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# UCL Academic Manual

## 2015-16

### Chapter 5: Assessment Framework for Research Programmes

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Chapter 5 is UCL's regulatory framework for the assessment and examination of Postgraduate Research students at UCL. The chapter defines UCL's *threshold* academic standards. Students should also refer to their programme handbooks and departmental/divisional literature for more detailed information about their specific programme and guidance on the regulations applicable to their studies.

Chapter 5 includes the main regulations for all UCL students, except where the following approved derogations and variations supersede:

- Doctor in Engineering (EngD) Additional Regulations
- Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Regulations
- Masters by Research (MRes) Additional Regulations
- UCL IOE General Academic Regulations

- UCL IOE Assessment Regulations for Students
- UCL IOE MPhil/ PhD Regulations 2014-15 (Continuing Students)
- UCL IOE Doctor in Education Regulations (EdD) 2015-16 (New Students)
- UCL IOE Doctor in Education Regulations (EdD) 2014-15 (Continuing Students)
- UCL IOE Doctor in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy) Regulations 2015-16 (New Students)
- UCL IOE Doctor in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy) Regulations 2014-15 (Continuing Students)
- UCL IOE Policy and Procedures for Requests for Additional Time

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# 1 Research Degrees Assessment: PhD/EngD/MPhil/MD(Res)

## 1.1 Requirements of a Thesis

### 1.1.1 Theses: General

1. The greater proportion of the work submitted in a thesis must have been undertaken after the registration of the student for the MPhil/PhD/EngD or MD(Res) degree.
2. The work in the thesis submitted by a student must be their own work and the submission of a thesis for examination will be regarded as a declaration of that fact.
3. A student will not be permitted to submit a thesis that has been submitted for examination for a degree, or comparable award, of this or any other university or institution. However, students may incorporate into a thesis previously examined fieldwork which they have already submitted for a degree or comparable award of this, or any other university or institution. In such a case this must be indicated on the Examination Entry Form and the incorporated fieldwork must be clearly identified as such in the thesis submitted for examination.
4. Students may submit the results of work done in conjunction with their supervisor and/or with fellow research workers provided that their own contribution in the investigation is clearly stated and a statement of confirmation is certified by the supervisor.
5. The decision of a student to submit a thesis should be made in consultation with the student's supervisor(s). The decision to submit a thesis in any particular form rests with the student alone.

#### **Further guidance**

1. An allowance may be made in the case of a student who has transferred from another institution (see Chapter 1, Section 2: Research Degree Admissions).
2. Students should also include in each copy of their thesis a signed declaration that the work presented is their own. This may be inserted between the title page and the contents page of the thesis in the following terms:  
*'I, [Student's full name], confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.'*

## 1.1.2 Requirements of a PhD/EngD Thesis

1. A thesis for the awards of EngD or PhD degree shall be examined in accordance with the criteria prescribed by UCL and the thesis shall demonstrate that it:
  - a) is genuinely the work of the candidate;
  - b) shows a student's capacity to pursue original research in the field of study based on a good understanding of the research techniques and concepts appropriate to the discipline;
  - c) embodies the results of a research programme which may reasonably be expected of a student after three years of full-time study or the part-time equivalent, formulated and carried out by the student in consultation with the supervisors;
  - d) consists of a student's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree;
  - e) represents a distinct and significant contribution to the subject, whether through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, or the revision of older views;
  - f) shows the exercise of critical judgement with regard to both a student's own work and that of other scholars in the field;
  - g) is an integrated whole and presents a coherent argument;
  - h) gives a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describes the method of research and its findings, includes discussion on those findings and indicates in what respects they appear to the student to advance the study of the subject; and, in so doing, demonstrates a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study, (a student being able to place the thesis in a wider context), objectivity and the capacity for judgement in complex situations and autonomous work in that field.
  - i) is satisfactory in its literary and/or technical presentation and structure with a full bibliography and references;
  - j) takes due account of previously published work on the subject;
  - k) makes clear the sources from which information has been derived, the extent to which the work of others has been used, and the areas which are claimed as original;
  - l) contains an element which might, after any necessary revision, merit publication in a medium appropriate to the discipline (for example as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals);
  - m) shows a student's ability to design and implement an independent research project.

2. A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of a thesis, either by a student alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of a thesis but may be adapted to form an integral part of a thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of a thesis. Publications derived from the work in a thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of a thesis.

### 1.1.3 Requirements of an MPhil Thesis

1. A thesis for the award of an MPhil degree shall be examined in accordance with the criteria prescribed by UCL and the thesis shall demonstrate that it:
  - a) is genuinely the work of the candidate;
  - b) consists of the candidate's own account of their investigations and indicates in what respects they appear to them to advance the study of the subject;
  - c) represents a contribution to the subject, either through a record of the candidate's original work or a critical and ordered exposition of existing knowledge;
  - d) takes due account of previously published work on the subject;
  - e) makes clear the sources from which information has been derived, the extent to which the work of others has been used, and the areas which are claimed as original;
  - f) is an integrated whole and presents a coherent argument;
  - g) is satisfactory as regards literary presentation;
  - h) has a full bibliography and reference.
2. A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of a thesis, either by a student alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of a thesis but may be adapted to form an integral part of a thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of a thesis. Publications derived from the work in a thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of a thesis.

### 1.1.4 Requirements of an MD(Res) Thesis

1. A thesis for the MD(Res) degree will deal with any branch of medicine, or surgery or medical or dental science. It is a condition of the award of the degree that the clinical research involved in the thesis shall conform to high ethical standards. If UCL is not satisfied on this point, the degree will not be awarded irrespective of the merit of the thesis in other respects.

2. The thesis shall:
  - a) demonstrate it is genuinely the work of the candidate;
  - b) consist of the candidate's own account of his/her investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree;
  - c) form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power;
  - d) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;
  - e) give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, include discussion on those findings and indicate in what respects they appear to the candidate to advance the study of the subject; and, in so doing, demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study (the candidate being able to place the thesis in a wider context), objectivity and the capacity for judgment in complex situations and autonomous work in that field;
  - f) include a full bibliography and references;
  - g) demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented;
  - h) be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals).
3. A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of a thesis, either by a student alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of a thesis but may be adapted to form an integral part of a thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of a thesis. Publications derived from the work in a thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of a thesis.

### 1.1.5 Language of a Thesis

1. All theses must be written in English.
2. For candidates in the field of foreign language and literature, the decision about which language the thesis should be written in would be made by the Faculty Graduate Tutor following consultation with the supervisor(s) and the School/ Departmental Graduate Tutor at the outset of research. The decision would be reviewed at six months.
3. The English abstract is a compulsory additional submission and standard English Language skills are required.
4. In all cases, the oral examination of a thesis would normally be conducted in English.

### Further guidance

1. Submission of a thesis in a language other than English applies only to theses in the field of foreign language or literature submitted by students in the following Departments of UCL: the School of European Languages, Culture and Society, Hebrew and Jewish Studies and the School of Eastern European and Slavonic Studies.
2. The criteria for agreeing to another language would include linguistic reasons, the broader academic context, research impact, dissemination of research and the availability of examiners.
3. The decision would take into account the feasibility of supervising and examining a PhD in a language other than English.
4. A request to write the PhD in another language made after six months should be submitted by the department and faculty and should be referred to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee via the Student Centre.
5. When a candidate has been granted approval for a thesis to be submitted in a language other than English the Student Centre must be informed.

## 1.1.6 Word Length of a Thesis

1. The maximum word lengths for theses are:
  - PhD/EngD degree: 100,000 words
  - MPhil degree: 60,000 words
  - MD(Res) degree: 50,000 words
  - Documentary Track PhD: 60,000 - 70,000 words, accompanied by a film of 20-30 minutes
2. The maximum word lengths include footnotes, tables and figures but exclude bibliography, appendices and supporting data.

