

GRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

CODE OF PRACTICE 2023/24

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
RESEARCH DEGREES – GENERAL INFORMATION	5
SOURCES AND RESOURCES	5
ADMISSIONS AND SELECTION PROCEDURES	6
RESEARCH GOVERNANCE AND INTEGRITY	6
DEPARTMENTAL/DIVISIONAL STRUCTURES	7
SUPERVISORY PANEL	7
PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR	7
SUBSIDIARY SUPERVISOR	10
DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATE TUTOR	11
DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATE COMMITTEE	12
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	12
STAFF-STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE	12
FACULTY AND UCL STRUCTURES	13
FACULTY GRADUATE TUTOR	13
UCL STRUCTURES	13
THE STUDENT	14
PROGRAMME OF STUDY AND RESPONSIBILITIES	14
RESEARCH STUDENT LOG	16
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	16
ETHICS	17
LEAVE AND INTERRUPTION OF STUDY	17
TEACHING	19
COMPLETING RESEARCH STUDENT STATUS	20
THESIS PREPARATION AND EXAMINATION	20
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS/COPYRIGHT	21
PLAGIARISM AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT	21
RESOLVING PROBLEMS	21
FORMAL COMPLAINTS	22
BULLYING AND HARASSMENT	22
RESEARCH DEGREES – PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC INFORMATION	23
MPhil/PhD including upgrade	23
Professional Doctorates	24
MD(Res)	26
MRes	26
Typical timetable for a Full-time PhD student	27

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO UCL AND THE UCL DOCTORAL SCHOOL

This Code of Practice aims to set out what you as a research student can expect from your supervisory team and from UCL, and what your Supervisors and others in UCL can expect from you. It is important that you read this document carefully and keep it for reference. If you are a Supervisor, you should also read and keep it – and remind yourself periodically of its contents.

Research students are at the heart of UCL's mission as a research-led university. We aim to give our research students a distinctive high-quality experience intended to develop research leaders in preparation for various career pathways. As a UCL research student you will be a member of a vigorous research community enabling you to develop as an independent researcher, building networks within and beyond your primary discipline. You will be learning to work in an environment that aspires to the highest standards of research integrity.

The Doctoral School exists to promote and oversee research student education and training at UCL. The Doctoral School, on behalf of Research Degrees Committee, issues this Code of Practice which complements the formal UCL academic regulations and guidelines for research degree students in the UCL Academic Manual. The Code contains guidelines for good practice: in contrast, the regulations provide the minimum framework and requirements for completion of a degree.

A research degree focuses on the production of a piece of original research under the supervision of at least two research Supervisors, in conjunction with the development of the research student's research skills and generic skills. The majority of research degrees at UCL are within MPhil/PhD programmes, but the range of Professional Doctorates reflects increasing diversity and development of degrees in emerging areas of professional practice. There is also a range of Research Master's degrees (MRes), some stand-alone and some leading to further PhD or EngD study. These students undertake independent research, with supervision and guidance, and normally are also expected to attend structured courses to learn about research methods in the field.

This Code of Practice applies to all research degree programmes at UCL: MPhil/PhD, MD(Res), Professional Doctorates, and also the research component of the MRes degree. You should read the general information section of this Code first, and then the section referring to the particular programme on which you are enrolled.

UCL offers a programme for the development of generic research and personal transferable skills to help you develop the skills necessary not only for successful completion of your degree but also to equip you for later life and the work place. [The Doctoral Skills Development Programme](#) is run centrally by Organisational Development. The specific menu of courses and other training opportunities should be discussed between you and your Supervisors using the Personal Training and Development Plan section of UCL's Research Student Log. The self-assessment process is based on a national framework, the Researcher Development Framework.

My best wishes for a productive and fulfilling time at UCL.

Professor David Bogle
Pro-Vice-Provost of the Doctoral School

RESEARCH DEGREES – GENERAL INFORMATION

Note that the terminology used throughout is generic and individual departments (or divisions, as appropriate) may have slightly different structures and terms.

SOURCES AND RESOURCES

[Academic Manual](#)

UCL Academic Regulations and Guidelines for Research Degree Students, including the Guidance documents at the bottom of the landing page.

[Doctoral School Essential Information](#)

including policy information and contact list of relevant staff.

[The UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)

[UKCGE Good Supervisory Practice Framework](#)

Note: Individual funders and UCL departments may also issue additional guidelines

ADMISSIONS AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

At least two members of Academic Staff, with appropriate expertise and experience, should be involved in the selection of graduate research students. Applicants should be interviewed by Academic Staff, including the potential Supervisor(s) if they have been identified. Some sponsoring bodies leave the project topic to be agreed between the student and the department (Supervisory Panel and Departmental Graduate Tutor), whereas others approve a research topic in advance of recruitment of a suitable student.

