

## **Regulation 23**

### **Masters Degrees By Research**

#### **A. Introduction**

1. In this regulation “you”, “your” and “yours” means a student registered for a research degree awarded by City, University of London. “We”, “us” and “our” means the University or any of its staff, depending on the context.
2. The regulation sets out the core principles, structures and process that underpin the award of a research degree, aligned with Level 7 of the national [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) (FHEQ), by the University.
3. This regulation should be read in conjunction with, in particular:
  - Framework for Research Degrees, which sets out the scheme of delegation between University Senate, the City Doctoral College and academic Schools and Departments
  - The Programme Specification for the masters degree by research in the area of study
  - Supplementary policies and guidance, as contained in the University’s webpages.

#### **B. Award of a degree**

4. City will confer one of the following awards to candidates who successfully complete the requirements of an approved programme of research:
  - i. Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
  - ii. Master of Musical Arts (MMA)
  - iii. Master of Research (MRes)
  - iv. Master of Arts by Research (MA)
5. The awards listed above may be supplemented by the addition of a named award title. Where two or more disciplinary specialisms feature in the named award title, there should be an appropriate balance of emphasis on each subject area. For instance, approximately equal balance for a joint (A and B) title and, for major/minor (A with B) titles, the minor discipline accounts for at least a quarter of the programme.
6. Where more than one named award title is outlined, there shall be tangible and explicit differentiation in programme aims, structure and/or research emphasis that is specific to each named award. The University Programme Approval Committee will ultimately confirm the appropriateness of award title(s).
7. Joint and dual awards for masters degrees by research are to be made in accordance with any memoranda of agreement with a partner awarding institution.
8. The approval of new awards and development of new programme schemes is delegated by Senate to the University Programme Approval Committee, with oversight by the Doctoral College Board of Studies. The Committee and Board can, at their discretion, refer matters to Senate for discussion.

9. The University's Framework and Regulations for masters degrees by research apply equally to partnership and validation provision unless different and specific arrangements have been agreed as part of the formal agreement between institutions or as approved via the relevant Course Board or Board of Study that oversees the partnered or validated programme.

### **C. Admissions**

10. This regulation should be applied in conjunction with:
  - i. [Senate Regulation 14](#) on Admission of Students and Occasional Students;
  - ii. The University's [Admissions Policy for Research Degrees](#);
  - iii. Any other policies for admission which cut across all City students, under the responsibility of the University's Admissions Office.
11. You must follow all general entrance requirements, as set out in the above documents, along with any research programme-specific requirements as set out in the programme specification or the University's online prospectus.
12. You are normally expected to hold, or achieve before admission, an upper second-class or first class honours degree or an equivalent overseas qualification. If you are not a graduate of City or currently enrolled at City, you will be required to send an original or certified copy of the certification for your qualification(s) to the School or Department.
13. If you hold other non-standard qualifications or equivalent professional experience, they will be approved on a case-by-case basis, with the departmental Senior Tutor for Research making a recommendation to the School Research Programmes Committee and Doctoral College Board of Studies for consideration.
14. If you satisfy the requirements for admission, your candidature is also dependent on us being satisfied with your research subject and that we have the appropriate resources, facilities, and supervisory arrangements in place to allow your enrolment.
15. You should follow the application procedures as set out on the programme webpages and programme specification for the programme. The School in which the programme is based will, provided it is satisfied with your academic fitness for the programme of research, recommend your application for admission to the School Course Officer and Doctoral College Board of Studies, along with its nomination of a supervisor or supervisors and such other information as required. This shall include a short description of the subject of research, and recommendations on the category and effective date of registration. If you are already registered for the Degree of Master of Philosophy at City, the effective date of registration shall normally be the date on which you were first registered for that degree.

### **D. Mode of Study/Category of Registration**

16. You can enroll on either a full-time or part-time basis.
17. If you are a full-time candidate, you are expected to dedicate a full working week (35 hours) to your masters programme on average throughout the year, except when on approved annual leave.