### Further guidance

1. The above prescribes the maximum allowable length for MPhil/EngD/PhD/MD(Res) theses, not necessarily the preferred length. In many instances supervisors may wish to recommend a shorter length. Students should consult their supervisors on the usual length of theses in their subject area or topic.
2. The signature of the student and the Principal Supervisor on the Examination Entry Form to the MPhil, PhD, EngD or MD(Res) examinations (see the Research Degree Examination Entry webpages) shall be taken as confirmation that the thesis submitted is within the required word limit
3. 'Supporting data' refers largely to raw data which is not essential to the argument of the thesis. Appendices are not in the word count and should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish. Examiners are not required to read beyond the maximum word limits. Where the thesis itself is an edition of

a text or texts, normally in the field of literature, the above word limits may not apply.

4. Students registered for Professional Doctorate awards should refer to the specific programme regulations for their thesis word lengths and other elements of their programmes that are examined as part of the doctorate.

### 1.1.7 Format of a Thesis

1. The thesis should be submitted in the format determined by UCL at the time of submission.

#### **Further guidance**

1. Further information and guidance is available on the [Thesis Formatting webpages](#) and on the [Research Degree Examination Entry webpages](#). Some exceptions are made for students in the fields of Fine Art, Design, Architecture and Town Planning as detailed on the [Thesis Formatting webpages](#)
2. A4 size paper (210 x 297 mm) should be used. Plain white paper must be used, of good quality and of sufficient opacity for normal reading. One or both sides of the paper may be printed on. Photographic and other illustrations should be permanently mounted on A4 size paper and bound in with the thesis.

### 1.1.8 Approval of a Thesis Title

1. A student must have the title of his/her thesis approved by his/her Principal Supervisor.
2. The approved title is submitted to UCL on the Examination Entry Form submitted to the [Student Centre](#).

### 1.1.9 Availability of a Thesis

1. After the examination has been completed and before the degree is awarded, successful students are required to submit one soft-bound copy to UCL, via the [Student Centre](#), for lodging in the UCL library.
2. The electronic copy of a candidate's thesis and Deposit Agreement Form should be deposited directly via UCL's [Research Publications Service \(RPS\)](#).

#### **Further guidance**

1. Further information about the terms of this declaration on retention is available on the [Research Degree Examination Entry webpages](#).
2. A student may apply to UCL at the time of registration or thereafter, for restriction of access for a period of not more than three calendar years to their thesis and/or the abstract of their thesis on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting. In very exceptional circumstances, if the thesis includes material that is significant for national security, subject to approval of UCL, copies of the thesis placed in the public domain, with the agreement of the

graduate concerned, may have certain parts excised from them. Applications to restrict access to a thesis should be made via the [Library](#).

3. Further information on the availability of the thesis for Practice-Led programmes is available from the [Thesis Formatting webpages](#).

## 1.2 Examination Entry

### 1.2.1 Examination Entry Form: MPhil/PhD/EngD/MD(Res)

1. Before the thesis is submitted for examination, an Examination Entry Form must be submitted to UCL.
  - i) The Examination Entry Form may not be submitted earlier than six months before the completion of the prescribed programme and must be submitted not later than four months before the submission of the thesis. For the entry form and more information, see the [Research Degree Examination Entry webpages](#).
  - ii) A student is required to submit to his/her supervisor a short description of the content of the thesis in about 300 words, the short description must be submitted to the Registry with the Examiner Nomination Forms, to assist in the appointment of suitable examiners (see [Research Degrees Guidance webpages](#) for more details).
  - iii) If a student has not submitted a thesis for examination within 18 months (or such shorter period as shall be stipulated by UCL) from the submission of the Examination Entry Form, the examination entry will be cancelled unless a special case is made for late submission in writing to UCL via the [Student Centre](#).

### 1.2.2 Thesis Submission: MPhil/PhD/EngD/MD(Res)

1. Prior to examination, candidates are required to submit two soft-bound copies of their thesis to UCL for dispatch to their examiners.
2. After the examination and before the award is made, candidates entering for a UCL award are required to submit one soft-bound thesis and to deposit one e-thesis in the UCL Institutional Repository. Candidates entering for a University of London award are required to submit one soft-bound thesis.

#### **Further guidance**

1. A student may be required to provide additional copies of his/her thesis if additional examiners are appointed at any stage in the examination process.
2. A candidate for the EngD, PhD, MPhil or MD(Res) degree is required to bring to the oral examination a copy of his/her thesis which is identical to the copies submitted to the [Student Centre](#). Further information and forms are available on

the [Research Degree Examination Entry webpages](#) and on the [Thesis Formatting webpages](#).

3. Further information on the thesis submission for Practice-Led programmes is available from the [Thesis Formatting webpages](#).

### 1.2.3 Dispatch of Theses to Examiners

1. A thesis will be sent, via the Student Centre, to both examiners at least four weeks in advance of an oral examination.
2. Direct submission of theses to examiners by students, supervisors or departments/ divisions is not permitted.

#### **Further guidance**

1. All theses will be submitted to UCL via the [Student Centre](#). Theses will be sent to both examiners by the Student Centre. Supervisors and students should note that theses will only be sent to examiners who have been formally appointed by UCL and only after the Examination Entry Form has been submitted in accordance with the Examination Entry Guidelines on the [Research Degree Examination Entry webpages](#).
2. Supervisors and students for examination should ensure that all examination entry requirements have been met in good time before a planned oral examination takes place.
3. Oral Examinations cannot proceed if the requirements for the examination entry, including the formal appointment of examiners, have not taken place in accordance with UCL regulations. The outcome of any examination conducted in such an instance would be void.

## 1.3 Appointment of Examiners

### 1.3.1 The Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees

1. Two examiners will be appointed for each candidate in accordance with the UCL Procedures for the Appointment of Examiners (see [Research Degrees Guidance webpages](#) for more details). One of the examiners shall be external to UCL; the other shall normally be a member of the academic staff of UCL.

#### **Further guidance**

1. For each student, two examiners shall be appointed by the UCL Research Degrees Committee on the recommendation of the appropriate Departmental and Faculty Postgraduate Committees or equivalent bodies. Two external examiners may be appointed in lieu of an internal examiner if, on grounds of academic expertise or other reasons, a suitable individual within UCL cannot be nominated.

2. An examiner shall not have acted as either Principal or Subsidiary Supervisor of the thesis to be examined, nor have been involved in any way with the candidate or project to be examined, including the MPhil to PhD upgrade process.
3. In the case of a student who is a member of the academic staff of UCL, no examiner may be appointed who is internal to UCL. In this case, all examiners must be external to UCL.
4. It is desirable that no examiner, either internal or external, should be appointed on more than three consecutive occasions for the same supervisor. Generally, supervisors and departments are asked to avoid repeatedly nominating the same person as an examiner, or nominating each other to act for the other's student, within a short time frame.
  - a) External Examiners:

Normally, an individual external examiner should not be appointed more than once during a given year by members of the same UCL department<sup>1</sup>.
  - b) Internal Examiners:

Normally, an individual internal examiner should not be appointed more than five times during a given three year period by members of the same UCL department.
5. N.B. The appointment criteria for examiners for the University of London MPhil/PhD are different to those for the UCL degree. Candidates for the University of London degree will normally have two examiners appointed, one of whom will be external to the University of London; the other will be internal to the University of London and preferably from a different College to that of the candidate and supervisor. Further guidelines for the appointment of examiners and nomination forms are available on [Research Degrees Guidance webpages](#).

### 1.3.2 The Appointment of Additional Examiners

1. Exceptionally a third examiner, who must be external to UCL, may be appointed with the approval of UCL.
  1. Exceptionally a third examiner may be appointed with the approval of the UCL Research Degrees Committee. A third examiner will be appointed in cases where, between them, the two examiners do not feel they have a sufficient level of expertise to examine the thesis.
  2. A third examiner may also be appointed where there is a dispute between two examiners about the result of an examination which they cannot resolve between themselves.