As part of the admission process, Supervisors and prospective students are expected to discuss funding options for the student's living expenses, course fees and any fieldwork, laboratory work etc. to be carried out. The expectation is that adequate funding for the completion of the programme will be in place on arrival, either secured by the student or by the department. However, Supervisors are expected to encourage and help students to find any additional funding required during their programmes. In the case of self-funded students in particular, Supervisors are expected to work with students in securing alternative external or internal funding wherever possible.

RESEARCH GOVERNANCE AND INTEGRITY

To realise its research strategy and ensure that all research conducted by members of staff, honorary staff, students and individuals who collaborate in research with UCL staff and students conforms to good practice in research integrity and ethical standards, UCL has adopted a set of research governance policies and procedures. This framework is described in the documents listed in [UCL Research Governance](#), including [UCL's Code of Conduct for Research](#).

In addition, the 'UCL Statement on Research Integrity' sets out the standards expected by all those involved with research at or in collaboration with UCL, including adherence to the principles of integrity contained within. The [Research integrity](#) website provides a central access point for guidance on research integrity, and acts as a living framework for research integrity at UCL.

DEPARTMENTAL/DIVISIONAL STRUCTURES

SUPERVISORY PANEL

Each student has a Supervisory Panel consisting of Principal and Subsidiary Supervisors. Students must have at least two supervisors; however, there is not a maximum number of supervisors. The panel may also include other persons, for instance members of collaborating bodies, e.g. industrial partners, or persons with special expertise necessary for the research. The Supervisory Panel will meet as necessary and be involved at key milestones in the research degree (for example in the MPhil to PhD transfer process, and in the appointment of examiners).

Principal Supervisors will take the lead in the supervisory team, and in instances where the level of input changes significantly between Principal and Subsidiary Supervisor throughout the evolution of the project, the supervisory team should consider swapping roles, in consultation with the Departmental Graduate Tutor.

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

You can expect your Principal Supervisor to*:

**The timings described below are for a 3-year FT project*

– please make adjustments to your own programme timeline accordingly.

Supervisory team

1. Advise you of the name of your Departmental Graduate Tutor, and ensure that you know that you may contact the Departmental Graduate Tutor and/or your Faculty Graduate Tutor to discuss graduate matters including problems regarding your supervision.
2. Arrange (in consultation with the Subsidiary Supervisor and the Departmental Graduate Tutor) for a replacement in the event of their absence for a period exceeding 4 weeks.

Progression

1. Participate in the selection process and be present at your admission interview.
2. Establish a timetable of regular meetings with you at which all matters relating to your work can be discussed; such meetings should take place at least once per month.

3. Ensure that you use the Research Student Log effectively to manage the progression of your project aims, and review and approve the reports you submit to the Log in a timely fashion according to the reporting schedule in the Log.
 4. Agree with you, within a month of registration, a suitable topic of research which will stimulate interest and can be completed as a research project and written up within the prescribed period of study.
 5. Agree with you no later than 3 months after registration the basic structure of the research project, an appropriate research method, a realistic plan of work, and any additional required study including skills development training; and making you aware of expectations regarding timings for assessments/progression as per the department or funding body regulations.
 6. Inform you about key review stages in your programme, and, for MPhil/PhD students, the procedures for transfer/upgrade from MPhil to PhD, and assist you with these processes.
 7. Agree with you no later than 24 months after registration a realistic timetable for the completion of the research and writing up of your thesis.
 8. Discuss with you the work accomplished and revise the objectives as the work proceeds in the light of progress made and external factors (such as newly published findings).
 9. Make recommendations and complete the appropriate paperwork for the appointment of internal and external examiners (at least 4 months before the planned submission of thesis), discuss with you when to submit your thesis for examination*, and ensure that you complete the exam entry procedure in good time (usually 4–6 months before you hand in).
- * Funders sometimes have specific expectations about what is considered 'on-time' thesis submission for their Terms & Conditions; your supervisor should help advise you of the appropriate submission time for your funder.*
10. Provide you with prompt constructive criticism and reaction on submitted draft work to facilitate timely completion of your thesis.
 11. Arrange the Viva Voce examination and advise all third parties, e.g. collaborators, sponsors, etc. of the examination result.

Note: It is recommended the Principal Supervisor arrange a 'mock' viva examination for their students.