18. A full-time candidate may, with the permission of their internal supervisor and Head of Department, undertake additional paid work providing that this is not detrimental to the progress of your PhD. Such work should amount to no more than an average of six hours per week across the academic year. Note that student visa holders may be subject to additional limits on the amount of work that may be undertaken and you should check with the International Student Advice team before engaging in any such work if you are unclear about the government limits currently in force.
19. If you are part-time candidate, you are expected to dedicate at least 16 hours (equivalent to two working days) to your masters programme on average throughout the year, except when on approved annual leave.
20. You can change your mode of study from full-time or part-time, or vice versa, during your period of study. This will usually only be allowed once, and not in your final year of study. Where this is a requirement of your funder, their rules will apply.
21. The duration of each masters programme is set out in the following table:

Degree	Minimum length of candidature		Maximum length of candidature	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
MPhilMMA MRes MA	1 year	2 years	3 years	5 years

22. Your period of candidature ends when you submit your thesis for examination.
23. If you fail to submit your thesis for examination by the maximum period of candidature, you will be deemed to have withdrawn from your degree.
24. You can register for a masters programme in one of the following categories:
- a) Internal Candidates**  
You are registered with City and receive supervision by staff appointed by City.
- b) External Candidates**  
You are registered with City and receive supervision by external staff, recognised by City for this purpose. External candidates have at least one supervisor from City, except where the research programme is delivered by a validated partner institution.
- c) Staff Candidates**  
Staff candidates of all categories are members of staff of City or retired members of staff. Staff candidates are subject to the same minimum and maximum periods of candidature as any other candidate registered under these Regulations. Supervision arrangements for staff candidates are the same as those for internal candidates.
25. If you are registered as an external candidate, you can be based overseas, provided there are the appropriate resources, facilities and supervisory support to carry out your research satisfactorily to completion. You are required to spend a minimum of four days per year at City, to include meeting with your internal supervisor and giving a presentation on your research. City does not offer research degrees entirely by distance learning.

## E. Category of study

26. Your Masters Degree by Research will fall into one of the following categories of study:

### a) By major thesis

You register for and pursue a programme of research study (which may include composition and performance), which may include published work, on either a part-time or full-time basis.

### b) By structured components

You register for, and pursue, a programme of structured research study consisting of a variety of masters level components (which may include composition, performance, and a portfolio of original creative work) on either a part-time or full-time basis.

27. If you are studying for a Master of Musical Arts (MMA), you should also submit performance recordings in addition to the above.

28. Modules contained within the Master of Research (MRes) are also assessed through a combination of presentation, examinations and coursework.

29. Your conferred award will not usually indicate under which category you fulfilled the requirements of your programme of study.

## F. Supervision

30. You will be allocated a supervisory team, nominated by your School to the Doctoral College Board of Studies. Your supervisory team will consist of at least two members of City staff. Where you are undertaking research at or in conjunction with another institution, industrial partner, or commercial organization, an additional supervisor can be appointed to the team. Supervisors based at City or outside of City will be distinguished as Internal and External Supervisors, respectively.

31. Where you are undertaking research at or in conjunction with another institution, industrial partner, or commercial organization, you may alternatively have a Consultant designated, who does not have a contractual relationship with the University but may provide specialist advice on a particular area of research which is outside the expertise of the supervisory team.

32. Your first supervisor will be an academic member of City staff, in accordance with the criteria for a Category A Supervisor as set out in the University's [policy on the approval of doctoral degree supervisors](#). Their employment contract must be valid for the typical duration of candidature; staff on probation or a professor emeritus may not act as first supervisor. External supervisors may not act as the first supervisor.

33. Your second supervisor will be either an academic member of City staff or affiliated to the University with a formal contract, in accordance with the criteria set out for at least a Category B Supervisor as set out in the University's [policy on the approval of doctoral degree supervisors](#).