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<sup>1</sup>'Department' here refers to 'Research Department' in the case of the Faculty of Life Sciences and 'Division / Institute' in the case of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Brain Sciences and Population Health Studies.

3. In accordance with UCL regulations, the third examiner must be external to UCL.
4. In the case of the University of London MPhil/PhD, the third examiner must be external to the University of London.
5. The third examiner will, however, be nominated and appointed through usual UCL procedures and using the Examiner Nomination Form on the [Research Degrees Guidance webpages](#).

## 1.4 Conduct of the Research Degree Examination

1. The examiners shall prepare independent preliminary reports on the thesis, conduct an oral examination and submit a final, joint report to UCL.
2. The candidate's supervisor shall be invited, unless the candidate indicates otherwise on his/her entry form, to attend the oral examination as an observer. The oral examination will otherwise be conducted in private.
3. The oral examination should be held at UCL.

### **Further guidance**

1. The examiners shall prepare independent preliminary reports on the thesis to assist in conducting the oral examination. Copies of the preliminary reports for MPhil, PhD and EngD students should be submitted to the UCL [Student Centre](#) together with the final, joint report. The preliminary and joint reports will be released to students.
2. Examiner report forms and procedural information are available from the [Research Degrees Guidance webpages](#).
3. Each final, joint report by the examiners shall indicate whether the thesis meets the requirements specified in Section 1.1 as appropriate and shall include a statement on the examiners' judgement of the student's performance. Examiners have the right to make comments in confidence to UCL in a separate report. Such comments should not be concerned with the performance of the student but may cover matters which they wish to draw to the attention of UCL.
4. All matters relating to the examination must be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of material contained in a student's thesis until such time as any restrictions on access to the thesis, which have been granted by UCL, have been removed.
5. The supervisor who attends the oral examination does not have the right to participate in the examination of the candidate but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners. Otherwise the oral examination shall be held in private.
6. UCL may exceptionally agree that the examination be conducted outside London if there are circumstances which make this expedient. Applications to hold an oral examination outside of London should be made in writing to the

Chair of the Research Degrees Committee via Assessment and Student Records.

7. For further guidance on the conduct of an oral examination, students and staff should also refer to the UCL Doctoral School Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees.

## 1.5 Outcomes of the Oral Examination

### 1.5.1 Outcomes of the Oral Examination: PhD/EngD Degrees

1. Students for a PhD/EngD degree must submit a thesis and be examined orally. The following options are open to examiners in determining the result of an examination for the PhD/EngD degrees:
  - a) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 1.1.2) and the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the student has satisfied them in the examination and the award of the PhD degree should be made or, in the case of the EngD, the student has passed the research component of the award.
  - b) If the thesis otherwise satisfies the criteria (set out in 1.1.2) but requires minor amendments, and if the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the student to make, within three months, amendments specified by them. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners, or one of their numbers nominated by them, for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
  - c) If the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present their thesis in a revised form within 18 months. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of their thesis, a student who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form. Examiners may refer a thesis for the PhD degree for 18 months for re-submission in a revised form, on one occasion only.
  - d) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 1.1.2), but the student fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 18 months.
  - e) If, after completion of the examination for the PhD degree (but not in the case of the EngD, see below), the examiners determine that a student has not reached the standard required for the award of the degree nor for the re-presentation of the thesis in a revised form for that degree, they may determine that the student may submit the thesis, in a revised form for the award of the MPhil degree.

- f) The examiners may determine that the student has not satisfied them in the examination and no award will be made.
  - g) The examiners shall not, save in very exceptional circumstances, make any of the above decisions without submitting the student to an oral examination on at least one occasion.
2. In the case of a thesis for the PhD that is referred for 18 months, examiners may determine that the re-examined thesis, if it still does not meet the necessary criteria for the PhD degree, may be re-submitted for the MPhil degree.
  3. In the case of an examination for the EngD, the award of the degree is also conditional upon students passing all taught elements of their programme of study. EngD candidates who fail the thesis element may be awarded an MRes degree, based on the taught courses they have passed, at the discretion of the EngD Board of Examiners.

#### **Further guidance**

1. Staff and students should also refer to the Doctoral School's Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees for further guidance on the examination of research degree students.

### **1.5.2 Outcomes of the Oral Examination: MPhil Degree**

1. Students for the MPhil degree must submit a thesis and be examined orally. There are five options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination as follows:
  - a) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 1.1.3) and the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the student should be awarded the degree of MPhil.
  - b) If the thesis otherwise fulfils the criteria (set out in 1.1.3) but requires minor amendments, and if the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the student to make within three months amendments specified by them. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners, or one of their numbers nominated by them, for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
  - c) If the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present his/her thesis in a revised form within 12 months. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of his/her thesis, a student who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form. Examiners may refer a thesis for the MPhil degree for 12 months for re-submission in a revised form on one occasion only.
  - d) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 1.1.3) but the student fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present the same thesis and

submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 12 months.

- e) The examiners may determine that the student has not satisfied them in the examination and no degree award will be made.
2. The examiners shall not, save in very exceptional circumstances, make any of the above decisions without submitting the student to an oral examination on at least one occasion.

#### **Further guidance**

1. Staff and students should also refer to the Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees for further guidance on the examination of research degree students.

### **1.5.3 Outcomes of the Oral Examination: MD(Res) Degree**

1. Students for the MD(Res) degree must submit a thesis and be examined orally. There are five options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination as follows:
  - a) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 1.1.4), and the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the student should be awarded the degree of MD (Res).
  - b) If the thesis otherwise fulfils the criteria (set out in 1.1.4) but requires minor amendments, and if the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the student to make within three months amendments specified by them. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners, or one of their numbers nominated by them, for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
  - c) If the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present his/her thesis in a revised form within 18 months. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of his/her thesis, a student who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form. Examiners may refer a thesis for the MPhil degree for 18 months for re-submission in a revised form on one occasion only.
  - d) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 1.1.4), but the student fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the student is permitted to re-present the same thesis and submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 18 months.
  - e) The examiners may determine that the student has not satisfied them in the examination and no degree award will be made.
2. The examiners shall not, save in very exceptional circumstances, make any of the above decisions without submitting the student to an oral examination on at least one occasion.

### **Further guidance**

1. Staff and students should also refer to the Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees for further guidance on the examination of research degree students.

## **1.6 Research Misconduct**

### **1.6.1 Research Misconduct: Initiation of Proceedings**

1. All cases of suspected research misconduct, including plagiarism, shall be investigated in accordance with the UCL Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research.

#### **Further guidance**

- i) Cases of suspected research misconduct shall be investigated by following the procedures outlined in Sections 1.6.2 and 1.6.3 below. Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research are available from the Research Governance website.

### **1.6.2 Extent of Misconduct: Action Open to a Department/Division**

1. The following instances of research misconduct may be dealt with by the department/division concerned:
  - i) A first instance of plagiarism in the early stages of the programme of study.
  - ii) A first instance of misrepresentation of results in the early stages of the programme of study.

#### **Further guidance**

1. The following instances of research misconduct may be dealt with by the department concerned:
  - a) A first instance of plagiarism in the early stages of the programme of study (prior to upgrading to MPhil/PhD on the PhD programme, or at the end of the first year of study on the MPhil programme), including suspected collusion but not including suspected use of a fellow student's or other person's work without that student's knowledge and consent.
  - b) A first instance of plagiarism (including suspected collusion but not including suspected use of a fellow student's or other person's work without that student's knowledge and consent) in the later stages of the programme of study (after upgrade to MPhil/PhD on the PhD programme) in which no more than 30% (approximately) of the work in question can be demonstrated to have been plagiarised or, in the case of plagiarised data, statistics etc., it can be demonstrated that they are not the main findings or among the main findings on which the argument of the thesis rests.