Training & Development

1. Introduce you to the department, its facilities and procedures, and to other students and relevant staff (especially important for part-time students); and encourage attendance at relevant events, for both personal and professional development.
2. Arrange for you to be made familiar with the research facilities and activities at UCL, and enable and encourage you to play a full part in the social and intellectual life of your department and UCL.
3. Discuss with you your initial needs assessment for required training, and support you as your research progresses in acquiring the skills, attributes and behaviours you need to perform successfully during your research programme and in your future career.
4. Agree with you courses in the Doctoral Skills Development Programme to be taken over the full period of the research programme (and for MPhil/PhD students, the extent to which courses will be taken into account in the decision whether to transfer registration from MPhil to PhD).
5. Encourage you to present your work in progress from time to time as appropriate, attend relevant conferences, meetings and workshops, and to consult relevant sources of information and advice inside and outside your department.
6. Assist you in obtaining knowledge and information about career opportunities and refer you to careers guidance services in UCL and elsewhere.

Legal/ethical/safety concerns

1. Make you aware of your responsibility to work to the standards set out in [UCL's Statement of Research Integrity](#).
2. Ensure that you complete the [mandatory training for Doctoral students](#).
3. Ensure that risk assessment of laboratory and/or [field-based activities](#) has been carried out in accordance with UCL and departmental procedures and that you receive the required safety training.
4. Ensure that you maintain records of your research in a state which can be investigated and understood by anyone with a legitimate right to enquire.
5. Discuss the ethical implications of your research with you and ensure that [ethics approval](#) has been obtained in accordance with UCL procedures.
6. Determine, in consultation with the Head of Department, prior to or at the start of a student's project, whether an assignment of [Intellectual Property Rights/Copyright](#) is necessary and if so, ensure that an agreement on IPR/Copyright has been established at the outset of the project, and that the student is informed of the terms of the agreement at the start.

7. Report to the Registrar any suspected instance of research misconduct, including plagiarism.
8. Follow the [Personal Relationships Policy](#), [Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and [Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy](#) at all times and report any breaches of the policy that you witness.

SUBSIDIARY SUPERVISOR

You can expect your Subsidiary Supervisor to:

1. Participate in the selection process and be present at your admission interview if they have been identified at this time.
2. Keep acquainted with the progress of your work and to be present at, at least, annual supervisory meetings (and participate as chair in the MPhil to PhD transfer process if applicable).
3. Provide for continuity of supervision in the event of the absence or departure of the Principal Supervisor.
4. Enhance the effective supervision of your work by contributing a second opinion or additional areas of expertise.
5. Review and approve the Research Student Log records in a timely fashion.
6. Arrange (in consultation with the Principal Supervisor and the Departmental Graduate Tutor) for a replacement in the event of their absence for a period exceeding 8 weeks.
7. Follow the [Personal Relationships Policy](#), [Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and [Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy](#) at all times and report any breaches of the policy that you witness.

DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATE TUTOR

You can expect your Departmental Graduate Tutor to:

1. Oversee admission*, induction, supervision, progression and examination (see point 4 below) of research students in their department and generally ensure that this Doctoral School Code of Practice is implemented and monitored.

**Students should only be admitted when suitable supervision and necessary facilities are available.*

2. Ensure that a Supervisory Panel consisting of at least a Principal and a Subsidiary Supervisor appropriate to the research be appointed at the commencement of your research.
3. Ensure that the departmental procedure for transfer/upgrade of registration from MPhil to PhD, where applicable, is operated effectively
4. Ensure that at upgrade, your Research Log is up-to-date and that mandatory training has been completed.
5. Ensure that UCL procedures for entering research degree examinations are followed, and that appropriate examiners are properly nominated.
6. Serve as a source of information about regulations and resources for both students and staff.
7. Promote your personal and professional development by ensuring that you participate in the Doctoral Skills Development Programme and/or appropriate departmental or other training and development.
8. Facilitate and monitor your academic progress by ensuring that, amongst other things:
 - The Research Student Log is used effectively;
 - In the case of breakdown of relations between the Supervisor and the student and in other circumstances where a change of Supervisor is desirable, they assist in resolving any difficulties, and where necessary arranges the appointment of a replacement Supervisor;
 - All students, including part-time students, working in more than one department, and students primarily working in another institution or organisation are integrated into each department and that they receive adequate supervision and monitoring.
9. Promote general student welfare by informing Supervisors and students about:
 - Needs of international students;
 - Needs of part-time students;
 - Needs of BAME and underrepresented students;

- Needs of students with caring responsibilities;
- [UCL Student Support & Wellbeing](#), [UCL Student Psychological Services](#) or other appropriate pastoral support structures;
- [UCL Student Disability Services](#);
- [UCL Equal Opportunity Policy](#);
- [Resources for students in financial hardship](#);
- [Resources for careers information and advice](#);
- [Advice and Support offered by the Students' Union Postgraduate Association](#);
- [UCL services and facilities, and resources available through the Students' Union, UCL](#);
- [UCL Doctoral School](#).

DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATE COMMITTEE

Most departments have a Departmental Graduate Committee; this body complements and assists the role of the Departmental Graduate Tutor and, on behalf of the Head of Department, reviews the quality of research supervision.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

The Head of Department has overall responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of research students in the department, including supervision, provision of necessary equipment and facilities, safety, etc. Where students work in more than one department or institution, or are part-time, then the Head of Department should ensure that adequate provision is made for supervision, facilities and monitoring progress, and that the student is integrated as far as reasonably possible into the life of their department.

STAFF-STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

All departments have a Staff–Student Consultative Committee, jointly co-chaired by a student and a member of staff, which meets at least three times per academic year. You are represented by one or more elected graduate student representatives and the department is responsible for informing you of the selection process. Minutes of meetings are published in the department, usually online.

FACULTY and UCL STRUCTURES

FACULTY GRADUATE TUTOR

Every department at UCL is situated within a Faculty. It is important to find out which [Faculty](#) you are part of so that you can benefit from additional support at this level of the organisation. For every department/division, there is a Faculty Graduate Tutor. The Faculty Graduate Tutor has overall responsibility for the general academic and pastoral oversight of research students in the faculty and assists the Faculty Dean in all matters relating to quality management and enhancement. The Faculty Graduate Tutor chairs the Faculty Research Degrees Committee, and reports on faculty graduate matters to the Doctoral School.

Faculty Graduate Tutors approve applications from staff members to act as Supervisors ensuring that all Supervisors undertake UCL's mandatory Supervisor training. They also consider and approve nominations of examiners for all UCL research degree candidates registered in the faculty on behalf of the Chair of Research Degrees Committee.

As part of their roles in maintaining general academic and pastoral oversight of all research students within their faculty, Faculty Graduate Tutors are available to advise research students who are experiencing any difficulties affecting their studies.

UCL STRUCTURES

Above faculty level there are UCL structures concerned with research students. The Doctoral School and the Researcher Training Strategy Committee focus on the development of institutional strategy on Doctoral Education and evaluation of the plans and delivery of doctoral education at UCL. Research Degrees Committee (RDC), the UCL-level committee directly concerned with all aspects of research degrees, is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Provost of the Doctoral School. RDC membership includes all Faculty Graduate Tutors, the Students' Union Postgraduate Students' Officer, and other key UCL staff involved in doctoral education. The Research Degrees Office in Student and Registry Services provides advice on regulations and processes to research students, staff and examiners. UCL's Students' Union has a Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer as well as Research Student Academic Representative for all Faculties. Find your rep on [their website](#) to feedback to and influence UCL's academic community.

THE STUDENT

PROGRAMME OF STUDY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Research students can be registered as Full-time or Part-time. All research students are registered in a department although they may have Supervisors in more than one department. It is important that all research students have equal and full access to all UCL resources necessary for successful completion of their work.

Your responsibilities as a graduate student are:

Your research integrity/quality

1. To carry out your research effectively, to an adequate standard and within the prescribed period of study.
2. To carry out your research according to the regulations as set out for your programme, and the principles and procedures set out in UCL's [Research Governance Framework](#) and the [Research Integrity Framework](#)
3. To complete the [mandatory training](#) required as a UCL Doctoral Student as well as any training required for your specific project.
4. To be responsible for considering the ethical implications of your research and ensuring that you do not commence the research until ethical approval is obtained where necessary.
5. To ensure that you maintain records of your research in a state which can be investigated and understood by anyone with a legitimate right to enquire.
6. Follow the [Personal Relationships Policy](#), [Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and [Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy](#) at all times and report any breaches of the policy that you witness.

Your academic progression

1. To use the online Research Student Log effectively, recording your formal supervisory meetings; and to record the development of your generic research and personal transferable skills.
2. To agree and strictly abide by a timetable for regular meetings with the Principal Supervisor at least once every month.
3. To consult regularly with the Subsidiary Supervisor.
4. To submit your written work to agreed deadlines to allow sufficient time for comment and discussion.
5. To attend any relevant induction sessions and Doctoral Skills Development Programme as agreed with your supervisory team.
6. To present your work or findings from time to time when encouraged to do so by the Principal Supervisor.
7. To follow the procedure set out below for transfer/upgrade of registration from MPhil to PhD (where applicable).
8. To discuss and notify in advance your supervisory team and administrators of any planned Study Leave or Interruptions, as set out in the procedures below.
9. To submit the examination entry form in good time (normally 4–6 months before thesis submission).
10. To decide when to submit your thesis for examination, having taken due account of your Principal Supervisor's opinion, funder regulations, and shown the final version to your Subsidiary Supervisor should they wish to see it.

