, when income tax liability is assessed for the fiscal year in which the award terminates.
- 11.15 The University will not make any national insurance contribution in respect of bursary payments. If the student undertakes teaching or demonstrating, however, and the national insurance threshold is reached then both the University and the student is liable to pay national insurance contributions.
- 11.16 Bursaries are intended to be held on a continuous basis. However a student who is in receipt of a bursary may apply to suspend his/her studies. The University will be prepared to consider the suspension of studies provided that:
- the period of suspension does not exceed one calendar year
 - the student's supervisor supports, in writing, the suspension and certifies that the suspension of studies will not delay the submission of the final thesis by more than the length of suspension; and
 - the request for suspension is made in writing in advance to the RU
- 11.17 The HoR and the RDC must approve all such requests for suspension. If the suspension is approved the bursary will be suspended until the student resumes his/her research. Any bursary overpaid to the student must be reimbursed to the University on approval of the suspension.
- 11.18 If the student's performance is giving cause for concern, the supervisor, through his/her HoR, should advise the RU immediately, even if immediate termination of the award is not justified.
- 11.19 If the performance of a bursary holder is such that continuation of the award is not justified, the supervisor, through his/her HoR, must notify the RU immediately.
- 11.20 If a student finishes his/her research before the bursary expires, the award will terminate on the date the degree is signed off as completed.
- 11.21 If a full-time student takes up full-time paid employment before the expiry date of the award, the award will terminate on the commencement of that employment.

- 11.22 If an award is prematurely terminated for any reason, the student must repay to the University any monies including the research bursary overpaid to him or her, or on his or her behalf, either in whole or in such proportion as the University determines.
- 11.23 A bursary may be terminated, or its conditions varied, at any time, at the absolute discretion of the University.

12 Annual Review of Student Progress

- 12.1 The University requires that the progress of each student is reviewed formally on an annual basis. The annual review takes place in May/June.
- 12.2 The purpose of the annual review is to evaluate:
- a students progress
 - previously identified targets
 - practical issues such as data collection, access to facilities, and other resource requirements
 - the training process and the identification of unmet or changed needs
 - the timetable of work and targets for the next year
 - potential problems and establish the students support needs
 - submission dates bearing in mind the allowed registration periods; and
 - the implications for funding (fees and/or bursary)
- 12.4 The RU, in conjunction with the supervisors, is responsible for the administration of the process at Faculty/University level.
- 12.5 All students, including those based off-campus or overseas, are required to have an annual review. The only exceptions are students who:
- have submitted their thesis
 - registered after February of the academic year
- 12.6 All students must attend the University for the Annual Review Process.
- 12.7 Students should be given at least four weeks prior notice of the date of the interview.
- 12.8 The student will be required to produce a report to be made available to the interview panel at least one week prior to the interview. The report should include evidence of work completed since the previous review and a work plan covering all tasks to submission.
- 12.9 The interview panel should consist of three members of staff (the HoR or nominee and both the supervisors) with the interview taking place in private. Where the HoR or nominee is one of the supervisors, an additional member of staff should be present.
- 12.10 The possible outcomes are:
- registration confirmed
 - registration confirmed but required to undertake an additional prescribed programme of work
 - registration confirmed but required to change status (full-time/part-time/abeyance)
 - registration transferred to MPhil
 - registration withdrawn
- 12.11 All forms must be signed by all the interviewers and the student. If the student is unable to agree with the substance, or the detail, of the report this should be noted. A copy of the completed University Annual Review Report form will be issued to the student.
- 12.12 The Faculty will:

- a) ensure that supervisors have conducted the review fairly and adequately
- b) ensure that the documentary record is comprehensive
- c) note each individual student's registration status
- d) consider any academic support or resource issues
- e) make recommendations on the fee and bursary status of each research student
- f) note any unresolved individual problems and consider the means of addressing these
- g) identify any generic problems, considering recommendations as appropriate to the RDC on University issues and action proposals on Research issues at Faculty level
- h) agree the Faculty report to be submitted to the RDC

12.13 The student representative will not take part in this review process.

12.14 Each Faculty report will be presented to the first RDC of the new Academic year. The RDC will:

- a) note issues relevant to Research in each Faculty and the action proposed by the Faculty to deal with these issues
- b) note generic issues identified by Faculties and consider the means by which these issues might be addressed
- c) evaluate the process conducted in each Faculty
- d) consider its response to Faculties where omissions have been noted
- e) consider the means by which any specific issues will be conveyed to individual supervisors
- f) identify good practice
- g) evaluate the Research Student Feedback process, including the analysis of the results
- h) identify any issues, from the annual review and the student feedback process, for inclusion in a report on research students' progress

12.15 The Chair of the RDC, in conjunction with the RU, will prepare an Annual Monitoring Report to be presented to the next meeting of the RDC (normally November/December).