- c) A first instance of misrepresentation of results in the early stages of the programme of study (prior to upgrading to MPhil/PhD).
  - d) A first instance of misrepresentation of results in the later stages of the programme of study (after upgrading to PhD on the PhD programme, or after the first year of study on the MPhil programme) which is judged to have been owing to error, misunderstanding or other extenuating circumstances.
2. Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research are available from the [Research Governance website](#).

### 1.6.3 Extent of Misconduct: Action Open to UCL

1. The following instances of research misconduct shall be referred to the Registrar:
  - i) any instance of plagiarism, except those covered in Section 1.6.2 above;
  - ii) any repeated instance of plagiarism;
  - iii) any instance of misrepresentation;
  - iv) any instance of piracy or fraud;
  - v) any instance of any kind of research misconduct which appears in published work;
  - vi) submission of a thesis for examination by a student when an allegation of research misconduct has been made.

#### **Further guidance**

1. The following instances of research misconduct must be referred for action by UCL:
  - a) Any instance of plagiarism (including suspected collusion<sup>2</sup>) other than a first instance falling under Section 1.6.2 above in which approximately 30% of the work can be demonstrated to have been plagiarised or, in the case of plagiarised data, statistics etc. it can be demonstrated that they are the main findings or among the main findings on which the argument of the thesis rests.
  - b) Any repeated instance of plagiarism after a warning has been given, whether or not it exceeds 30%, or involves data, statistics etc. which are not among the main findings on which the argument of the thesis rests.
  - c) Suspected use of another student's or person's work without that student's knowledge and consent.
  - d) Any instance of misrepresentation other than a first instance falling under Section 1.6.2.

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<sup>2</sup> Where collusion between two or more students is established, all students concerned will be penalised.

- e) Any instance of piracy or fraud, as defined in the [UCL Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research](#).
  - f) Any instance of any kind of research misconduct which appears in published work, whether or not the work appears before or after the examination for MPhil/PhD.
  - g) Submission of a thesis after the student has been warned not to submit it because of an allegation of research misconduct.
2. Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research are available from the [Research Governance website](#).

#### 1.6.4 Research Misconduct Discovered after Successful Completion of an Examination

1. UCL has the right to rescind an award if research misconduct is discovered after the examination of a thesis.

### 1.7 Student Complaints Procedure

1. There is no right of appeal against an academic decision. There is a Student Complaints Procedure in place. Students can lodge a case under this procedure in the circumstances specified.
2. Students and staff should consult Chapter 1, Section 12: Student Complaints Procedure.

### 1.8 Graduation Ceremonies

1. UCL will organise Graduation Ceremonies and publish an annual deadline for ticket applications (see the [UCL Graduation Ceremonies](#) website).
2. It is mandatory for all UCL graduates to wear academic robes to the graduation ceremonies. It is the responsibility of students to obtain the appropriate robes from UCL's suppliers. For further information see the [Graduation: Academic Robes web pages](#).

## 2 Professional Doctorate Assessment

### 2.1 Taught Element

#### 2.1.1 Successful Completion of a Professional Doctorate Programme

1. In order to complete successfully a professional doctorate programme at UCL, students must complete all specified taught components of their degree programme, as follows:
  - a) For the coursework and/or practicum components, a threshold for completion will be set by the programme and be clearly publicised to students.
  - b) In the event that any threshold set is not reached, the result for the component will be “incomplete” regardless of the mark obtained.

#### 2.1.2 Unseen Examinations

1. An unseen examination component is deemed complete if a student has submitted an answer that can be academically assessed. The mark awarded, however, might be zero. If a student makes little or no attempt at the examination, this will be deemed “incomplete”.
2. A taught component is complete when a student has been declared complete on all relevant assessments for that component using the criteria specified in the relevant programme regulations.

## 2.2 Academic Assessment

1. For the purposes of these regulations, ‘examination’ refers to the assessment of taught and practicum assignments other than research, whether by written examination and/or by coursework, or other means of academic assessment.
2. The assessment of the research thesis is discussed under Section 2.3 below.
3. These regulations should be read together with Chapter 4, Section 1: *Assessment Strategy* and the *Examination Guide for Candidates* on the [Examinations and Awards website](#).

### 2.2.1 Anonymity of Assessed Work

1. With the exception of the circumstances set out in item 4 below, unseen summative written examinations must be assessed anonymously against an anonymous identifier such as candidate numbers or SRN.

2. A summative coursework element that constitutes more than 40% of a module must be submitted and assessed on an anonymous basis where possible.
3. Once marks have been finalised for an element of summative coursework, for example by agreement between first and second markers, anonymity may be lifted to facilitate feedback to students.
4. Anonymity may not be practical when assessing laboratory work, oral examinations, exhibitions, marking clinical work with patients, portfolios of work, dissertations/ research theses and group work etc.
5. Anonymity is not required for an element of summative assessment that constitutes 40% or less of a module.
6. Consideration by Boards of Examiners of all summative assessed marks, progression decisions and awards must be conducted anonymously.

### **Further guidance**

1. In this context a coursework element is either part of or the entire coursework component for a taught module. For example, one essay weighed at 40% of a taught module is one element and therefore makes up the entire 40% coursework component for that module, the remainder being other component(s) weighted at 60%. However, as another example, 10 individual weekly problem sheets weighted at 40% of a taught module are 10 elements of the 40% coursework component of that module the remainder being other component(s) weighted at 60%.
2. Reports listing names and candidate numbers will be available via Portico to designated departmental/divisional staff in the first term.
3. The student SRN may be used as an anonymous identifier when departments/divisions wish to reserve use of candidate numbers for unseen written examinations.
4. Since students benefit from feedback on their coursework, anonymity is not required when the coursework element constitutes 40% or less of the assessment for a taught module.
5. Anonymity is required when a coursework element constitutes 40% or more of a taught module and SRN or candidate numbers may be used as appropriate. However, anonymity may be relaxed once marks have been agreed to facilitate feedback to students.
6. Candidate numbers should be used for all unseen written examinations and at meetings of Boards of Examiners.

## **2.2.2 Examination Entry Criteria**

1. Students will be eligible for summative assessment if they have attended and pursued the taught module(s) to the satisfaction of the teaching department/division. The minimum requirement for 'satisfactory performance' is attendance of 70% of the taught module(s) in terms of lectures, seminars,

laboratory sessions and other forms of teaching and learning as specified by the department/division or faculty.

2. Students who are clearly falling short of any departmental/divisional requirements in any particular taught module will be informed in writing that their performance is currently less than satisfactory, and that if the situation continues, they may be barred from the assessment of the taught module(s) in question together with the consequences that this may bring.
3. Students have the right to appeal against the decision to bar them from being assessed.

#### **Further guidance**

1. Departmental/divisional, programme and taught module literature given to students at the start of the session must set out the policy on satisfactory performance, together with clear definitions of what will constitute 'unsatisfactory performance'. If particular importance is attached to the attendance for certain elements, such as seminars for laboratory work, of a taught module, then the requirements must be set out clearly in the literature given to students.
2. Departments/divisions may stipulate a higher minimum requirement than attendance of 70% of the taught if they wish to do so as long as this is communicated to the students.
3. Wherever it is practicable for them to do so, departments/divisions must have adequate mechanisms in place for regularly recording attendance at seminars, classes and tutorials, and the submission of required coursework and any other work and for the reporting by individual teachers of any serious deficiencies to the Departmental/Divisional Programme Tutor (as appropriate), who are the designated departmental/divisional officers with overall responsibility for instigating the barring process.
4. Any communications informing students that their performance is currently less than satisfactory, should be sent to the relevant Faculty Tutor/ Faculty Graduate Tutor for information (and to the student's home department/division if it is not the department/division responsible for teaching the taught module(s) in question).
5. Such warning must be given to students in sufficient time for them to be able to rectify the situation during the remainder of the session and certainly no later than half-way through the module(s) in question.
6. The Faculty Tutor/ Graduate Faculty Tutor (and, where relevant, the student's home department/division) may also decide at this point to interview the student concerned.