Your wellbeing

1. To inform your Supervisory Team or Departmental Graduate Tutor of any problems, either personal or professional, which may be interfering with your work. You should feel free to bring any problems, including those of a social or medical nature, to their attention, or if you feel you cannot, you should inform another member of staff, e.g. your administrator, student mediator, or Student Wellbeing team member.
2. To consult in confidence with the Departmental Graduate Tutor if you are concerned about any behaviour of your supervisory team, or if you feel that a change of Supervisor is desirable for any reason.

RESEARCH STUDENT LOG

Use of UCL's online Research Student Log is mandatory for all UCL research degree students. The student is asked to document academic progression and skills development training in the Log and it is the responsibility of the student to maintain this Log for their own long-term benefit. The Log reflects a dialogue between you and your supervisory team and records a series of review meetings (including important milestones such as the MPhil to PhD upgrade) and discussions on academic (subject discipline), generic and transferable skills training.

The Log is intended to be used in a flexible manner, to allow for different research processes between disciplines. Your Principal Supervisor and Departmental Graduate Tutor will explain its use to you. Induction sessions on the Log are provided by Organisational Development. The Departmental Graduate Tutor, who monitors the Log records and usage, will confirm that the Log has been satisfactorily completed at upgrade from MPhil to PhD (where applicable) and at thesis submission.

Visit the [Research Student Log](#) online.

There is a [student quick reference guide](#) to help you get started

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

All research students irrespective of how they are funded are expected to take full advantage of the Doctoral Skills Development Programme. All UKRI funded research students are required to participate in the Doctoral Skills Development Programme and/or appropriate departmental courses for 20 points per year (which equates to roughly 2 weeks), not including non-funded CRS periods, if relevant. All training courses and activities have been assigned a point value.

You should use the Personal Training and Development Planning tool in the Research Student Log to identify, in discussion with your Supervisors, which courses from the Doctoral Skills Development Programme and any departmental/faculty training courses you might wish to attend. Students are expected to take a broad range of courses across all the domains of the [Researcher Development Framework](#). Information is available via the [Organisational Development website](#).

ETHICS

UCL regards it as fundamental that research should be conducted according to ethical guidelines. All research can raise ethical considerations due to the recruitment of participants, the methodology, material studied, topic, potential impact of the research, or the use, processing and sharing of data:

You must:

- Consider and address all ethical concerns prior to the research commencing. These should be regularly reviewed during the research to ensure that new considerations are appropriately identified and managed.
- Consider and regularly review the safety and wellbeing of all involved in the research, participants and researchers alike.
- Ensure that ethical approval (if necessary) is obtained prior to the commencement of any research, particularly if working with living human participants/data or animals. This includes all relevant approvals within the UK as well as other jurisdictions. For specific guidelines and requirements, see the UCL [Ethics Policy](#) and UCL [Biological Services](#).

LEAVE AND INTERRUPTION OF STUDY

Attendance

Research students' attendance is not formally monitored; however, it is expected that their research time mirrors that of staff engagement as closely as possible. It is therefore recommended that Full-time research equates roughly to 36.5 hours per week; this should be pro-rata to whatever Part-time equivalent has been agreed, but not normally less than 50% the Full-time-equivalent (FTE). If a student has external funding, they should also ensure they meet the Terms & Conditions of their funder in this regard.

Annual leave

It is important for research students to maintain a healthy work-life balance. As such, we recommend that research students take annual leave in-line with staff entitlements. For a full-time student, this equates to 41 days over the year including 27 days of Annual Leave, 8 Public and Statutory Holidays, and 6 Closure Days. For part-time students these entitlements should be pro-rata. If a student has external funding, they should also ensure they meet the Terms & Conditions of their funder in this regard.

Study Leave

Research is often a collaborative activity and research students from strong research universities such as UCL, need to be aware of global research activities, and to gain confidence at an international level. It may be desirable or necessary for you to conduct research away from UCL or any other institution to which you have been attached. Where such research requires absence for more than four weeks, an [Application for Study Leave](#) must be made to the Research Degrees Office. The application must be made on the recommendation of your Principal Supervisor and must be approved on behalf of Student and Registry Services before you leave to conduct research elsewhere. UCL's procedures relating to Risk Assessment, Health & Safety and Ethics must be followed.

Also be aware that proper [Risk Assessments](#) must be followed for any fieldwork, especially in light of the recent global pandemic.