12.16 The RDC will:

- a) identify additions and amendments as appropriate;
- b) consider which generic issues need to be reported back to each Faculty

12.17 The RDC's Annual Monitoring Report will be submitted to Senate as part of the University's cycle of annual monitoring (normally January).

12.18 Senate will:

- a) note any quality issues which should be addressed within the next academic year
- b) highlight any unresolved problems, particularly those from the previous year
- c) prepare and endorse the Institutional Annual Monitoring Report, with reference to the Research Degrees Annual Monitoring Report

12.19 After the RDC's Annual Monitoring Report has been approved by Senate it will be submitted to Coventry.

13 MPhil/PhD Transfer

13.1 A student registered for the degree of MPhil will be formally assessed 12 months following initial registration for full-time students or 18 months for part-time students, in order to confirm that the student will be submitting for a MPhil or transferring to a PhD award.

13.2 The Research Unit will provide reminders to Faculties when transfer interviews are due, normally three months beforehand.

- 13.3 The transfer process will be based on a formal interview, (although in some cases a student may be asked to present work in a seminar to his/her peers). For practice/project research the exhibition of work might be deemed applicable.
- 13.4 The interview panel will consist of the HoR and both supervisors. If the HoR is also one of the supervisors one other member of staff, who has supervised to completion, should be on the interview panel.
- 13.5 The student will be required to produce written work at an agreed date in advance of the transfer interview.
- 13.6 For the traditional style of thesis, this work will normally consist of:
- a) a working title for the thesis
 - b) the objectives of the thesis
 - c) a time plan (up to submission)
 - d) a critical review
 - e) a detailed research methodology section, including justification for methodology employed and reflection on its use.
- Practice/project research will require supporting material suitable to the study e.g. visual, aural etc. The nature of the study should indicate agreed range of types of support material.
- 13.7 Requirements vary to reflect disciplines and the style of thesis. Students will always be notified of these requirements. A PhD style, which is a series of coherent phases, may require the student to have completed a number of components with evidence of them being written up, at the date of transfer.
- 13.8 The interview panel should verify that adequate training has been completed (normally that identified in the working agreement).
- 13.9 The decision will be one of the following:
- a) transfer to PhD recommended
 - b) MPhil registration to be maintained for a further, specified, period (the date of the next interview to consider transfer should be set in advance)
 - c) agreement to submit MPhil thesis
 - d) required to withdraw
 - e) If a transfer does not occur, an extension to study, of one year maximum, will be required
- 13.10 A unanimous decision by the interview panel is required before transfer to PhD is approved.
- 13.11 Should the interview panel fail to agree to transfer the student to PhD, a limited time will be allocated to enable the student to revise his/her work and then be re-interviewed.
- 13.12 The student will have the right to ask to be reassessed and one other transfer opportunity is offered if transfer is first unsuccessful. This normally should occur within three months for full-time students and six months for part-time students. The Chair, RDC, if required, will take responsibility for any arbitration.
- 13.13 A detailed report on the outcome of transfer will be included on the University Transfer Interview Form. This will be completed and signed by all members of the interview panel and the student, who will be given a copy of the report.
- 13.14 The completed form will be sent to the RU.
- 13.15 The transfer interview and annual review must be distinct and separate meetings and must be held on different days.

