

Royal Agricultural University

Regulations for Research Degrees

Validated by Coventry University

1.1 Introduction

These Regulations apply to the award of higher degrees other than by the submission of portfolio work, including Professional Doctorates, and to MSc/MA Degrees by Research where the research component includes a requirement on the student to produce original work. All Regulations apply to all students unless specified.

1.2 General

- 1.2.1 A programme of research may be undertaken in any field of study that is within the RAU's capability to supervise effectively provided that it is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment by appropriate examiners in the form of a thesis; the submission may include material in other than written form.
- 1.2.2 In addition to satisfying the RAU's requirements for the standards of its higher degrees, each student must be able to demonstrate a full and proper understanding of the research methods appropriate to the field of study concerned.
- 1.2.3 Each candidate for a higher degree must normally be required to defend the thesis at an oral examination.
- 1.2.4 The general arrangements under which a person who is registered on a programme of study leading to the award of a higher degree of Coventry University must facilitate adherence to the relevant codes of practice and be such as to enable that person to conduct and complete the research programme in a safe and efficient manner.
- 1.2.5 Each proposed higher degree programme must be considered on its academic merits and without any reference to the concerns or interests of any funding body which might be associated with the project. In particular, satisfying the terms on which a project is funded must not detract from the fulfilment of the objectives and requirements of the student's work leading to the submission for a higher degree.
- 1.2.6 A Doctor of Philosophy is also available by portfolio (see Coventry University's separate Regulations)

1.3 Approval of a programme of study

- 1.3.1 Higher degree students will normally only be accepted into an environment that provides support for undertaking and learning about research and where high quality research activity is taking place.
- 1.3.2 Before an applicant can be registered as a higher degree student, 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 (see paragraph 1.5);
 - 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.
- 1.3.3 The judgement must be exercised by persons appropriately qualified and experienced in undertaking research and supervising higher degree students, obtaining external specialist advice when necessary.
- 1.3.4 Where appropriate, a programme of study leading to the award of a higher degree of Coventry University may be undertaken in co-operation with an industrial, commercial, professional, academic or other research establishment with a view to:
- a) encouraging outward looking and relevant research;
 - b) extending the student's experience and perspectives;
 - c) providing a wider context to assist in the development of the particular project;
 - d) mutually benefiting the RAU and the co-operating establishment(s);
 - e) providing a greater opportunity for the student to become a member of the research community.
- 1.3.5 If the links described in 1.3.4 are to be used, they must be agreed when the student's programme is confirmed.

1.4 Administration

Each stage of the administration of the progress of a student registered for a higher degree shall be in accordance with the procedures established and notified by the RAU's Research Committee under the delegated authority of Coventry University's Research Degrees Committee.

1.5 Application and admission

- 1.5.1 Applicants may apply at any time of the year.
- 1.5.2 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. Overseas applicants are required to demonstrate their competence

through attainment of a notified minimum overall IELTS score of 7.0 with a minimum score of 6.5 in each component, (or equivalent English language qualification and score) prior to application, even if there is evidence of previous language of instruction in English.

Overseas students enrolled on a pre-sessional English course will also be required to attain the notified minimum IELTS score (or equivalent) prior to application for a higher degree (plus meet any other requirements as specified by the RAU).

1.5.3 The normal requirements to enable an applicant to be considered for admission onto an RAU higher degree programme of study are as follows:

- a) MSc/MA
 - i) First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree in a relevant discipline/subject area or an approved equivalent award, with a minimum mark of 60% in the project element or equivalent; or
 - ii) The applicant has appropriate research or professional experience at postgraduate level which has resulted in published work, written reports or other appropriate evidence of achievement.
- b) Doctorate
 - i) A Postgraduate Masters Degree with Merit or above or with a minimum overall average mark of 60% or above in a relevant discipline/subject area and a minimum mark of 60% in the project element or equivalent or
 - ii) First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree in a relevant discipline/subject area or an approved equivalent award with a minimum mark of 60% in the project element or equivalent; or
 - iii) The applicant has appropriate research or professional experience at postgraduate level which has resulted in published work, written reports or other appropriate evidence of achievement.

1.5.4 A degree specified in 1.5.3 above must be awarded by a University or other institution of higher education or organisation in the United Kingdom with degree-awarding powers granted by the responsible Secretary of State, or any other qualification which is regarded by the RAU as being equivalent, or from an overseas institution of equivalent standing.