### **2.2.3 Right of Appeal against a Decision to Bar a Student from Examinations**

1. Students have the right to appeal against the decision to bar. Such appeals must be made by the student in writing, either to the home Faculty Graduate Tutor or the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, as appropriate, within

seven days of the date of notification of the department/division's or Faculty's decision.

2. The home Faculty Graduate Tutor will deal with any appeal there may be against a departmental/divisional decision where progression is not at stake within five working days of receipt of the written appeal.
3. Appeals against a decision by the Faculty Graduate Tutor which results in non-progression or classification difficulties for the student will be dealt with by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee within 5 working days of receipt of the written appeal.

#### **Further guidance**

1. Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal may go through UCL's Student Complaints Procedure, but they must accept that a final outcome is unlikely to be reached before they are due to take the examination(s) in question.
2. For further information see Chapter 1, Section 12: Student Complaints Procedure.

### **2.2.4 Authorised Absence from Assessment**

1. A student, who is prevented owing to illness or the death of a near relative or other cause judged sufficient by UCL from completing an examination at the normal time, may at the discretion of the examiners either:
  - i) Enter the examination in those elements in which they were not examined on the next occasion when the examination is held in order to complete the examination; or:
  - ii) Be set a special examination in those elements of the examinations missed as soon as possible and/or be permitted to submit any work prescribed (e.g. report) at a date specified by the Board of Examiners concerned.

#### **Further guidance**

1. The special examination shall be in the same format as specified in the programme regulations for the elements missed.

### **2.2.5 Unauthorised Absence from Assessment and Non-Submission of Assessed Work**

1. Students who are absent without permission from other forms of assessment or who do not submit work for assessment will be awarded a mark of zero.
2. If a student is absent from an examination without permission or, although present at an examination, either does not attempt the paper or attempts so little that it cannot be assessed and provides no evidence of extenuating circumstances, the normal procedure should be that the student is awarded a mark of zero for the missed/non-attempted examination (i.e. a mark of zero

would be counted in any average and it would be treated as an attempt: the overall result for the module would be recorded by Assessment and Student Records as absent or incomplete, as appropriate).

## 2.2.6 No Attempt or Minimal Attempt at Assessment

1. Students who do not attempt a paper or other form of assessment, or who make an attempt that is academically un-assessable, will be awarded a mark of zero.

## 2.2.7 Re-Entry to Assessment

1. Students who obtain a mark below the condoned mark range will be required to re-enter that examination at the next normal occasion.
2. The mark achieved will apply even if this is lower than the original mark.

## 2.2.8 Number of Permitted Attempts

1. Students who, at their first entry, do not successfully complete an examination may re-enter for the examination or other forms of assessment on one more occasion.
2. This does not apply if a student has been awarded a degree, or been excluded from UCL on the grounds of academic insufficiency or as a result of examination misconduct or professional misconduct.

## 2.2.9 Programme Regulations and Syllabus for Re-entered Examinations

1. Students who re-enter for any part of an examination shall be subject to the programme regulations and syllabus current at their first attempt. This is providing that:
  - i) Appropriate examiners for the course are available.
  - ii) For students wishing to enter or re-enter examinations after satisfactory completion of the programme of study, such entry or re-entry is made within two calendar years of the completion of the programme of study.
  - iii) For students wishing to enter or re-enter examinations following a period of interruption of study, such entry or re-entry is made within two calendar years of the completion of attendance on the course unit.
  - iv) Examination according to the method(s) of assessment operating at the time of the original registration for that course does not disadvantage the student.
2. Where one or more of the conditions set out at i)-iv) above cannot be met, the following will apply:

- i) The student will be notified in writing of any changes to the method(s) of assessment since the time of their original registration for the course.
- ii) The student must signify in writing that they understand that the method(s) of assessment have changed as notified.

## 2.2.10 Format of the Reassessment

1. Students will only re-take failed assessment components unless the regulations for their programme require students to re-take all assessed components of a module.
2. Students will be automatically re-entered for assessment components that they have failed to pass or complete, unless they have been granted permission not to re-enter by UCL or have been excluded from UCL. If a student passes assessed coursework components but fails an examination, the normal expectation is that the student would only re-sit the examination, unless specific programme regulations require otherwise. However, following academic advice, a recommendation may be made by the Departmental/Divisional Programme Tutor that a student can re-sit all assessment components of the module, including those previously passed. Evidence of support by the Faculty Tutor should be sent to Assessment and Student Records.

## 2.2.11 Late Submission of Coursework

1. Deadlines for submission of coursework will be set by individual programmes, and are absolute.
  1. Coursework submitted after the deadline will be deemed to have failed, and a new piece of work will need to be submitted in place of the original.
  2. Where there are extenuating circumstances that have been recognised by the Board of Examiners or its representative, these penalties will not apply until the agreed extension period has been exceeded.
  3. For further information see Chapter 4, Section 7: Extenuating Circumstances Regulations.

## 2.2.12 Over-length Coursework, including Research Projects, Dissertations and Final Reports

1. Prescribed word counts for each piece of work will be set by individual programmes, and are absolute.
  - i) Coursework with a stated word count above the maximum will not be accepted for submission (i.e. it will not be date-stamped or otherwise recorded as formally submitted), but will be immediately returned to the student with instructions to reduce the word length.
  - ii) If submitted work is subsequently found to have an inaccurately stated word count it will be failed. At the discretion of individual programmes the

student may be permitted to re-present the coursework in a revised form that meets the prescribed word count.

## 2.2.13 Approved Format for Examinations

### Assessment – General

1. Assessment is a general term used to describe the mechanism to measure student achievement. A variety of assessment methods may be applied to reflect an integrated curriculum design. At UCL there is an expectation that a mixture of formative and summative assessment methodologies will be applied to test different skills and to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Formative assessment can also provide experience of a programme's summative assessment.
2. **Summative assessment** provides a clear statement of achievement or failure that can be made in respect of an individual student's performance. The outcome of summative assessment is used to classify a degree award and is recorded on student transcripts.
3. **Formative assessment** provides feedback to individual students about their progress towards achieving the intended learning outcomes for specified course units and modules. In addition, innovative formative assessment methodologies make an important contribution to the overall development of student skills and transferable knowledge.
4. Permitted forms of summative academic assessment are set out in Chapter 4, Section 1: Assessment Strategy.
5. Permitted forms of summative e-assessment are set out in Chapter 4, Section 5.2: Summative E-assessment.

### Examination of a Programme

1. Students entering an examination must be examined in all parts of the examination prescribed for the programme. Therefore (unless prevented by illness or other adequate cause for which certification must be provided) students must register for each prescribed assessment and submit sufficient work to enable them to be examined. For components examined either in full or in part by coursework, students may be regarded as having been examined in all parts of the examination, that is having completed the assessment of the component, provided that:
  - a) All parts of the assessment have been completed at the time that the component is assessed.
  - b) Individual departments/divisions may prescribe the proportion of unseen written examination and coursework. In every case, the percentage of coursework which must be completed shall be clearly specified in appropriate documentation and clearly indicated to the students concerned.

## **Examination of Coursework**

1. Criteria for the assessment of coursework will be published by individual programmes.
2. The coursework component will examine both the taught and practicum components of the programme.
3. Coursework has to be passed independent of the examinations of other course components.
4. The examiners may specify changes to a piece of coursework and require these to be carried out before these are accepted as part of the student's portfolio.