14 Thesis

- 14.1 A student for a research degree must submit a thesis:
- a) in the English language
 - b) on a topic that has been approved by the University
 - c) which conforms to the University guidelines, before the expiry of the relevant period of registration as detailed in Section 9 above;
 - d) the major part of which, including the written material, must have been completed during the student's period of enrolment with the University and registration with Coventry, under supervision arrangements approved by the University;
 - e) which must be a substantial piece of work in which the student is required to demonstrate a sound knowledge and critical appreciation of his/her discipline and of associated research techniques
 - f) that makes a distinct contribution to knowledge and provide evidence of the student's originality by the discovery of new facts, new artefacts development or the exercise of independent critical power
 - g) that demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the field of scholarship
 - h) that shows the student's ability to test ideas (whether his/her own or those of others)
 - i) to demonstrate a broad knowledge and understanding of the discipline and of appropriate cognate subjects
 - j) to demonstrate a knowledge of the research techniques appropriate to his/her discipline
 - k) that shows that the techniques have been successfully applied through satisfactory record of research
 - l) that shows the student's ability in the organisation and presentation of material in the thesis and demonstrating clarity of expression and appropriate literary style
 - m) that is suitable for publication, as either submitted or suitably abridged
- 14.2 In addition, a student undertaking practice/project led research must submit appropriate evidence of practice, which makes a distinct contribution to knowledge. This evidence must be presented in its original concept for the *viva voce* and must also be represented through the most appropriate form of reproduction for storage, access and retrieval in partnership with written elements of the thesis.
- 14.3 The thesis may include work that the student has already had published, with other collaborators or as the sole author. The student must acknowledge this in the text of the thesis and bind it in at the end.
- 14.4 Students may include in a thesis work that has been submitted for an award of this or any other university or award-granting body, or published prior to his/her registration for a research degree, provided that this is clearly indicated in the text and that it is appropriately and critically reviewed in the main text, and does not make up a substantial part of the thesis. All work that is not the student's own must be acknowledged.
- 14.5 It is important that the student acknowledges all his/her sources in the thesis and that they are referenced in accordance with conventions in the students discipline (the University recommends the use of the Harvard system).
- 14.6 If the student fails to acknowledge and reference all his/her sources, the student may be charged with plagiarism, which is a disciplinary offence and may result in the student being expelled from the University without an award.
- 14.7 The thesis must be presented in conformity with ISO 7144:1986 (Documentation – Presentation of Theses and Similar Documents).
- 14.8 The word limit of a thesis must not normally exceed:
- a) 80,000 textual words – PhD
 - b) 20,000 textual words - practice based PhD
 - c) 40,000 textual words – MPhil

If a student is likely to submit a thesis that has a textual word content that exceeds the applicable word limit, the student must seek approval from his/her supervisor. A submission substantially in excess of the applicable word length may contribute to the thesis being rejected by the panel of examiners.

14.9 The thesis must contain the following items in the order given:

- a) Title Page
- b) Abstract
- c) List of Contents
- d) List of Illustrations
- e) List of Tables
- f) Acknowledgements
- g) Authors Declaration
- h) Main Text of Thesis
- i) List of References
- j) Appendices

14.10 The abstract should be on one side of A4, no more than 300 words in length and bound after the title page. It should state:

- a) the nature and scope of the research undertaken
- b) the contribution made to knowledge
- c) the method of investigation, where appropriate
- d) an outline of the principal arguments; and
- e) a summary of conclusions

14.11 It should be in a form suitable for separate publication and may be edited by the student's Main Supervisor. The University may publish the abstract without further reference to the author.

14.12 The title page of every volume of the thesis must contain the following information:

- a) full title of the thesis (and sub-title, if any)
- b) volume number, if more than one volume will be submitted
- c) full name of the research student
- d) degree, written in full, for which the student is registered
- e) Buckinghamshire New University
- f) Coventry University
- g) the month and year of submission or, if re-submitted, the date of re-submission
- h) the following copyright statement:

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts. No quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

14.13 The University form, Supervisor's/Candidate's Sections, must be signed by the Main Supervisor and then by the student confirming that the responsibilities of both have been fulfilled. This form should normally be signed when the student and supervisor are satisfied that the thesis is ready for examination. Although the University does advise students to follow the advice of their supervisors in this matter, the decision to submit the thesis is entirely that of the student. Equally, students should not assume that a supervisor's agreement to the submission of the thesis guarantees the award.

14.14 The Coventry Candidate's Declaration form RDC11 must be completed and signed by the student and signed by the Main Supervisor.

14.15 The student is required to submit one securely bound soft cover copy of the documentation to be examined per examiner.

- 14.16 The student is required to submit an identical electronic copy of the thesis and associated documentation in PDF format to the Research Unit for possible submission to the University's plagiarism detection service.
- 14.17 It is the student's responsibility to ensure the reprographic accuracy of each copy of the documentation and representations of any artefacts submitted.
- 14.18 The student will be liable for the cost of copying and binding the thesis.
- 14.19 The copies of the thesis for the examiners should be submitted to the RU not less than one month and not more than three months before the intended *viva voce* date. Submission must be accompanied by the signed declaration of supervisor/student.
- 14.20 On submitting the thesis to the RU the student will be issued with a receipt. The date on the receipt will be taken as the date of submission and will be noted on the Preliminary and Final Report Forms for Examiners. The RU shall arrange for a copy of the thesis to be sent to each of the Examiners.