Interruption of Study

For various reasons of a personal nature, it is sometimes necessary for study to be interrupted for a period, for example medical reasons or parental leave. Such interruption must have the formal approval of UCL and you should consult your Principal Supervisor about the procedures for making an application, in advance of your interruption of study, to the Student Centre, UCL Student and Registry Services. If you are funded, you should check your funder Terms & Conditions regarding whether your absence would be paid leave or not.

Further information and application form are available on the [UCL Student web pages](#).

Travel

Be aware that any [UCL travel](#) should be registered for UCL insurance coverage, especially in light of the recent global pandemic.

TEACHING

As a research student, you may be asked to contribute to undergraduate teaching, for example demonstrating in laboratory classes, leading tutorial groups, marking essays, etc., in return for payment (unless included in the terms of your studentship). This activity provides valuable teaching experience but the responsibilities must be clearly defined and the work compatible with the research programme; the time commitment should not exceed 180 hours per year (to include teaching, preparation, and training). See the [PGTA Code of Practice](#) for further information on PGTA recruitment, payment, and rights and responsibilities.

Postgraduate students new to teaching at UCL are required to attend an introductory Gateway Workshop, provided by UCL's Arena Centre for Research-based Education, or an agreed equivalent offered by your department or faculty (to be granted exemption from attending a Gateway Workshop you must contact arena.one@ucl.ac.uk outlining the training offered). The Gateway Workshop forms the first part of UCL Arena One, the development scheme for postgraduate teachers. If you have sufficient teaching and/or assessment responsibilities, you may then choose to progress to the UCL Arena One Teaching Associate Programme, which allows you to work towards an Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, a nationally recognised qualification in Higher Education teaching and learning.

Full information on UCL's Postgraduate Teaching Assistant Scheme, including HR Guidance and UCL Arena One Training (Gateway Workshops and Teaching Associate Programme) is available via the [Arena website](#).

COMPLETING RESEARCH STUDENT STATUS

On completion of your programme of study (normally after 3 years FT or 5 years PT), if you have not submitted your thesis, you can progress to Completing Research Student (CRS) status for a maximum period of one calendar year (full-time students) or two calendar years (part-time students) if:

1. you will be in a position to submit your thesis within the next 12 months (full-time students) or 24 months (part-time students);
2. you have been upgraded from MPhil to PhD registration, or have confirmed you are entering for an MPhil only (MPhil/PhD students only);
3. you have met any additional requirements of your department/division.

CRS status means that you do not pay fees but have access to UCL facilities and can have at least one draft of your thesis read by your Supervisor. If you do not meet the conditions listed above then you will continue to pay full-time or part-time fees as appropriate. It follows that if you do not have CRS status and do not pay fees then you are no longer registered and cannot have access to UCL facilities or to supervision.

Notes: (1) If a research student is registered on a four year programme of study, they are still entitled to a year of CRS at the end of the 4 years.

(2) Different funders have varying rules about what they consider an 'on-time' submission to be. Although all UCL students are entitled to the above timings, please be aware that your funder may have specific requests regarding when you should hand in. You should clarify your expected hand-in date with your Supervisory team or your Postgraduate Research Administrator if you are unsure.

(3) CRS status does not apply to MRes degrees.

THESIS PREPARATION AND EXAMINATION (all programmes except MRes)

All research students are normally expected to submit a thesis to UCL for examination within a period of one calendar year (or two years in the case of part-time students) after the end of the fee-paying enrolment period.

Full 'Requirements of a Thesis' may be found in the [academic regulations](#) and guidelines for research degree students. In addition, further guidance on thesis and viva preparation can be found on the [Research assessment pages](#) of the UCL Students website.

You are responsible for submission of the necessary applications to enter the appropriate examination following liaison with your Principal Supervisor. The examination entry procedure and other relevant information may be obtained from the Research Degrees Office. It must be submitted through an online workflow no later than four months before the proposed date for submission of your thesis. It is the responsibility of the Principal Supervisor to arrange for appointment of examiners via the Departmental Graduate Tutor; to arrange the Viva Voce examination in liaison with the examiners and with you the candidate; and in due course advise any relevant collaborating persons or institutions and sponsors of the results. It is also recommended that a 'mock' Viva Voce examination be arranged for the student by the Principal Supervisor.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) RIGHTS/COPYRIGHT IN RELATION TO STUDENTS

As a general principle, UCL recognises the student as owner of any IP they produce while a registered student of UCL. This principle may be subject to variation in the case of collaborative or externally sponsored work, or other exceptional circumstances. See [UCL's Policy Statement on Intellectual Property Rights/Copyright](#) for further information.