- 1.5.5 An applicant holding qualifications other than those specified in 1.5.3-1.5.4 above shall be considered on his or her merits. Evidence of ability and background knowledge must be provided in relation to the proposed topic and higher degree.
- 1.5.6 All applications will be reviewed by an admissions panel comprising a minimum of two suitably qualified and experienced research-active academic members of staff (normally including the Director of Research)
- 1.5.7 In reviewing the application, the panel must consider the requirements set out in Regulation 1.3 above.
- 1.5.8 The decision of the admissions panel should be reported to Coventry University's Research Committee to assure the RAU that a balanced and independent admissions decision has been made that supports its admissions policy and demonstrates equality of opportunity.
- 1.5.9 Applications shall be treated in strict confidence.
- 1.5.10 Any canvassing by an applicant shall automatically disqualify them from an award of Coventry University.

1.6 Enrolment

1.6.1 Mode of Attendance

- a) Higher degree students may enrol on a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time students are required to devote at least 40 hours, and part-time students at least 15 hours, per week on average to the programme of study over a normal 45 week academic year.
- b) Any change in the mode of attendance from part-time to full-time or vice versa must be notified by the student to the Director of Research. All changes in mode of attendance must be approved by RAU's Research Committee.

1.6.2 Duration of Registration

- a) Students will normally register for either a Masters by Research, or for a PhD. The minimum and maximum periods of registration are normally as follows:

Category		Minimum	Maximum
MSc/MA by Research	Full-time	12 months	24 months
	Part-time	18 months	36 months
MPhil	Full-time	24 months	48 months
	Part-time	36 months	72 months
Doctorate	Full-time	24 months	72 months
	Part-time	48 months	84 months

- b) Any reduction in a period of registration from the minimum specified at registration may only be approved by the RAU's

Research Committee when it is apparent that the programme of study is proceeding exceptionally well on the recommendation of a Progress Review Panel. Any request for such an exceptional shortening of the duration of registration must normally be submitted at the same time as the request for approval for the proposed examination arrangements.

- c) Similarly, any extension of duration of registration from the maximum may only be approved by the RAU's Research Committee when reasonable grounds have been provided or a recommendation made by a Progress Review Panel.
- d) Where a student has previously undertaken research as a candidate registered for a higher degree of a university or other institution of higher education, or of an appropriate organisation, it may be appropriate to approve a duration of registration which is less than the specified minimum to take account of all or part of the time already spent by the individual on such research. In no circumstances shall the overall duration of registration be less than 6 months full-time or 12 months part-time including any retrospective registration approved by the RAU's Research Committee.
- e) A research degree student, whether full-time or part-time is only permitted to enrol as a writing-up student for one year (two in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the RAU's Research Committee) in excess of the maximum registration period specified in 1.6.2a.
- f) Any change in the duration of registration must be approved by the RAU's Research Committee.
- g) Students will be required to complete progress reports at notified points throughout their studies (normally every 12 months). Progression will be dependent upon passing the module(s) concerned and making suitable progress on the course overall as determined by a Progress Review Panel (see 1.10.5).
- h) In the case of overseas students, the duration of registration agreed at the time when a visa was sought must be adhered to and, in those exceptional circumstances where an extension to the duration of study is required, a written request for this must be submitted to the Academic Registrar for consideration prior to the period of extension being agreed with the student.

1.6.3 **Suspension of Registration**

Students may apply to suspend their registration, for reasons of ill-health or other circumstances, normally for a maximum period of twelve consecutive months under the procedure notified.

Retrospective suspensions are not normally permitted. The period of suspension shall be included within the maximum registration period for the award. A student returning from a period of suspension of registration shall be subject to the Regulations that apply at the time of re-enrolment (see 1.6.6).

1.6.4 **Withdrawal from Programme of Study**

- a) Students may withdraw from their programme of study with uncompleted modules at any time. In such cases it is the student's responsibility to inform the Director of Research of the withdrawal through the procedure notified. The student may apply to re-enrol for the programme at a later date.
- b) The RAU reserves the right to require a student to withdraw where the student has not fully engaged with the course. Examples of not fully engaging include: repeated non-attendance at teaching sessions and/or not taking part in formal or informal assessments and/or mandatory taught modules and/or the annual progress review and/or not responding to requests sent by the RAU to explain such non-attendance. This list is not exhaustive.