15 Examiners

- 15.1 The examiners for a research degree shall be appointed by Coventry on the recommendation of the HoR and the endorsement of both the HoR and the RDC.
- 15.2 The Coventry forms Examination Arrangements and Candidate's Declaration must be completed and submitted to the RU.
- 15.3 A student will be examined by an Examination Panel including at least two independent examiners, of whom at least one must be an External Examiner.
- 15.4 When the student is a current member of the University's staff (or has been a member of staff in the 12 months prior to the oral examination), two External Examiners must be appointed.
- 15.5 Internal examiners will be nominated by the HoR or nominee and must be members of the academic staff of the University.
- 15.6 The collective experience of the examining team should include a minimum of three MPhil or PhD candidates examined, normally in the UK.
- 15.7 The Main Supervisor will normally make an informal approach to prospective external and internal examiners during the year before the thesis is complete, and will notify the student of their identity.
- 15.8 Each External Examiner should normally hold a position in a UK university as a Professor, Reader or Senior Lecturer. An External Examiner will generally possess a profound knowledge and understanding of the subject area in which the student's thesis is centred. This knowledge should be current, and the appointment of those who, whilst fully qualified, have not been active in the field within the past five years is discouraged.
- 15.9 An External Examiner will normally hold a PhD or equivalent evidence of research competence. The role of the External Examiner is to bring to the examination a sense of the standards, which prevail in the wider academic community within a specific area of subject expertise.
- 15.10 The Internal Examiner:
- a) should have a broad understanding of one or more aspects of the student's field of investigation;
 - b) must possess comprehensive knowledge of the University's regulations relevant to research degrees and to the appeal process;

- c) should have a particular responsibility for ensuring that, in its final form, the detailed presentation of the thesis meets the University requirements;
 - d) must ensure that the Final Report Form for Examiners is completed and signed by the examiners at the appropriate time;
 - e) be familiar with their role in terms of handling amendments.
- 15.11 Normally the same person should not be asked to serve as an External Examiner more than twice within the same department of the University within a 12 month period.
- 15.12 A member of staff from Coventry cannot serve as an External Examiner.
- 15.13 An External Examiner may not be employed by, or otherwise closely associated with, the University or one of its associate institutions, nor have been employed by the University or an associated institution during a period of three years prior to the examination.
- 15.14 The External Examiner should not have been cited as an academic referee on the student's original application and registration forms.
- 15.15 The External Examiner should not have collaborated with the student, or have provided significant support for the student in earlier research or that on which the thesis to be examined is based.
- 15.16 The student must have no direct role in the nomination of examiners, but has the right and duty to draw to the attention of his/her supervisor and the HoR any matter that might militate against comprehensive and fair examination.
- 15.17 It is the responsibility of the HoR or nominee to ensure that the mechanisms for the timely vetting of proposed examiners are in place and adhered to within the Faculty. This includes ensuring that details of nominated examiners are presented to the relevant committees.
- 15.18 Examiners will normally be given a minimum of six weeks to read the thesis, therefore the estimated examination date should reflect this.
- 15.19 After approval of the examiners by Coventry, the RU will advise the Main Supervisor that the examination can proceed.
- 15.20 Examiners must, on no account, have any contact with the student before examination of the thesis.
- 15.21 An examiner who, after appointment, is unable to serve should inform RU as soon as practicable and should subsequently submit a formal letter of resignation.
- 15.22 If it is not possible to comply with any of the above requirements, the supervisor or the HRDP the RU for advice on how to proceed.
- 15.23 No person who is registered for a higher degree, whether of the University or of any other university or institution of higher education, may be appointed to act as an examiner.
- 15.24 Any individual currently appointed as an Emeritus Professor or Honorary Research Fellow may undertake the role of Internal Examiner or Chair.

16 Examination

- 16.1 The examination will have two stages:
- a) preliminary assessment
 - b) defence by *viva voce*.