### **Further guidance**

1. The examination of coursework will be conducted in accordance with procedures for examination of coursework as set out in Chapter 4, Section 1: Assessment Strategy.
2. Where coursework is required to be resubmitted students should be given clear feedback indicating the revision required.
3. Students whose performance falls below the required standard will normally be allowed one resubmission.
4. External examiners should be involved in the examination process and where failure is indicated their advice should be sought.

## **Examination of Practicum Assignment and Practicum Assessments**

1. The practicum assignment will be assessed by criteria published by the department/division at least once a year, and must be passed according to written criteria published by the programme.
2. Attendance requirements for professional doctorate programmes must be met in order to allow entry into the examination.
3. The evaluation is based on observation of the performance of the student on the practicum assignment by either a member of the programme staff and/or a member of the profession formally recognised and designated by the programme as possessing the appropriate qualifications for examining the student.
4. Failure of the practicum assignment will normally lead to failure of the course, but at its discretion the Board can permit students to re-take the relevant assignment. There will only be one opportunity to retake an assignment.
5. If students are deemed not to be meeting criteria, they need to be informed that this is the case. If their performance continues to be unsatisfactory they may be required to attend an oral examination.
6. Students may appeal against failure of the practicum component.

### **Further guidance**

1. The frequency of assessment of the practicum assignment will be specified in the regulations of individual programmes.

2. The person examining the practicum component will normally be specified before the student is sent on the practicum assignment.
3. The criteria for satisfactory performance in a practicum assignment will be specified by the programme and made available both to students and assessors of the practicum.
4. Reports of the student's progress and the oral examination (if conducted) will be considered by the Board of Examiners of the programme.

#### 2.2.14 Examination Conduct

1. The conduct of examinations will follow UCL norms as set out in Chapter 4: Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes.

#### 2.2.15 Special Assessment Arrangements

1. Special examination provisions on the grounds of a specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia), disability or ill-health will follow UCL norms as set out in Chapter 4, Section 4: Special Assessment Arrangements.

#### 2.2.16 Publication of Examination Results

1. The Publication of Examination Results will follow UCL norms as set out in Chapter 4, Section 3.16: Award of Degrees.

#### 2.2.17 Prescribed Scheme of Award

1. Every professional doctorate will have an associated prescribed Scheme of Award that is a statement of the means by which the degree is awarded. The Scheme of Award will be published in the student information handbook for the programme.
2. Students will be considered for an award according to the Scheme for Award in place at the time of their registration on the programme.

##### **Further guidance**

1. The Scheme of Award is the method by which the award of the degree is calculated. Teaching departments/divisions are required to publish their local award scheme rules in the Student Handbook for each programme, and students are expected to familiarise themselves with these local rules.

#### 2.2.18 Changes to a Prescribed Scheme of Award

1. Students will have signified in writing that they have understood that changes have been made to the Scheme for Award as notified.

## 2.2.19 Date of a Degree Award

1. The date of award for professional doctorates will be no longer than one month after the Board of Examiners has recommended to Assessment and Student Records that a student be passed.

## 2.2.20 Provision of Degree Certificate

1. A UCL degree certificate will be sent to each successful student who is awarded a degree.
2. Students should ensure that their contact address is kept up to date, via Portico, as this address will be used for the despatch of certificates. For students gaining a UCL award, certificates are despatched by Assessment and Student Records, within approximately three months of the date of award.

## 2.2.21 Students with an Outstanding Debt to UCL

1. All students who will, if successful in their examinations, qualify for the award of a degree, should note that UCL will withhold the award in the case of any student who is in debt to UCL in regards to tuition fees.
  - i) No report will be made on the student's results record until the tuition fee debt has been settled in full, and attendance at a Graduation Ceremony will not be permitted unless all tuition fees have been settled by the due date.
  - ii) All other students who hold a debt to UCL in relation to tuition fees will have their official results withheld and/or not be permitted to enrol at any future session until that tuition fee debt has been settled in full.
  - iii) For the avoidance of doubt, the term 'tuition fees' does not include, without limitation: accommodation charges, charges for childcare services, library charges, examination and submission fees, student loans and other fines and penalties.

## 2.2.22 Award of Degrees

1. The Academic Committee of UCL is authorised to award degrees.

## 2.2.23 Revocation of Degrees

1. UCL may revoke any degree, diploma or certificate awarded, if discovered at any time and proved to the satisfaction of UCL, that:
  - a) There was an administrative error in the award made under the procedures required by UCL, including an error in calculating the results.

- b) Subsequent to award, a Board of Examiners, having taken into account information that was unavailable at the time its decision was made, determines that a student's or students' classification should be altered.

## 2.3 Requirements of the Research Thesis

### 2.3.1 Theses: General

1. The greater proportion of the work submitted in a thesis must have been undertaken after the registration of the student for the professional doctorate.
2. The work in the thesis submitted by students must be their own work and the submission of a thesis for examination will be regarded as a declaration of that fact.
3. Students will not be permitted to submit a thesis that has been submitted for examination for a degree, or comparable award, of this or any other university or institution.
4. Students may submit the results of work done in conjunction with their supervisor and/or with fellow research workers provided that their own contribution in the investigation is clearly stated and a statement of confirmation is certified by the supervisor.
5. Students should include in the thesis submission form a signed declaration that the work presented is their own. This may be inserted between the title page and the contents page of the thesis in the following terms:

*'I, [student's full name], confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.'*

### 2.3.2 Requirements of the Research Thesis

1. A thesis for the award of a professional doctorate shall be examined in accordance with the criteria prescribed by UCL and the thesis shall demonstrate that it:
  - i) is genuinely the work of the student;
  - ii) shows a student's capacity to pursue original research in the field of study based on a good understanding of the research techniques and concepts appropriate to the discipline;
  - iii) embodies the results of research which may reasonably be expected of a student after the period under research supervision, formulated and carried out by the student in consultation with the supervisors;

- iv) consists of a student's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period under research supervision for the degree;
- v) represents a distinct and significant contribution to the subject, whether through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, or the revision of older views;
- vi) shows the exercise of critical judgment with regard to both a student's own work and that of other scholars in the field;
- vii) includes a critical assessment of relevant literature, including a description of the method of research and its findings, discussion of those findings and indicates in what respects they appear to the student to advance the study of the subject and, in so doing, demonstrates a deep and synoptic understanding of a field of study, objectivity and the capacity for judgment in complex situations and autonomous work in that field;
- viii) is satisfactory in its literary and/or technical presentation and structure with a full bibliography and references;
- ix) the report of research takes due account of previously published work on the subject;
- x) makes clear the sources from which information has been derived, the extent to which the work of others has been used, and the areas which are claimed as original;
- xi) contains an element which might, after any necessary revision, merit publication in a medium appropriate to the discipline (for example as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals);
- xii) shows a student's ability to design and implement an independent research project.

#### **Further guidance**

1. Supervision of the research component of a professional doctorate normally starts after students have undertaken other elements of the programme, and hence the period of registration is usually longer than the period during which the student is under research supervision. Students and staff should consult individual programme regulations for details of the period of research supervision.

### **2.3.3 Language of a Thesis**

1. All these must be written in English and the oral examination must be conducted in English.

## 2.3.4 Word Length of a Thesis

1. The maximum word length of professional doctorate theses is 100,000 words, including all component parts, footnotes, tables and figures but excluding bibliography, appendices and supporting data.
  - i) The above prescribes the maximum allowable length for the thesis, not necessarily the preferred length. Individual programmes may recommend a shorter length and give specific advice on partitioning the submitted thesis. Students should refer to the regulations for individual programmes for advice on the usual length and specified components of theses in their subject area.
  - ii) The signature of the student on the Examination Entry Form to the examination for the specialist doctorate shall be taken as confirmation that the thesis submitted is within the required word limit.
  - iii) "Supporting data" refers largely to raw data which is not essential to the argument of the thesis. Appendices are not in the word count and should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish. Examiners are not required to read beyond the maximum word limit.
  - iv) Students should refer to the specific programme regulations for their thesis word lengths and other elements of their programmes that are examined as part of the doctorate.