1.6.5 **Transfer of Registration**

- a) A higher degree student who wishes to transfer to another programme of study (for example, from Master by Research to PhD) must submit a formal application for the transfer of registration under the procedure notified.
- b) A higher degree student who is registered for a doctorate and who is unable to complete the approved programme of study may, at any time prior to the submission of the thesis for examination, apply for the registration to be changed to that for an MPhil under the procedure notified.

1.6.6 **Deferral due to Extenuating Circumstances**

- a) Students who submit work for assessment or who attend an examination are declaring themselves fit to be assessed and no subsequent claim for extenuating circumstances shall normally be accepted.
- b) Any student has the right to draw the attention of the RAU to personal extenuating circumstances which seriously impair his/her ability to undertake an assessment, and to request deferral of the assessment. Requests for deferral on grounds of extenuating circumstances may only be made using the procedure notified, and must be accompanied by verifiable and current third party evidence.
- c) Deferred first assessments or repeat attempts shall be treated as a first attempt.

1.6.7 **Concurrent and Consecutive Registration**

Regulations regarding concurrent and consecutive registrations are set out in Coventry University's Academic Regulation 4.7.

1.7 **Work to be undertaken abroad**

When a higher degrees applicant proposes to work outside the United Kingdom, for whatever period, including students registered on a split-site basis, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- a) the student will be based in the United Kingdom or will establish and maintain close links with the RAU;
- b) there will be satisfactory evidence about the environment in terms of both the supervisory arrangements and the available facilities in which the research is to be undertaken abroad;
- c) the arrangements proposed for supervision will specify that frequent and substantial contact will be made between the student and the supervisor(s) based in the United Kingdom, including adequate face-to-face contact;
- d) the student will normally be expected to spend the first three months of the programme of study in the RAU to prepare the research hypothesis and methodology; a longer period of time may be appropriate depending on the particular programme, the supervision and the facilities available abroad, and in the RAU;
- d) the student will normally be expected to spend the final three months at the RAU writing up under supervision and preparing for the viva; a longer period of time may be appropriate depending on the particular programme, the supervision and the facilities available abroad, and in the RAU.

1.8 Group-based research

If the proposed programme of study is to be part of a group project or activity, the programme of research to be undertaken by the applicant for registration must, in itself, be distinguishable for the purposes of assessment and be appropriate for the category of registration and level of award being sought.

1.9 Programmes of study: structure

1.9.1 Research Induction and Research Skills Modules:

- a) A student registered for a higher degree is required, as part of the programme of study, to study and pass the Research Induction module.
- b) All higher degree students are normally expected to study and pass the RAU's Research Skills module. This requirement may be waived and the module exempted by the Chair of the RAU's Research Committee when one or more of the following apply: the higher degree student
 - i) has already taken and passed the RAU's core study skills module as part of another higher degree programme;
 - ii) has transferred their registration to the RAU from another institution where equivalent modules were studied and passed;
- c) The research induction module must normally have commenced within 3 months of the initial full-time enrolment
- d) The core study skills module must normally have commenced within 6 months of the initial full-time enrolment

1.9.2 Other Supporting Studies

- a) A student registered for a higher degree may undertake a programme of other supporting studies but these are not assessed as part of the research degree programme.

1.10 Assessment

1.10.1 Assessment of Research Induction and Research Skills Modules

- a) All modules shall be assessed by formal written examination and/or coursework.
- b) A student shall be deemed to have passed a module on obtaining an overall module mark of 40% or more, subject to any criteria notified as to how the mark is to be calculated (e.g. by specifying the relative weighting of any components).
- c) The minimum pass requirement for each module component is 40%. Marks between 39.5 and 40% inclusive shall be regarded as 40% for these purposes.
- d) In modules with more than one component, there may be provision for a compensation band to enable good performance on one component to offset poor performance in another component. In such cases, the minimum component mark required is 35%, and such criteria must be specified in the approved module descriptor. Compensatable failure between module components is normally only permitted when there is an overlap of assessment of intended learning outcomes across the module.
- e) Students who fail to submit work for assessment or attend examinations shall be deemed to have failed the assessments concerned.
- f) No module may be condoned under these Regulations under any circumstances.
- g) Reassessment criteria are in section 1.11

1.10.2 Assessment Variation

When a candidate cannot, through disability, sickness or a comparable valid cause, be fairly assessed by the methods prescribed for the module or thesis concerned, the RAU's Research Committee may agree to vary those as deemed appropriate, bearing in mind the intended learning outcomes of the assessment and the need to assess each candidate on equal terms with other candidates. In addition, special arrangements can be made via the Disability Officer for adjustments to the conditions under which formal written and oral examinations may be undertaken. In determining the nature of any variation in methods of assessments, full account must be taken of the RAU's policies. The grounds on which an alternative form of assessment may be authorised must NOT include that of the student's knowledge of the English language being inadequate.