- 16.2 The examination is deemed to have commenced once the thesis is submitted to RU and sent to the examiners and to have been completed when all examiners have signed the Coventry form RDC10B.
- 16.3 After submission and prior to the *viva voce* the student should be offered the opportunity to have a mock *viva voce*.
- 16.4 In exceptional circumstances, if a student reaches the necessary standard in less than the normal period of registration, the RDC may recommend to Coventry that the student be examined, and, if successful, the degree be awarded.
- 16.5 Each Examiner will assess the thesis and each will complete a preliminary written report (Coventry form RDC10A).
- 16.6 The supervisor(s) in consultation with the RU, the student and the Examination Panel will arrange the date and location of the *viva voce*.
- 16.7 The University recommends that, wherever possible, a *viva voce* should be held in the morning so that all examination formalities are completed on the day of the *viva voce*.
- 16.8 *Viva voce* examinations should normally be held on a campus of the University.
- 16.9 The *viva voce* will be held in private in the presence of an Examination Panel consisting of the Internal Examiner, the External Examiner(s) and a Chair.
- 16.10 An independent Chair will be appointed for all oral examinations who must:
- be a senior member of the academic staff of the University but will not be from the same school/discipline as the candidate;
 - be wholly independent of the student and nominated by the Chair, RDC;
 - normally have supervised or examined or chaired at least one higher degree candidate in the United Kingdom.
- 16.11 The Chair is required to complete the Coventry form RDC13 (Independent Chair's Independence Declaration). The Chair is not required to read the thesis or complete a preliminary report form and should be seen as totally independent throughout the process.
- 16.12 The Chair will ensure that:
- a) the *viva voce* conforms to approved regulations and procedures and takes place in a fair and transparent manner;
 - b) there is consistency and equity in the examination process;
 - c) all examiners have been given copies of the preliminary reports;
 - d) the examiners are aware of the documentation involved;
 - e) the examiners are aware of the *viva voce* process;
 - f) the examiners establish an 'agenda' for the *viva voce*;
 - g) the student is happy to have the supervisor(s) in attendance;
 - h) the examiners know that the Chair will call for a break, with their permission, if the *viva voce* is still in progress after 1½ to 2 hours (during any break, the Chair should remain if possible, with the examiners);
 - i) the examiners are familiar with the options available to them;
 - j) the student is clear on the outcome;
 - k) if the thesis requires amendments the student is clear as to the requirements of the examiners;
 - l) it is clear who will check the amended thesis in the case of minor amendments (it is normally the responsibility of the Internal Examiner);
 - m) if the examiners require the thesis to be amended the amendments are clearly documented on the Coventry form RDC10B before the completion of the *viva voce*;
 - n) the Coventry form RDC10B has been signed by the examiners;
 - o) for all outcomes the Coventry form RDC10B form will be returned to the RU;

- p) he/she provides a written report to the RU on the nature and results of the *viva voce* examination.
- 16.13 Immediately prior to the *viva voce* a meeting of the Examination Panel, normally of about 30 minutes duration, will be held to discuss their preliminary reports and to establish an 'agenda' for the *viva voce*. Where the research being examined is practice/project led and involves a substantial exhibition of work the time allowed for this meeting may be well in excess of 30 minutes to allow for the examiners to study the visual work.
- 16.14 Only one supervisor may be present at the *viva voce* and then only with the agreement of the student. The supervisor may speak during the *viva voce* only if invited to do so by the Chair on behalf of the examiners.
- 16.15 Attendance at the examination by anyone other the Examination Panel, the student and the supervisor is strictly forbidden unless the approval of the examiners is sought in advance.
- 16.16 The *viva voce* is an opportunity for the student to defend his/her thesis and to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their knowledge. The Examination Panel is required to assess not only the thesis, but also characteristics of the student e.g. critical judgement, individuality.
- 16.17 The *viva voce* will close when the Examination Panel announce that it has no more questions for the student.
- 16.18 There is no limit on the length of the *viva voce*, which will continue until all examiners are satisfied with the student's defence of his/her work.
- 16.19 At the conclusion of the examination, the student will be asked to leave the room.
- 16.20 If a supervisor is present at the *viva voce* the supervisor can stay, until excused, in case there are any points the Examination Panel wish to clarify with the supervisor. However, the supervisor must not be present when the Examination Panel is discussing its recommendations.

17 Examination Outcomes

- 17.1 For both an MPhil and a PhD the examiners are required to confirm:
- a) that they are satisfied that the thesis/submission is the student's own work
 - b) that the student has shown a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of:
 - matters relating to the thesis/submission
 - background studies to the subject of the thesis/submission.
- 17.2 For the award of PhD the examiners should also consider if the student has demonstrated:
- a) the criteria and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship of a quality to satisfy peer review and to extend the forefront of the discipline
 - b) the acquisition and understanding in a systematic way of a substantial body of knowledge at the forefront of the discipline
 - c) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry; and
 - d) an ability to conceptualise, design, and implement a thesis for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding
- 17.3 Each examiner is required to read and assess the thesis and to submit an independent preliminary report to the University before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. As part of that assessment, each examiner must consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the University's requirements for the degree concerned and, where possible, make an appropriate provisional decision, subject to the outcome of the oral examination.