## 2.3.5 Format of a Thesis

1. The thesis should be submitted in the format determined by the home department/division of the programme at the time of submission.
2. Further information and guidance on the format and presentation of theses is available from the individual programme literature.

## 2.3.6 Availability of a Thesis

1. At the time of entry to the examination, students are required to sign a declaration giving UCL the necessary authority to retain a copy or copies of the thesis.
  - i) Further information about the terms of this declaration on retention is available from the individual programme literature.
  - ii) Students may apply to UCL, at the time of registration or thereafter, for restriction of access for a period of not more than two calendar years to their thesis and/or the abstract of their thesis on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting. If the thesis includes material that is significant for reasons of confidentiality or other reasons, subject to approval of UCL, copies of the thesis placed in the public domain may have certain parts

excised from them. Applications to restrict access to a thesis should be made via the Student Centre.

## 2.4 Examination Entry

### 2.4.1 Thesis Submission Form

1. Prior to the time of submission of a thesis for examination, a thesis submission form must be submitted to the home department.
  - i) Information about the submission of the form, and when submission is required, should be available from the home department/division.
  - ii) The form, which requires a short description of the content of the thesis in about 300 words, must be submitted to the Departmental/Divisional Postgraduate Committee to assist in the nomination of suitable examiners.

### 2.4.2 Thesis Submission

1. Students, prior to examination, are required to submit two copies of their theses to UCL using the procedures identified by the programme.
2. Students may be required to provide a third copy of their thesis if a third examiner is appointed at any stage in the examination process.
3. Students are required to bring to the oral examination a copy of their thesis which is identical to the copies submitted to UCL.

### 2.4.3 Dispatch of Theses to Examiners

1. A thesis will be sent to both examiners at least four weeks in advance of an oral examination.
2. Direct submission of theses to examiners by students or supervisors is not permitted.

#### **Further guidance**

1. All theses will be submitted to UCL using the procedures identified by the programme. Supervisors and students should note that theses will only be sent to examiners who have been formally appointed by UCL and only after the thesis submission form has been submitted in accordance with the examination entry guidelines. Further information is available from individual programmes.
2. The Departmental/Divisional Postgraduate Committee and the student should ensure that all examination entry requirements have been met in good time before a planned oral examination takes place.
3. Oral examinations cannot proceed if the requirements for the examination entry, including the formal appointment of examiners, have not taken place in

accordance with UCL regulations. The outcome of any examination conducted in such an instance would be void.

## 2.5 Appointment of Examiners

### 2.5.1 The Appointment of Examiners for Professional Doctorates

1. The Chair of the Board of Examiners for the professional doctorate will nominate external examiners for the taught and practicum components of the programme.
2. In making a nomination, the Chair will take account of the appointment criteria specified by UCL Research Degrees Committee including confirmation of approval of the nomination from UCL Research Degrees Committee and the Faculty Graduate Tutor on behalf of the Faculty Postgraduate Teaching committee.

#### **Further guidance**

1. Upon receipt of the confirmation of appointment of the nominated examiner by UCL, the Chair of the Board of Examiners should ensure that the newly-appointed examiner receives the following, together with any additional information required:
  - i) Name of departmental/divisional board contact (e.g. Examinations Liaison Officer);
  - ii) Departmental booklet such as a Student Handbook or syllabus information;
  - iii) Composition of the Board of Examiners (e.g. number of internal examiners and any interdepartmental involvement);
  - iv) Number and subject area of other external examiners appointed to the Board;
  - v) Scheme of award;
  - vi) Marking scheme for papers (when known);
  - vii) Criteria for practicum requirements (where appropriate);
  - viii) Criteria for the research component;
  - ix) Date(s) of meetings of Board of Examiners to which the external examiner is invited (when known);
  - x) Outline of procedures of Board of Examiners (e.g. point of contact for external examiner, time allowed for marking, procedures for setting and scrutinising papers).

### 2.5.2 Confirmation of External Examiner Continuing Appointment

1. Chairs of Boards of Examiners will confirm that external examiners are continuing in their role on an annual basis for a total period of four years.

2. The task of the annual review and confirmation of external examiners continuing appointment is conducted via Portico (the Student Record Management Database).
3. Chairs or their nominees should use the functionality found in the “Examiners” header of their staff home page.

### 2.5.3 The Appointment of External Examiners

1. An external examiner must be from outside UCL and must not be involved in regular teaching on the programme they examine.
2. A member of the academic staff of a college of the University of London other than UCL, or any other external institution with which UCL has service teaching arrangements, may be appointed as an external examiner, providing that no students from the appointee’s college, so far as can be anticipated, are being examined by the Board of Examiners at UCL on which the appointee will serve and the appointee is not involved in teaching on the programme examined by the Board to which they will be appointed.

#### **Further guidance**

1. Departments/divisions should avoid, where possible, appointing an external examiner where there is a risk that students from their home institution will register on modules examined by the Board of Examiners at UCL on which they will serve.
2. This risk is high in the case of external examiners from other colleges of the University of London. If such a situation occurs, however, and is known only after the external examiner is appointed, any assessed work by these external students cannot be referred to an external examiner from the same institution.

### 2.5.4 The Criteria for the Appointment of External Examiners

1. An external examiner is normally expected to be a member of staff in the same discipline as the professional doctorate in another UK university. Where they are not current members of the academic staff they should have experience of professional training and be senior members of the profession. They should also be competent in assessing students' knowledge and skills at higher education level, expert in the field of study concerned and have appropriate academic or professional experience and authority.
2. In order to have sufficient time for the proper performance of their function, external examiners are normally not expected to hold more than the equivalent of two substantive external examinerhips at the same time.
3. An external examiner shall not normally be appointed from a department/division in which a member of UCL staff is serving as an examiner, although exceptions may on occasions be unavoidable, for example, in the case of subjects taught only in a very small number of institutions or subjects with an unusually high number of specialisms.

4. External examiners shall be asked at the time of appointment or continuation in appointment to declare any interest in or connection with any student on the programme for which they are acting as examiner whether that interest or connection is personal or professional. If such an interest or connection exists, the examiner in question should not normally be appointed.
5. After serving for a period of four consecutive years (or five years if an extension to service was approved), an examiner is not eligible for re-appointment for a period of two further years. The period of service is defined as the period of service as an external examiner at UCL and not as the period of service as external examiner to a particular Board of Examiners.
6. After serving for a period of not more than four normally consecutive years, or, in exceptional circumstances, for such limited extension of this period as UCL Research Degrees Committee may determine, the examiner shall not be eligible for re-appointment to any external examiner appointment for a professional doctorate at UCL (including an external examiner appointment at UCL in a related subject area) until after a lapse of two further years. The period of service shall be defined as the period of service as an external examiner at UCL, not as the period of service as external examiner to a particular Board of Examiners.

## 2.5.5 Additional Criteria for the Appointment of Examiners for the Thesis Component

1. The thesis submitted as part of the professional doctorate will be examined by at least two examiners. One of these will be an external examiner appointed in accordance with the procedure identified at Sections 2.5.1 to 2.5.4, and the other shall be a member of the academic staff of UCL.

### **Further guidance**

1. For each student, two faculty-approved examiners shall be appointed by the appropriate Postgraduate Departmental/Divisional Committee.
2. It is expected that external examiners for each thesis will normally be selected for their specialist knowledge of the field rather than knowledge of the precise area of research study.
3. Nominated examiners should not have acted as either a Principal or Subsidiary Supervisor of the thesis to be examined, nor have been involved in any collaborative academic or professional work with the student on the project to be examined. In addition, examiners should not be nominated if there is a close personal relationship between themselves and either the student or supervisors, or if there is an apparent conflict of interest of any kind.
4. Reciprocal examination arrangements are not permitted: staff from equivalent programmes should not be appointed as external examiners if a member of staff in the home department/division is currently serving as an external examiner in that programme. However exceptions may on occasion be unavoidable, for

example, in the case of subjects taught only in a very small number of institutions or subjects with an unusually high number of specialisms.