PLAGIARISM AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

UCL expects all its researchers to act in a professional manner in relation to their work. Regulations concerning plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, and other research misconduct are set out in the [academic regulations](#) and guidelines for research degree students

See UCL's [Policy Statement on Plagiarism](#) for further details.

RESOLVING PROBLEMS

From time to time, students encounter problems of an academic, administrative or other nature with which they need assistance. Research students should raise awareness of problems initially with their supervisory team. If they wish to discuss matters outside the supervisory team, the student should raise the matter with their Departmental Graduate Tutor, and thereafter their Faculty Graduate Tutor.

If the matter remains unresolved, students are encouraged to contact the UCL Student Mediator. The UCL [Student Mediator](#) has the authority, on behalf of the Provost, to mediate, to act relatively informally and speedily, and propose practical solutions to help resolve matters. Students may also find it helpful to approach the Students' Union Advice Service whose staff have considerable experience of advising and supporting students.

Note: there are two grounds upon which students may have their registration terminated

– a serious disciplinary offence

see [Disciplinary Code and Procedure in Respect of Students](#) in the UCL Academic Manual

or

– academic insufficiency

see [Guidance on Addressing Poor Performance in Research Students](#) in the Academic Manual.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

For academic complaints, UCL has a formal Student Complaints Procedure for use in cases which cannot be resolved by informal discussion with the Departmental Graduate Tutor, Faculty Graduate Tutor and/or Student Mediator. Complaints should be submitted as soon as possible when a problem arises and within two months of the problem arising if at all possible.

For the UCL Student Complaints Procedure, see the UCL Academic Manual, [Chapter 6; Student Casework Framework, Section 8](#).

For complaints about bullying and/or harassment by members of UCL staff, see the [UCL Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

Complaints of this nature should be submitted to HR via Report and Support.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

UCL has a zero tolerance approach to all bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct and hate crime. If you are subject to such behaviour or witness such behaviour from anyone on campus, there are many ways you can seek support:

- UCL's [Report & Support tool](#): anonymous and non-anonymous reporting.
- UCL [Student Mediator](#)
- a student officer in the Students' Union UCL (UCLU) or the trained staff of the UCLU Rights and Advice Centre
- UCL [Dignity Advisors](#)
- Your Supervisory Team, Department Graduate Tutor, Faculty Graduate Tutor, Head of Department, or any other trusted member of staff in your department or faculty
- UCL [harassment and bullying policy](#).

RESEARCH DEGREES – PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

MPhil/PhD

The MPhil/PhD programme is normally three years of full-time research (in some cases four years), or the part-time equivalent, with the thesis submitted at the end of this period, or as soon as possible within a year. If the thesis is not submitted within three years then normally fourth year students register as Completing Research Students (CRS). See page 20 for full eligibility requirements.

Length of Study for the PhD		
	Full-time	Part-time
Programme of Study	3 years	5 years
CRS	1 additional year	2 additional years

Upgrade/transfer from MPhil to PhD

Students intending to study for a PhD are normally admitted for the MPhil degree and, upon satisfactory progress, transferred later to PhD registration; the upgrade procedure for registration for a PhD degree is an important step in their programme. The purpose of the upgrade is to assess the student's progress and ability to complete their PhD programme in a reasonable time frame. The assessment should not be confined to the research material presented by the student but should also consider the student's demonstrable academic and generic skills.

Your Principal Supervisor will inform you about the procedure for transfer from MPhil to PhD, initiate the transfer at an appropriate time, provide guidance in the drafting of the Upgrade Report, arrange a meeting of the Upgrade Panel (usually chaired by the Subsidiary Supervisor) to assess the Report and orally examine you (viva). The Upgrade Panel will then advise the Departmental Graduate Tutor and you of the result and give full reasons for any failure to meet the required standards.

Note: where Transfer of Registration has not been completed within 18 months of first registration for full-time students (and typically no later than 30 months part-time), the Principal Supervisor should draw the situation to the attention of the Departmental Graduate Tutor for consideration as to whether the student should write up for the MPhil and not proceed to the PhD, or be referred to the academic insufficiency procedure.

Detailed guidelines, including information on criteria, process, and outcomes, can be found on the UCL [Student pages](#).

Professional Doctorates

DPsych, DClinPsy, DEdPsy, DEdPsy, DDent, Doc Orth

Students registered for professional doctorates are normally registered for a three year programme of study full-time, at the end of which CRS status can apply.

Professional doctorates require the completion of a specified number of taught components and (where applicable) practicum assignments in addition to a research thesis, and may require attendance at lectures.

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

EngD

EngD students are registered for a four year programme of study, which is a combination of taught modules, research training and research, at the end of which CRS status can apply.