- 17.4 Following the oral examination of the candidate, the Examination Panel must, when all examiners are in agreement, present a joint report and decision to the University relating to the award of the higher degrees being sought. The preliminary reports and joint decision of the examiners must together provide enough detailed observation on the scope and quality of the work undertaken to enable the University to be satisfied that the criteria for the award of the higher degree have been met. When the examiners are not in agreement, they must submit separate reports and recommendations to the University.
- 17.5 The Examination Panel shall only be permitted to recommend to the University the following:
- that the student be awarded the degree for which registered;
 - that the student be awarded the degree for which registered, subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis;
 - that the student be permitted to resubmit for the degree concerned and to be reassessed, with or without an oral examination;
 - that the student be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be reassessed;
 - in the case of an assessment for a PhD, that the student be awarded the Degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners;
 - in the case of an assessment for MPhil, that the student be awarded a Doctorate, subject to written confirmation from the examiners that the thesis has made a significant contribution to knowledge.
- 17.6 When the examiners' decisions and recommendations are not unanimous, the University may:
- accept a majority recommendation provided that majority recommendation has been supported by at least one External Examiner;
 - accept the recommendation of the External Examiner(s);
 - require the appointment of an additional External Examiner in accordance with the procedures approved for the appointment of examiners.
- 17.7 The Examination Panel may require that a particular student be subject to a further assessment in addition to the oral examination. Where such an additional assessment is arranged following an oral examination, it must be normally held within two calendar months of the oral examination and it must be deemed to be part of the student's first assessment.
- 17.8 When it is decided, on the recommendation of the Examination Panel, that the degree be not awarded and that no reassessment be permitted, the examiners must be required to prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and give the reasons for their decision to be forwarded to the student by the University.

The University guidelines for Minor Amendments are as follows:

- requires the correction of
 - minor omissions of substance
 - typographical errors
 - occasional stylistic or grammatical flaws
 - references
- requires the addition/modifications of some figures and some minor changes to layout
- rewriting of small sections may be necessary where the work required does not involve exceeding the amendment of more than a few pages of the thesis in total
- some very limited further analysis may be required provided it does not affect the originality of the central thesis
- requires no new research
- requires further referencing to creative practice
- requires re-presentation of creative or practical outputs

if, in the opinion of the examiners, the amendments can be completed within four months.

- 17.9 At the conclusion of the *viva voce* examination, the examiners will complete the Coventry form RDC10B. It must be signed by all Examiners.

- 17.10 Once the examiners have made their decision they will invite the student to return. The examiners will then inform the student of their recommendation.
- 17.11 It is the responsibility of both the Internal Examiner and the Chair to ensure that if there are any amendments to be made, clear guidance as to what is required will be given to the student immediately after the end of the *viva voce*. Lists of typing corrections and, for example, errors in references will be given to the student.
- 17.12 The completed Coventry form RDC10B will be submitted to the RU.
- 17.13 Where the examiners have recommended minor amendments the amendments will be approved by the examiner nominated on the Coventry form RDC10B (normally the internal).
- 17.14 Following the submission of the thesis, no student for a research degree may be assessed on more than two occasions.
- 17.15 After approval of the thesis by the examiners, the student must submit to the RU two hardbound copies of the thesis and associated documentation as outlined in the document Thesis Information obtainable from the RU.
- 17.16 The University will pay for the binding of the two hardbound copies (up to a maximum amount to be agreed annually). The student must submit a receipt with the bound final version. Reimbursement will then be by cheque only
- 17.17 The recommendation for the award of MPhil or PhD research degree will not be forwarded to Coventry until the student has complied fully with the above. The degree is deemed awarded as of the date the confirmation letter from Coventry is written, which the RU will send to the student.
- 17.18 The University Library will retain one hardbound copy of the thesis and one electronic copy. The second hardbound copy of the thesis will be submitted to the Coventry University Library. The British Library Document Supply Centre will be sent the completed Agreement Form, along with a copy of the title page, contents page, and abstract. Should anyone request to refer to the thesis, the British Library Document Supply Centre will contact the University library.
- 17.19 The RDC may agree that a thesis should be held under confidential cover for a specified period. The University Publication of Thesis form is for the student to specify whether the thesis (in whole or in abstract) may be lodged in the Library or whether it is to be retained under confidential cover for a specified number of years. Unless the thesis is under confidential cover, the University Librarian may allow a thesis to be copied in whole or in part without further reference to the author. Subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement, single copies may be made for study purposes or multiple copies may be supplied to educational establishments. The copyright of the thesis will be protected by the copyright declaration in the thesis.

18 Continuation Status

- 18.1 If a full-time student submits before the end of the normal registration period the student will be placed in continuation for the next enrolment period and the continuation fee will be waived.
- 18.2 If a full-time student does not submit before the end of the normal registration period the Main Supervisor will be required to confirm that the student will submit in the next 12 months.
- a) If the supervisor is able to do so the student will be placed in continuation but the continuation fee will not be waived. The supervisor must be able to show that the student has completed his/her research and writing up his/her thesis with the balance of work to be completed requiring little or no active supervision. Reasonable access to the supervisors will still be permitted.
 - b) If the supervisor is not able to do so the student will not be placed in continuation and the full fee will be charged.