5. Examiners will not normally examine more than five theses in a single cohort.

## 2.6 Conduct of the Oral Examination

### 2.6.1 Format of the Oral Examination

1. The oral examination will usually consider the student portfolio, including the outcomes of practicum assignments and assessments, related coursework and the research dissertation.
2. All oral examinations shall be conducted in the English Language.
3. If an oral examination is prescribed for the assessment of an element, all students enrolled on the element are expected to be examined accordingly.
4. Decisions relating to failed performance in the practicum assignment can be informed by an additional oral examination. This possibility should be clearly indicated to students as part of programme documentation. The outcome from the oral examination should inform the decisions of the Board of Examiners, alongside other assessments relevant to that assignment.
5. Where individual programmes examine only specific elements of the portfolio in the oral examination, this will be specified in their regulations.

### 2.6.2 Conduct of the Research Degree Examination

1. The examiners will prepare independent preliminary reports on the thesis, conduct an oral examination and submit a final, joint and summary report to UCL. A report of the oral examination will normally be made to the Board of Examiners of the programme.
2. The oral examination shall normally be conducted in London.

#### **Further guidance**

1. The examiners shall prepare independent preliminary reports on the thesis to assist in conducting the oral examination. After the examination copies of the preliminary reports together with the final, joint report should be submitted to the Student Centre in UCL Student and Registry Services. The final report will be released to students. Examiner report forms and procedural information are available from the individual programme.
2. Each final, joint report by the examiners shall indicate whether the thesis meets the requirements specified in Section 2.3, and shall include a statement on the examiners' judgment of the student's performance. Examiners have the right to make comments in confidence to UCL in a separate report. Such comments

should not be concerned with the performance of the student but may cover matters which they wish to draw to the attention of UCL.

3. All matters relating to the examination must be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of material contained in a student's thesis until such time as any restrictions on access to the thesis, which have been granted by UCL, have been removed.
4. The supervisor does not have the right to participate in discussion of students at the Board of Examiners but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners.

### 2.6.3 Outcomes of the Oral Examination

1. Students must submit a thesis and any other aspects of the portfolio requested by the examiners and be examined orally.
2. The following options are open to examiners in determining the result of an examination:
  - a) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in Section 2.3) and the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the student has passed the research component of the award.
  - b) If the thesis otherwise satisfies the criteria (set out in Section 2.3) but requires minor amendments and if the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the student to make, within a maximum of one month, amendments specified by them. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners or one of their number nominated by them for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
  - c) If the thesis otherwise satisfies the criteria set out above, but requires stipulated amendments and if the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the student to make, within a maximum of three months, amendments specified by them. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners or one of their number nominated by them for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
  - d) If the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present their thesis in a revised form within a maximum of 12 months. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of their thesis, a student who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form. Examiners may refer a thesis for a maximum of 12 months for re-submission in a revised form, on one occasion only.
  - e) The examiners may determine that the student has not satisfied them in the examination and hence has not passed the research component of the

award, and is not therefore eligible for the award of a professional doctorate.

- f) The examiners shall not, save in very exceptional circumstances, make any of the above decisions without submitting the student to an oral examination on at least one occasion.
- g) The award of a professional doctorate is conditional upon students passing all specified elements of their programme of study.

### **Further guidance**

1. Students should refer to individual programme regulations for guidance on deadlines for resubmission of the thesis, which may be shorter than the maximum periods identified here.
2. Some professional doctorate programmes have an exit award other than a professional doctorate. Where this is the case, and examiners consider that a student has not met the requirements of a professional doctorate, they may recommend that the Board of Examiners confers this alternative exit award.

## **2.7 Research Misconduct**

1. All cases of suspected research misconduct, including plagiarism, shall be investigated in accordance with the [UCL Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research](#).
2. Cases of suspected research misconduct shall be investigated by following the procedures outlined in Sections 2.7.1 and 2.7.2 below.

### **2.7.1 Extent of Misconduct: Action Open to a Department/Division**

1. The following instances of research misconduct may be dealt with by the department/division concerned:
  - a) A first instance of plagiarism in the early stages of the programme of study;
  - b) A first instance of misrepresentation of results in the early stages of the programme of study;
  - c) A first instance of plagiarism in the early stages of the programme of study (prior to the end of the first year of study), including suspected collusion but not including suspected use of a fellow student's or other person's work without that student's knowledge and consent;
  - d) A first instance of plagiarism (including suspected collusion but not including suspected use of a fellow student's or other person's work without that student's knowledge and consent) in the later stages of the programme of study in which no more than 30% (approximately) of the work in question can be demonstrated to have been plagiarised or, in the case of plagiarised data, statistics etc., it can be demonstrated that they

are not the main findings or among the main findings on which the argument of the thesis rests;

- e) A first instance of misrepresentation of results in the early stages of the programme of study (in the first year of study);
- f) A first instance of misrepresentation of results in the later stages of the programme of study which is judged to have been owing to error, misunderstanding or other extenuating circumstances.

## 2.7.2 Extent of Misconduct: Action Open to UCL

1. The following instances of research misconduct shall be referred to the Registrar:
  - a) Any instance of plagiarism, except those covered in 2.7.1;
  - b) Any repeated instance of plagiarism;
  - c) Any instance of misrepresentation;
  - d) Any instance of piracy or fraud;
  - e) Any instance of any kind of research misconduct which appears in published work;
  - f) Submission of a thesis for examination by a student when an allegation of research misconduct has been made.

### **Further Guidance**

1. The following instances of research misconduct must be referred for action by UCL:
  - a) Any instance of plagiarism (including suspected collusion) other than a first instance falling under 2.7.1 above in which approximately 30% of the work can be demonstrated to have been plagiarised or, in the case of plagiarised data, statistics etc. it can be demonstrated that they are the main findings or among the main findings on which the argument of the thesis rests;
  - b) Any repeated instance of plagiarism after a warning has been given, whether or not it exceeds 30%, or involves data, statistics etc. which are not among the main findings on which the argument of the thesis rests;
  - c) Suspected use of another student's or person's work without that student's knowledge and consent;
  - d) Any instance of misrepresentation other than a first instance falling under 2.7.1;
  - e) Any instance of piracy or fraud, as defined in UCL's procedures;
  - f) Any instance of any kind of research misconduct which appears in published work, whether or not the work appears before or after the examination for the doctorate;

- g) Submission of a thesis after the student has been warned not to submit it because of an allegation of research misconduct;
- h) Where collusion between two or more students is established, all students concerned will be penalised.

### 2.7.3 Research Misconduct Discovered after Successful Completion of Thesis Examination

1. UCL has the right to rescind an award if research misconduct is discovered after the examination of a thesis.

### 2.7.4 Appeal against the Action Taken in the Event of Research Misconduct

1. Students cannot contest a decision on academic grounds. Students can only contest a decision on specific grounds as set out in Chapter 1, Section 12: Student Complaints Procedure.

## 2.8 Student Complaints Procedure

1. Students cannot contest the decision of a Board of Examiners on academic grounds. Students can only contest the decision of a Board of Examiners on specific grounds as set out in Chapter 1, Section 12: Student Complaints Procedure.

## 2.9 Graduation Ceremonies

1. UCL will organise Graduation Ceremonies and publish an annual deadline for ticket applications (see the [UCL Graduation Ceremonies website](#)).
2. It is mandatory for all UCL graduates to wear academic robes to the graduation ceremonies. It is the responsibility of students to obtain the appropriate robes from UCL's suppliers (see the [Graduation: Academic Robes web pages](#)).