The EngD was developed to provide business and technical expertise to complement doctoral level research skills. About three-quarters of the programme is in the form of an industrial research project carried out within a company. The remainder of the programme involves taught courses in technical, business, managerial and personal skills.

Students registered on an MRes associated with an EngD are required to achieve the award of the MRes before being allowed to register on the 3-year EngD. All other students register initially for the 4-year EngD and undertake a first year consisting of taught courses, professional and research training, group project work, and research.

The EngD Supervisory team often includes industrial Supervisors, who must also satisfy the requirements laid down for UCL Subsidiary Supervisors.

The award of the degree is dependent on the thesis and the final oral examination. The thesis must not be submitted until all other elements of the programme are successfully completed and it must meet the same award requirements as those prescribed for the UCL PhD degree.

EdD

The Doctor in Education (EdD) aims to foster professional development through research as well as meeting the requirements of rigour and originality expected of a doctorate. It includes assessed taught modules, research-focused workshops and supervised original research at the end of which CRS status can apply.

EdD students are registered part-time for four to seven years. The first year of the programme consists of three taught modules. During the second and third years of the programme the student will develop further skills drawing on the Faculty of Education Research Training Programme or UCL Doctoral Skills Programme.

During the second year of the programme students must successfully complete a portfolio of practitioner research (portfolio reflective statement) before developing a proposal for their Institution-Focused Study (IFS). Students registered from 01 September 2019 must achieve a minimum of two B grades across these four elements i.e. the three taught modules and the portfolio reflective statement in order to progress to the IFS phase. Students who do not achieve the progression requirement will be awarded the postgraduate diploma practitioner research. The IFS is developed over 12 months and is submitted in the middle of the third year of study.

After successfully completing the IFS, students will develop a thesis proposal and complete a formal review prior to thesis (EdD Upgrade) normally by the end of the autumn term of their fourth year of study. Students registered from 01 September 2019 must achieve at least a grade B in their IFS to be permitted to submit a thesis proposal for EdD upgrade. Students who do not meet this progression requirement or any students who are unsuccessful on more than one occasion in their EdD upgrade, will be awarded MEd Practitioner Research. As the EdD research is linked to the student's professional role, there is an expectation that a contribution to professional knowledge/practice will be made. The award of the degree is dependent on the successful completion of the EdD thesis and viva defence.

MD(Res)

MD(Res) students are registered for a two-year programme of study (full-time or part-time), at the end of which CRS status can apply.

The MD(Res) is aimed specifically at individuals in clinical practice, any branch of medicine, or surgery or medical or dental science, who wish to undertake a piece of supervised research associated with their employment. To be eligible for registration for the MD(Res) degree, a candidate must have obtained the MBBS degree or some other registrable primary qualification in Medicine and be eligible for full registration or hold limited registration with the General Medical Council (GMC); or have obtained the BDS degree or hold an equivalent dental qualification.

MRes

Some MRes programmes are stand-alone degrees, but others are preparation for an EngD or PhD programme (1+3 programmes) in which students achieving the award of the MRes are then able to progress to the associated research degree programme.

The MRes programme is normally 1 year full-time, a combination of taught modules, research training and a significant research project submitted at the end of this period.

The timings listed in this Code do not apply to the MRes Programmes which typically have a series of shorter projects with appropriate deadlines, and whose topic and timescales should be agreed as quickly as possible.

Typical Timetable for a Full-time PhD Student

<p>Before 1 month</p>	<p>Research project agreed</p> <p>Assignment of all supervisors (at least two).</p> <p>Discussion and agreement of strict timetable for supervisory meetings and progress reports.</p> <p>Provision of necessary research equipment and facilities, as well as identification of research support needed (e.g. from a postdoc, courses, or other support outside the supervisory team).</p>
<p>3 months</p>	<p>Agreement of thesis work plan, research methods and timetable (i.e. research proposal).</p> <p>Agreement of initial personal development plan including planned attendance of Doctoral Skills Development Programme.</p>
<p>12 months</p>	<p>Agreement of research and development plan for second year of study and transfer/upgrade of registration from MPhil to PhD (at 9–18 months, but as early as reasonable).</p>
<p>24 months</p>	<p>Agreement of thesis structure and strict timetable for thesis writing and submission.</p>
<p>30 months (not less than 4 months before expected date of submission)</p>	<p>Entry for examination.</p> <p>Nomination of Examiners.</p>
<p>36 months (48 months for 4-year programme)</p>	<p>Submission of thesis.</p>
<p>36-48 months</p>	<p>Completing Research Student status (if necessary). (see page 20).</p>



UCL Doctoral School
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