- 18.3 If the student is on a bursary and has not submitted before the end of the normal registration period the Main Supervisor must satisfy himself/herself that the student can support himself/herself and at the same time pay the necessary fees
- 18.4 If a part-time student submits before the end of the maximum registration period the student will be placed in continuation for the next enrolment period and the continuation fee will be waived.
- 18.5 If a part-time student does not submit before the end of the maximum registration period the Main Supervisor will be required to confirm that the student will submit in the next 12 months.
- a) If the supervisor is able to do so the student will be placed in continuation but the continuation fee will not be waived. The supervisor must be able to show that the student has completed his/her research and writing up his/her thesis with the balance of work to be completed requiring little or no active supervision. Reasonable access to the supervisors will still be permitted.
 - b) If the supervisor is not able to do so the student will not be placed in continuation and the full fee will be charged.
- 18.6 A student may not normally be registered 'in continuation' for more than 12 months.
- 18.7 Transfer from full/part time status to continuation status does not affect the overall registration period. Students in continuation status must continue to enrol annually.
- 18.8 International students entering a period of continuation must apply for an extension to their Tier 4 visa through the International Administration Office.

19 Suspension of Studies (Abeyance)

- 19.1 Students may be permitted to suspend their studies for normally not more than a total of 12 months (full-time students) or 24 months (part-time students).
- 19.2 The student must write to the HoR requesting a suspension. The first supervisor if satisfied that the period in abeyance will not jeopardise the student's chances of completion must support this request.
- 19.3 Applications to suspend studies must be passed to the RDC for approval.
- 19.4 In order to be able to suspend studies the tuition fee due prior to the period of suspension must be paid in full. No tuition fee will be due in the period of suspension and the appropriate portion of unused fees in the period prior to suspension will be rolled forward to be offset against the fees due after studies are resumed.
- 19.5 Retrospective suspensions will not normally be permitted.
- 19.6 A student returning from a period of suspension of registration shall be subject to the Regulations that apply at the time of re-enrolment.
- 19.7 A student, on returning from a period of abeyance of more than six months or who misses an annual review while in abeyance, will be required to attend a formal review with his/her supervisors and HoR immediately upon the resumption of his/her research.
- 19.8 International students should consult the latest UKBA regulations vis-à-vis suspension of studies and seek the advice of the International Administration Office.

20 Withdrawal

- 20.1 Should a student wish to withdraw from his/her research course, the HoR must be consulted. Both student and HoR must complete a withdrawal form (C3), which is sent to the RU.

20.2 The RU will notify Coventry.

20.3 All home and EU students should consult the formal document Student payment and debt procedures – Home/EU: Effective from August 2009 regarding fees regulations. International students should seek the advice of both the Finance Office and the International Administration Office for clarification of the requirements for payment of fees.

21 Training for Research Students

21.1 The University provides:

- a) an induction programme for all new research students, which is generic in content; and
- b) a Research Student Training Programme each academic year.

21.2 The training programme is designed for equip MPhil/PhD students with the skills necessary for postgraduate research. It is intended for both full time and part time students and aims to support IT skills, time management skills, presentation and interviewing skills, skills in gaining access to outside agencies/industry and writing.

21.3 All students are required to attend the training programme and will not be permitted to transfer from MPhil to PhD until all the elements identified in his/her working agreement have been attended.

22 Research Students as Teachers

22.1 Research students are valuable members of the academic community with some choosing to make a career in higher education as teachers and/or researchers. It is common practice for research students to undertake limited teaching both to enable them to explore teaching as a career but also to augment their income.

22.2 However, where a student does undertake teaching it is at the discretion of his/her supervisor and the approval of the HoR. It is University policy that research students should not be involved in demanding teaching situations. They would normally be expected to undertake seminar / workshop / studio work which would not involve excessive preparation. In these circumstances, it would normally be the supervisor's role to provide guidance on an appropriate workload.

22.3 It is the responsibility of the supervisory team to ensure that the student receives training prior to commencing teaching duties. As a minimum a student should attend the Preparing for Teaching workshops offered by the University.

22.4 Where teaching work is available, a research student should not teach more than six hours per week and no more than 180 hours per academic session and, ideally focusing on laboratory and tutorial sessions.

22.5 Supervisors should review the impact of teaching on the progress of the research of their students to ensure that the additional work does not affect its completion within the required registration period.

23 Successful Thesis - Copyright Issues

Unless the student has requested that the thesis be placed under confidential cover, it will be treated as a publication by being placed on the shelves of the University Library, allowing it to be copied, in whole or in part, without further reference to the student. The copyright of the thesis will be protected by a copyright declaration in the thesis. This will probably mean that any intellectual property it contains cannot obtain patent protection at a later stage. It is possible,

however, that the author's rights can be protected by placing restrictions on access to the thesis.