34. New supervisors, changes to a supervisor's category, and changes to the supervisory team during the period of candidature are approved by the Doctoral College Board of Studies

35. If you are taking a research degree which includes a substantial taught element, you will be assigned tutor(s) relevant for that phase of the degree. These tutors may additionally act as supervisors for the research phase, where they meet the University's criteria for approval as doctoral (research) degree supervisors.
36. The supervisory team is responsible for supervision of the design and progress of the research project and for providing academic advice, as well as ensuring required administrative processes are completed during the period of candidature.
37. In the first three months of candidature, you must complete a Training Plan in conjunction with your supervisors. Throughout your programme, you are also expected to participate as appropriate in the compulsory and optional elements of the University's Researcher Development Programme, as specified by Schools and the Doctoral College in relation to your programme of study.

## **G. Progression**

38. You are required to (re)-register for your programme annually and must undertake progression reviews at fixed points during your period of candidature. Your first review will take place at 6 months, and you may not be withdrawn because of this review. Following this, you will complete an Annual Progress Review. If, following a second attempt at an Annual Progress Review, your progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, your School may recommend your withdrawal to the Doctoral College Board of Studies.
39. Your Department or School may review your progress at any other time. If progress is deemed unsatisfactory and, after warning and an opportunity to improve, it remains insufficient, your School may recommend your withdrawal to the Doctoral College Board of Studies.
40. You may appeal against a decision made in relation to your progression and, where appropriate, withdrawal in accordance with [Senate Regulation 21](#).

## **H. Transfer of registration**

41. If you wish transfer to the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD or equivalent), with the support of your supervisor, you may apply for permission subject to the approval of your School and Doctoral College Board of Studies. Your period of candidature to date will be counted towards your period of candidature required for the Doctor or Philosophy, though your previous registration will be withdrawn.
42. If you wish transfer to a different course of study leading to a different Masters degree or to a Diplomas, you may apply for permission subject to the approval of your School and Doctoral College Board of Studies. Your period of candidature to date will be counted towards your maximum period of registration for your new programme, though your previous registration will be withdrawn.

## **I. Interruption of Studies**

43. You are expected to remain registered and have a continuous period of candidature, except in circumstances where an interruption of studies is approved by the Doctoral

College Board of Studies in accordance with the [University's policy on Interruption of Studies \(Research Degrees\)](#)

44. Candidates for a masters degree by research will typically only be permitted up to two periods of interruption of between 3-12 months each to ensure the currency of the research project. These limits do not apply to periods of parental leave. If you are holding a studentship, the rules on interruptions stipulated by your funding body will apply.
45. A period of interruption will not count towards the maximum period of candidature.
46. You will neither receive supervision during a period of interruption nor be expected to complete scheduled progression milestones, but you will retain access to IT and library facilities.
47. If you are a student visa holder, an interruption of studies may affect your ability to remain in the UK as per the conditions of your visa, and you should discuss your circumstances with the University's Visa Advice team before applying for an interruption.

#### **J. Extension of Candidature**

48. You are expected to complete your research project and submit for examination within the minimum and maximum periods of candidature for your intended award. In a limited set of circumstances, you may be permitted by the Doctoral College Board of Studies to extend your period of candidature in accordance with the University's [policy on Extension of Candidature \(Research Degrees\)](#).
49. Extensions of candidature will normally only be permitted for six months in the first instance, renewable on one further occasion.
50. We will take into consideration any limits or conditions placed on extensions by your funding body (if you are a studentship holder) and their expectation of submission within a specific funded period, as well as any penalties or sanctions that may apply to the University from the funding body if we allow you to extend your candidature.

#### **K. Notification of Withdrawal**

51. You may choose to withdraw from your masters degree by research, in accordance with our [policy on Notification of Withdrawal](#). You will be liable for fees until such point as your withdrawal is approved by the Doctoral College Board of Studies.
52. We may also initiate your withdrawal, subject to approval by the Doctoral College Board of Studies, because of:
  - i. the recommendation of an Annual Progress Review due to poor academic progress, having been given a second opportunity to improve and resubmit for the same milestone;
  - ii. the recommendation of a progress review convened by the School due to significant academic concerns;
  - iii. the outcome of an academic misconduct or research misconduct panel;
  - iv. non-academic misconduct, in accordance with [Senate Regulation 13](#);
  - v. lack of contact/engagement with the University (over 3 months);
  - vi. failure to submit the thesis for examination by the end of the maximum period of candidature.