1.10.3 **Submission of the Thesis**

- a) The Director of Studies is responsible for advising the candidate on the procedure to be followed for the submission of the thesis, including the number of copies to be submitted for examination (one per examiner appointed) and any condition(s) to be satisfied before the candidate may be considered eligible for examination.
- b) It shall be the responsibility of each candidate to ensure that the thesis is submitted for examination, in the form prescribed by the RAU, before the expiry of the period of registration, taking account of any extension(s) or suspensions of registration that have been approved.
- c) While a candidate would be unwise to submit the thesis for examination against the advice of the supervisors, the submission of the thesis for examination is at the sole discretion of the candidate.
- d) A candidate must not assume that the supervisor's agreement to the thesis being submitted, or any decision relating to progression made by an Assessment Board, guarantees a successful outcome of the examination or the recommendation for the award of the degree being sought.
- e) A candidate is required to confirm where a thesis has been or is being submitted for a comparable academic award elsewhere, subject to the approval of the RAU's Research Committee prior to registration. In addition, the candidate concerned shall not be precluded from incorporating in a thesis submitted for examination, covering a wider field, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is made clear in a formal declaration and in the thesis which work has been so incorporated.

1.10.4 **Thesis Examination Arrangements**

- a) The Director of Studies will notify RAU's Research Committee of the proposed examination arrangement details three months in advance of the proposed examination date.
- b) The Chair of Coventry University's Research Committee will be required to approve the proposed examination arrangements before the arrangements are made.

1.10.5 **Assessment Boards**

The RAU's Research Committee shall convene a Progress Review Panel (PRP) to make all decisions about student progression and achievement as defined within the Regulations:

- i) for all programmes a Progress Review Panel (PRP) must be held to discuss the student's progress and future research plans. A PRP should normally be held on or before each twelve month anniversary of the student enrolling, except when an Examination Panel shall occur in three months or less;
- ii) a PRP shall comprise a Chair independent of the supervisory team, a subject expert independent of the

- supervisory team and the Director of Studies or alternative supervisor. The subject expert may be from within the RAU or, exceptionally, be external to the RAU where the topic is particularly specialised;
- iii) the Director of Studies shall not be involved in the questioning of the student but may be involved in the discussion and the final decision.
 - iv) Other members of the supervisory team may attend, but may not participate in the discussion or in any decisions;
 - v) the PRP may exceptionally seek written comments on the research from external subject experts if required;
 - vi) The format of the documentation required for PRPs and Panel procedures shall be as notified at the commencement of the academic year in question;
 - vii) the PRP shall be empowered to take decisions with regard to student progression on the programme of study as defined in Regulation 1.11.5.
- d) All results arising from the process described in 1.10.5 shall be reported to the RAU's Research Committee.

1.11 Re-assessment

1.11.1 Re-assessment of Taught Modules

- a) A student may be required to be reassessed by resit without re-registration in any failed module (provided an attempt has been made or a deferral granted (see 1.6.6)) normally by the same combination of written examination, coursework etc. as in the first attempt.
- b) If a module is failed, all components with a mark below 40% must be reassessed; the mark in the other component shall be carried forward and combined with the reassessed component.
- c) Reassessment of a module shall be restricted to one attempt by resit at a time to be determined by the Assessment Board/Examination Panel.

1.11.2 Repeating Periods of Study for Taught Modules

- a) A student who has not succeeded in redeeming previous failure of a taught M level module via reassessment, may register, if permitted by the Assessment Board, to *repeat* the module(s) at the next available opportunity (and normally within one year of the original failure).
- b) Complete reassessment in all components shall be required with the original marks not being taken forward or recombined with the repeat marks. In repeating a module, the student shall be eligible for reassessment as set out in 1.11.1 above. This right is subject to the module or equivalent still being offered by the RAU.
- c) Only one repeat opportunity shall be permitted for any M level module.

- d) Any module failed at the first attempt and passed at the repeat attempt shall carry the higher of 40% or the original module mark concerned, unless the original attempt has been nullified by the process notified.
- e) Students who are undertaking a deferred repeat shall be considered as making a first attempt. Any reassessment required during the deferred repeat period of study shall not be considered as deferred unless a student's submission under the notified extenuating circumstances procedure is accepted.