24 Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

- 24.1 The ownership of the rights to intellectual property, being the outputs of creative endeavour capable of being protected under legislation such as that relating to patents, copyright, trade marks, or design rights.
- 24.2 For some research degrees, both the research and any publications, including the thesis, give rise to issues of IPR. If the student and supervisor believe that it is appropriate or necessary for the student to register a claim to IPR that extends beyond the student's automatic rights arising through origination, the student and supervisor must contact the RU.

25 Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the processing of personal data, relating to living, identifiable individuals, whether it is held on a computer or on manual files. Students needing to process personal data for research purposes must make themselves aware of the requirements of the Act and also the University's Data Protection Policy.

26 Ethics

The HoR is responsible for ensuring that research students adhere to any ethical codes pertinent to their own discipline and any local practice or guidelines within their programme area.

27 Communications

- 27.1 Communications with both full-time and part-time students on matters related to their studies at the University will normally be via a Bucks email account, which can be accessed externally.
- 27.2 Emails sent to this account will be on all matters related to the student's studies as a research student at the University and will be deemed to:
- a) be a legitimate form of communication
 - b) have been delivered to the student

28 Appeals

- 28.1 Appeals against decisions of the Examination Panel shall only be permitted in accordance with University regulations, the latter regulations are laid out in Academic Appeals Procedure: Research Degrees.
- 28.2 The grounds for appeal against a decision not to award a postgraduate research degree or not to allow resubmission for a degree are as follows:
- a) there were circumstances that affected the student's performance of which the examiners had not been made aware when their decision was taken, and which it was not possible for the student to make known to the Examination Panel beforehand;
 - b) there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result might have been different;
 - c) there is evidence of prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more examiners.

28.3 No appeal, which questions academic judgement, will be allowed.

28.4 An appeal must be submitted in writing by the student to the RU within 21 days of receipt of the formal notification of the result.

29 Plagiarism

29.1 Matters of plagiarism are considered extremely serious offences and governed by the University regulations – Academic Misconduct.

29.2 Copying from any source (textbook, journal, electronic media, fellow student's work, whether published or unpublished), without acknowledgement is plagiarism. Plagiarism is further defined as minor or major. Major plagiarism is described as work submitted which contains substantial work which is not attributed or which is directly incorporated and which constitutes, or may reasonably be construed as constituting, an attempt to deceive or otherwise gain an advantage. Minor plagiarism is described as the absence of appropriate acknowledgement, and may include the use of some paraphrasing of a source (acknowledged or otherwise) without significant commentary on the argument and structure of the original.

30 Student Complaints Procedure

30.1 Students Complaints Procedure is detailed in the formal document available from the University's website.

30.2 The University aims to provide students with the best possible service in all areas of its work. A complaint is considered to be an expression of concern regarding some aspect of University provision or operation, which needs a response. A formal complaint would only be made if the student complaint cannot be resolved informally or through the systems already in place. The HoR should be consulted in the first instance, or alternately the RU.

31 Code of Conduct

The University has a code of conduct that students agree to abide by (Code of Conduct and Student Discipline). The code of conduct and its associated disciplinary procedures and regulations are intended to promote fairness and order in the treatment of students within the University.

32 Equal Opportunities

The University is committed to the development of policies that will promote equal opportunities in all areas of the University activity (Equal Opportunities Policy).

33 Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech is essential to the University. All members of the University are required to tolerate and protect the expression of opinions within the law whether or not those opinions are repugnant to them (Freedom of Speech: Code of Practice).

34 Health and Safety

34.1 The University Health and Safety Policy requires students and staff to observe all health and safety rules. Implicit within the Policy is the requirement for students and staff to comply with Sections 7 and 8 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

34.2 It is essential that students and staff:

- a) take reasonable care of their own and other peoples' health and safety
- b) consider the safety of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions
- c) work in accordance with information and training provided
- d) refrain from intentionally misusing or recklessly interfering with anything that has been provided for health and safety reasons
- e) report any hazardous defects in plant and equipment or shortcomings in the existing safety arrangements to a responsible person without delay
- f) do not undertake any task for which authorisation and/or training has not been given

34.3 Throughout the University official notices are posted in respect of Health and Safety requirements, e.g., evacuation procedures and routes in the case of the Fire Alarm sounding. In the case of a fire or other security alert on University premises it is in the interest of students and staff to:

- a) know what to do in the event of a fire, know how to use the fire appliances and know which appliances are safe to use for the fire being tackled;
- b) familiarise themselves with all the means of escape and assembly points in case of fire and avoid obstructions of staircases, landings and other exit routes at all times.

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