53. You may appeal a decision to be withdrawn in accordance with [Senate Regulation 21 on appeals for Research Programmes](#).

## **L. Submission**

54. You may submit your thesis for examination, in accordance with our policy on [Submission and Resubmission of Thesis](#), once the minimum period of candidature for your masters degree by research has elapsed and before your maximum period of candidature. Where a period of extension has been approved, this will be added to your maximum period of candidature.
55. You should notify your department of your intention to submit at least three months before your intended date of submission, in accordance with our [Policy on Notification of Intention to Submit](#).
56. You will normally submit with the endorsement of your supervisors; however, you may submit for examination without their support.
57. Your thesis should be formatted in accordance with [Senate Regulation 25](#), except where alternative formats of submission have been approved. In most circumstances, you will be required to submit an electronic copy but may also be required to submit up to two soft-bound printed copies. Where the format of your thesis does not suit online examination, you may be required to provide to your School office two soft-bound copies for the use of the examiners, formatted in accordance with Senate Regulation 25.
58. For the Master in Musical Arts (MMA), performance recordings should be submitted in digital (MP3/FLAC) format.
59. Your submission must include a short abstract comprising not more than 400 words and formatted within each copy of the submission. Your abstract shall provide an adequate and informative summary of the thesis and be in a form suitable for publication by City.
60. Where published papers are submitted, including paper manuscripts in preparation and under review, your submission shall include a paper which presents a reasoned argument in support of the published papers. This should place the work in its overall context, demonstrate the coherence and contemporary relevance of the work, describe the implications for future research and critically evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. Theses must be submitted in English. If you are submitting published papers, you must provide copies in English of any papers published in another language. Work for which a degree or other qualification has been awarded may not be submitted.
61. Your thesis will normally be made freely available through City Research Online (CRO). In exceptional circumstances access may be restricted on commercial grounds, pending publication or patent application, or to maintain confidentiality. The period of restriction will not normally exceed three years but may be renewed subject to reapproval. All restrictions must be approved by the University Library, using the Thesis Deposit Form.
62. Where you are submitting joint work, either as a thesis, published papers or performance records, it must be accompanied by a [Statement of co-authors of joint publications](#), incorporated into the thesis format, countersigned by your collaborator(s), which indicates clearly that a substantial part is original work on your part.



63. Your thesis should not exceed these word counts:

- i. MPhilMMA/MRes/MA – 50,000 words

These word counts include: footnotes, tables and figures. They do not include supporting materials, appendices, and bibliography.

Material that is submitted in appendices or other supplements should support the arguments made in the main body of the thesis, not extend them. The examiners may set aside information contained in appendices when determining whether the thesis should pass or not.

In some circumstances you may request prior approval to exceed these word counts from the Doctoral College Board of Studies; a thesis submitted in excess of these word counts without approval may be required to be resubmitted.

## **M. Examination**

64. Having received your notice of intention to submit, your supervisors will nominate examiners to the Doctoral College Board of Studies for approval, in accordance with the policy on [Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees](#).

65. All candidates will have at least two examiners, of whom at least one will be an external examiner. For staff candidates there will be at least two examiners, both of whom should be external examiners. For City degrees, examiners from other University of London member institutions count as external examiners.

66. Internal examiners must at no point have been a member of your supervisory team. If they have provided pastoral support, or if their own work is a focus of the research project to the extent that it would cause a conflict of interest or a lack of objectivity, then they should not be appointed to the examining team.

67. External examiners should not have had any co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the research project. If their own work is a focus of the research project to the extent it would cause a conflict of interest or a lack of objectivity, then they should not be appointed to the examining team.