1.11.4 Re-assessment of the thesis

- a) Only one opportunity for reassessment of this thesis (or equivalent) shall normally be allowed (Regulation 1.14.4 c) refers), provided an attempt has been made or a deferral granted (see 1.6.6).
- b) A candidate must not assume that the supervisors' agreement to the thesis being resubmitted or a PRP decision with regard to progression to an Examination Panel guarantees a successful outcome of the examination or the recommendation for the award of the higher degree being sought.
- c) The following forms of reassessment of the thesis shall be permitted:
 - i) the thesis only to be reassessed after revision without the holding of a second oral examination (and presentation, where specified);
 - ii) the thesis to be reassessed after revision followed by the holding of a second oral examination (and presentation, where specified);
 - iii) a second oral examination (and presentation, where specified); after due time, without the need to revise or resubmit the thesis;
 - iv) the holding of a different form of assessment to test the candidate's abilities.
- d) When the thesis is to be reassessed after revision (either with or without the holding of a second oral examination and presentation, where specified), the examination panel shall only be permitted to recommend to the RAU the following:
 - i) that the candidate be awarded the degree for which registered;
 - ii) for PhD candidates that the candidate be awarded the fall back award of MPhil, subject to very minor amendments being made to revise the thesis to MPhil standard to the satisfaction of the examiners;
 - iii) for MPhil and Professional Doctorate candidates that the candidate be awarded the fall back award of MSc/MA by Research, subject to very minor amendments being made to revise the thesis to MSc/MA by Research standard to the satisfaction of the examiners.
 - iv) for Masters by Research candidates, that the candidate be awarded the fall back award of Postgraduate Diploma in

Research Methods, subject to very minor amendments being made to revise the thesis to Postgraduate Diploma in Research Methods standard to the satisfaction of the examiners.

- v) that the candidate be not awarded the degree.

1.11.5 Progression

- a) To progress from one stage of a programme of study to a subsequent stage, whether by full-time or part-time study, a student must pass all modules required by the previous stage, which includes meeting any pre-requisite or mandatory or any other requirement set out in the course definitive documentation.
- b) Students who fail to satisfy the requirements to progress as set out in 1.11.5a) above may, at the discretion of the Assessment Board (which includes a PRP):
 - i) be transferred onto a new programme of study subject to eligibility and availability; *or*
 - ii) be required to resit or repeat modules according to the appropriate Regulations (Regulation 1.11 refers); *or*
 - iii) at the research phase of the programme of study, to progress to the next stage subject to revisions to be made to a satisfactory standard by a specified date; *or*
 - iv) at the research phase of the programme of study, to remain on the current stage of study to enable revisions to be made to a satisfactory standard by a specified date; *or*
 - v) be required to withdraw from the programme of study due to academic failure.

1.12 The higher degree thesis

1.12.1 Format, Content and Appearance

- a) The thesis must normally be presented in the A4 format in English and with the appearance approved by the RAU (see the Quality and Academic Standards Handbook), unless prior permission has been given by Coventry University's Research Committee for a different format.
- b) There must be a title page carrying the following information, in the format prescribed by the RAU (see the Quality and Academic Standards Handbook):
 - i) the full title of the thesis;
 - ii) the full name of the author;
 - iii) the award for which the thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements;
 - iv) the name of any collaborating establishment(s);
 - v) the month and year of submission.
- c) The thesis must include:
 - i) a statement of the candidate's objectives;

- ii) an acknowledgement of published and other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and of any assistance received;
 - iii) an abstract of around 300 words bound into each copy which provides a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject;
 - iv) where the research was undertaken as part of a collaborative group (see Regulation 1.8), a clear statement of the candidate's individual contribution and of the extent of the collaboration;
 - v) if applicable, the student must state which part of the submission has been submitted for another academic award, name the award concerned, and give the outcome of that submission plus date of any conferment.
- d) Where the final submission includes creative work (see Regulation 1.12.3), the submission must be accompanied by a permanent record of any such creative work and, where practicable, these should be bound into the thesis. The creative work must be clearly presented in relation to the argument of the written thesis and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context.
- e) Where the principal focus of the programme of study includes the preparation of a scholarly edition of a text, texts or other artefacts (see Regulation 1.12.3), the completed submission must include a copy of the edited text(s) or collection of artefacts, appropriate textual and explanatory annotations, and a substantial introduction and critical commentary setting the text(s) or artefacts in the relevant historical, theoretical, critical context or design.

1.12.2 Length

A declaration must be made by the student and Director of Studies, at the time of submission of the thesis for examination, that the thesis meets the standard norms for the relevant category that applies.

- a) The text of a thesis in physical science, engineering or art and design, excluding ancillary data, must not normally exceed the stated length by 10%:
 - i) for the MSc/MA by Research: 15,000 words;
 - ii) for the Degree of MPhil: 20,000 words;
 - iii) for a Doctorate: 40,000 words.
- b) The text of a thesis in the humanities or social sciences (including business and management studies), excluding ancillary data, must not normally exceed the stated length by 10%:
 - i) for the MSc/MA by Research: 30,000 words;
 - ii) for the Degree of MPhil: 40,000 words;
 - iii) for a Doctorate: 80,000 words.
- c) Where a submission incorporates material in other than written form, or the research involved creative writing or the preparation

of a scholarly edition (see Regulation 1.12.3), the text of the submission must not normally exceed the stated length by 10%:

- i) for the MSc/MA by Research: 15,000 words;
- ii) for the Degree of MPhil: 20,000 words;
- iii) for a Doctorate: 40,000 words.

1.12.3 **Artefacts and Creative Work**

- a) Where it is not practical to replicate creative work, it must be displayed appropriately, catalogued and labelled for the examiners to view prior to the oral examination.
- b) Small artefacts which cannot be bound should be presented in an appropriate manner with a label clearly indicating the reference number.
- c) Large artefacts which cannot be moved should be photographed and the photograph should have a reference number and location of the original artefact firmly attached.
- d) Performances or other dynamically creative works should be captured in audio and video on CD, DVD, appropriate video tape format or other similar appropriate medium.
- e) Artefacts which are created by a group should be accompanied by the following:
 - i) a brief summary from the student of the work and the nature of his/her involvement;
 - ii) a clear statement from the other members of the group about the student's contribution to the work presented on the letterhead of the group's host institution.
- f) A summary sheet listing all artefacts in reference number order should be included in the thesis.

1.12.4 **Copies**

- a) The student is required to submit the following number of soft cover securely bound copies of the documentation to be examined:
 - i) MSc/MA by Research - two copies;
 - ii) MPhil or Doctorate - two copies.
- b) The student is required to submit an identical electronic copy of the thesis and associated documentation in PDF format to the Quality and Research Section for possible submission to the RAU's plagiarism detection service.
- c) It is the student's responsibility to ensure the reprographic accuracy of each copy of the documentation and any artefacts submitted.

1.12.5 **Copyright, Publication and Confidentiality**

- a) The copyright of a thesis and artefacts are vested in the author.
- b) The author is free to publish material in advance of the thesis, but reference to any such published material must be made in the thesis. Moreover, a copy of any published material must either be bound into the thesis or be placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the thesis.

- c) Subject to the limitations described in Regulation 1.12.5e), a successful higher degree student must deposit in the RAU's library and repository one hard bound copy and an identical electronic copy (normally in PDF format, but other electronic forms of submission may be appropriate for non-narrative submissions (e.g. films)) of the thesis and associated documentation or artefacts respectively. A further hard bound and electronic copy must be deposited in the library or repository of any collaborating establishment. The student must also complete keywords, metadata and abstracts fields in the repository, as defined by the submission guidelines, to aid cataloguing and searching of the repository.
- d) The respective copy/copies of the thesis referred to in Regulation 1.12.5c) must be lodged with the RAU prior to an award being recommended.
- e) The thesis must normally be made available to the public. Exceptionally, the subject of a thesis may be classified as confidential for a specified period, in which case access must not be given until the expiry of that period. Approval for any such restriction must, whenever possible, be sought and given at the time of registration. The period of confidentiality shall not normally exceed five years beyond the completion of the programme of study and the submission of the thesis.

1.13 Conditions of award

- 1.13.1 After the results of module and oral assessments have been confirmed, an individual student shall be entitled to the award achieved on the criteria listed in the Regulations, subject to satisfying any specific requirements of the course on which the student is registered. All mandatory modules and any additional modules specified in the curriculum must be passed.
- 1.13.6 A student who fails in the MSc/MA by Research shall not be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate based on the work undertaken for the Masters award, but may be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma in Research Methods.

1.14 Oral examination arrangements

Oral examinations shall take place with the candidate present in the UK. It is the responsibility of each individual student intending to present himself/herself for examination to inform the Academic Registrar in advance of an examination deadline if extenuating circumstances prevent attendance at a formal examination or it is felt by the student that his/her performance would be so seriously impaired that a deferral of assessment for the examination should be requested. The request must be submitted on the correct form and supporting verifiable and current documentary evidence, normally from a third party, must be attached.

1.14.1 **Appointment of an Independent Chair**

- a) The appointment of an Independent Chair must be made for all oral examinations covered by these Regulations.
- b) The Independent Chair must be wholly independent of the student and will be nominated by the Chair of the RAU's Research Committee.
- c) The Independent Chair must normally have supervised or examined or independently chaired at least one higher degree candidate in the United Kingdom.

1.14.2 **Roles and Responsibilities of the Independent Chair**

- a) The Independent Chair is not required to read the thesis or complete a preliminary report form and should be seen as totally independent throughout the process.
- b) Prior to the oral examination the Independent Chair is expected to brief the examiners on the RAU's procedures and facilitate the development of an agenda if requested by the examiners.
- c) During the oral examination of the candidate, the Independent Chair ensures that the examination process takes place in a fair and transparent manner, guides the examiners and candidate through the oral examination and acts as an arbitrator throughout.
- d) Following the oral examination of the candidate, the Independent Chair assists in the completion of documents confirming the outcome of the examination (if no internal examiner is present).

1.14.3 **Appointment of Examiners**

- a) A candidate for a higher degree must be assessed by an Examination Panel including at least two independent examiners, of whom at least one must be an External Examiner, and an Independent Chair (see 1.14.1 and 1.14.2).
- b) When the candidate is a current member of the RAU's staff (or has been a member of staff in the 12 months prior to the oral examination), two External Examiners and an Independent Chair (see 1.14.1 and 1.14.2) must be appointed.
- c) Examiners are not permitted to discuss the thesis with the supervisory team between receipt of the examiner's preliminary reports within the RAU and the commencement of the oral examination.
- d) Any supervisor may be allowed, subject to the consent of the candidate, to attend the oral examination. Participation in the discussion is at the discretion of the Examination Panel and may be to clarify points of fact only. The supervisor is required to withdraw prior to the deliberation of the Examination Panel on the outcome of the examination.
- e) Except as provided for under 1.14.3 g) any External Examiner must be wholly independent of the student, the RAU, and any collaborating establishment. The same person must not be appointed as an External Examiner so frequently that familiarity with the RAU might prejudice the giving of independent judgement.

- f) Each examiner must be experienced in research in the general subject area of a particular candidate's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.
- g) The collective experience of the examining team should include a minimum of three candidates examined at the appropriate level, normally in the UK (e.g. the examination team for a Doctorate student should have examined a minimum of three Doctorate candidates).
- h) Each examiner must not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser. Coventry University's Research Committee may approve as Internal or External Examiner a person who has acted as one of the external experts who reviewed the application and transfer documentation or who has taken part in a PRP.
- i) any person appointed as External Examiner must not have been employed by the RAU during the previous three years.
- j) No person who is registered for a higher degree, whether of the RAU or of any other RAU or institution of higher education, may be appointed to act as an examiner;
- j) Any individual currently appointed as an Emeritus Professor or Honorary Research Fellow may undertake an internal examining and/or Independent Chairing role under these Regulations.

1.14.4 **Roles and Responsibilities of Examiners**

- a) Each examiner is required to read and assess the thesis and to submit an independent preliminary report to the RAU 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 RAU's requirements for the degree concerned and, where possible, make an appropriate provisional decision, subject to the outcome of the oral examination.
- b) 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 RAU relating to the award of the higher degree 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 RAU 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 RAU.
- c) The Examination Panel shall only be permitted to recommend to the RAU the following:
 - i) that the candidate be awarded the degree for which registered;
 - ii) that the candidate be awarded the degree for which registered, subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis;

- iii) that the candidate be permitted to resubmit for the degree concerned and to be reassessed, with or without an oral examination;
 - iv) that the candidate be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be reassessed;
 - v) in the case of an assessment for a Doctorate, that the candidate be awarded the Degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners;
 - vi) in the case of an assessment for a Professional Doctorate, that the candidate be awarded the Degree of MSc/MA by Research subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners;
 - vii) in the case of an assessment for MSc/MA by Research, that the candidate be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Research Methods, subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners;
 - viii) in the case of an assessment for MPhil, that the candidate be awarded a Doctorate, subject to written confirmation from the examiners that the thesis has made a significant contribution to knowledge.
- d) When the examiners' decisions and recommendations are not unanimous, the University may:
- i) accept a majority recommendation provided that majority recommendation has been supported by at least one External Examiner;
 - ii) accept the recommendation of the External Examiner(s);
 - iii) require the appointment of an additional External Examiner in accordance with the procedures approved for the appointment of examiners.
- e) The Examination Panel may require that a particular candidate 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 normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination and it must be deemed to be part of the candidate's first assessment.
- f) 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 candidate by the RAU.

1.14.5 Responsibilities of Candidates

A candidate must take no part in the arrangement of the examination and have no formal contact with the External Examiner(s) between the time of their being appointed and the holding of the oral examination, or between that and any subsequent oral examination in the case of there being a reassessment of the thesis.

1.14.6 **Procedure Compliance**

Any failure to comply with any of the procedures established by the RAU for the examination process may lead to a particular assessment being declared null and void and to the appointment of new examiners by the RAU.

1.15 **Supervisory arrangements**

1.15.1 **General**

- a) All supervisors will be monitored by the RAU's Research Committee to ensure that they have the experience and capacity to undertake the supervision of the assigned student.
- b) An individual will not normally be expected to supervise more than six higher degree student FTEs concurrently, and to be Director of Studies for no more than three student FTEs at any one time. Where a member of staff has been specifically employed to supervise research projects and students (e.g.: Professor, Reader, Senior Research Fellow or Research Fellow) and therefore has limited traditional teaching responsibilities, this Regulation shall not apply.
- c) Members of the supervisory team should notify the Chair of the RAU's Research Committee if it is felt that the student's programme of study is being put at risk as a result of the volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual supervisors.
- d) Supervisors will have their assigned workload, student progress and completion statistics, and research supervision training and development monitored by the RAU's Research Committee.
- e) Any individual currently appointed as an Emeritus Professor or Honorary Research Fellow may undertake a supervisory role as set out in these Regulations, with the exception of the role of Director of Studies.

1.15.2 **MSc/MA by Research**

- a) Each student registered for a MSc/MA by Research must have one, and may have two, identified supervisors.
- b) Where there is more than one supervisor one of them must be identified as the Director of Studies with the specific responsibility to supervise the student regularly and frequently and to ensure that the student receives proper guidance and support.
- c) The supervisor(s) must have experience in research in the area covered by the higher degree.

1.15.3 **MPhil and Doctorates**

- a) Each registered research degree student must have at least two, but not normally more than three, supervisors.
- b) The supervisory team must normally have a combined experience of higher degree supervision of not less than two and normally three candidates who have successfully completed their studies.
- c) In the case of a person registered for a Doctorate, one of the supervisors must have successfully supervised to Doctorate level.

- d) One of the supervisors must be appointed as the Director of Studies with the specific responsibility to supervise the student regularly and frequently and to ensure that the student receives proper guidance and support. Since they are responsible for overseeing the completion of any administrative matters, the Director of Studies must be located at the RAU.
- e) In addition to the supervisors, if appropriate, an adviser or advisers may be identified to contribute specialist knowledge or to provide a link with an external organisation.
- f) Anyone who is registered for a doctorate (PhD traditional route), either by the RAU or by another institution, shall be ineligible to act as the Director of Studies for a higher degree student, but, in certain circumstances and subject to the prior approval of the RAU, may be appointed to act as a second supervisor or as an adviser.

1.16 Academic misdemeanour

1.16.1 A higher degree student shall be subject to the same Regulations as other students of the RAU in the eventuality of any cheating or plagiarism in the preparation of the thesis or other academic misdemeanour in connection with an assessment or examination.

1.16.2 Any entitlement to an award may be set aside by an Examination Investigatory Panel following a case of cheating; the Panel may also award a lower award to a candidate in such circumstances, and may fail a student who has otherwise passed the course concerned. A student penalised for cheating shall not normally have the right to be assessed or reassessed to improve their award.

1.17 Reviews and appeals, and complaints

A student registered for a higher degree shall be covered by the same procedures for reviews and appeals as other students of the RAU.

1.18 Non-completion of awards and posthumous awards

The provision for Aegrotat and posthumous awards are set out in Coventry University's Regulations 5.3 and 5.4.