68. You will be required to present yourself for an oral (viva voce) examination on the subject of your thesis or published papers unless, by permission of Senate and the recommendation of the Examiners, you are exempt from the oral examination. Such oral examination will typically be face-to-face but may, under certain circumstances, be conducted online.

69. An independent Chair will be appointed to oversee your oral (viva voce) examination. The role of the Chair is to ensure that the operation of the assessment process is rigorous, fair, reliable and consistent. The Chair plays no role in the evaluation of your thesis nor the determination of the outcome of the assessment. For more information on the role of the Chair, please click [here](#).

70. A thesis submitted for a masters degree by research should demonstrate:

- i. an in-depth and advanced knowledge of the subject, informed by current practice, scholarship and research



- ii. critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject
- iii. a critical assessment of relevant literature together with description and justification of methods used during the research
- iv. demonstration of understanding of relevant matters relating to research integrity and research ethics
- v. mastery of critical skills while discussing the findings of the research

71. If your examiners determine in their preliminary reports that your thesis is not ready to proceed to examination, this will be recorded as a first submission but you will be permitted to resubmit your thesis in a revised form within 12 months. For the second submission you will be required to present yourself for oral examination.

## **N. Examination Outcomes**

72. The Examiners may agree to recommend one of the following examination outcomes:

- a) that you are awarded an appropriate masters degree by research drawn from Clause 4 of this regulation;
- b) that a masters level award be made subject to minor amendments being carried out to the satisfaction of the internal and/or external examiner within 3 months, without the need for presentation for a further oral examination;
- c) that a masters level award be made subject to major amendments being carried out to the satisfaction of the internal and/or external examiners within 6 months without the need for presentation for a further oral examination;
- d) that you be permitted to resubmit your thesis in a revised form within 12 months with or without the need for presentation for a further oral examination;
- e) that you are not awarded a degree.

Where your programme has a substantial taught component, this examination outcome is also contingent on satisfactory completion of all taught elements.

73. You must satisfy the examiner in both the thesis and the oral examination. The examiners may fail you on the thesis, the oral examination, or both. The examiners may recommend re-examination only in the part that you have failed.

74. If you are permitted to amend or resubmit your thesis or published papers, you must do so within the timeframe recommended by the Examiners drawn from the examination outcomes listed in Clause 71. Under exceptional circumstances, the examiners may recommend a longer period than that stipulated by Clause 71.

75. Where the student's thesis meets the criteria for the specified award and the student satisfies the examiners in all elements of the assessment, the examiners will make a formal recommendation for award to the Doctoral College Board of Studies.

76. If you fail to make the amendments in the timeframe specified or the Examiners are unable to confirm that the amendments are satisfactory, the procedure under 'Resubmission and Re-Examination of Thesis' below will apply.

## **O. Resubmission and re-examination of thesis**

77. The term 'resubmission' refers to instances where you have been assessed and are required to amend and resubmit your thesis for further examination (with or without the need for an additional viva voce). Except in certain cases of appeal, re-examination will normally be undertaken by the original examiners.
78. Following resubmission, the examiners may agree to recommend one of the following outcomes:
- a) that you are awarded an appropriate masters level degree drawn from Clause 4 of these regulations;
  - b) that you are not awarded a degree.
79. The examiners have the discretion to permit an additional 4 weeks for you to make further minor amendments before making a final decision. Minor amendments may include the following:
- i. Typographical errors;
  - ii. Minor amendments to text, references or other diagrams, or;
  - iii. More extensive corrections that do not require significant reworking of the intellectual content of the thesis.
80. If you are required to resubmit your thesis within 12 months you will continue to have access to relevant City facilities and will be entitled to have minimal supervision during this period. Such supervision will amount to no more than one draft of your thesis being read and commented on by at least one member of your supervisory team.

## **P. Notification of Outcome**

81. If the Examiners wish to advise you orally and informally of their decision at the conclusion of their deliberations following the examination, it is on the basis that the result is not formal and final until confirmed and notified by a letter from the University to you.
82. A letter will be sent to you officially informing you of your result.

## **Q. Appeals against the outcome of an examination**

83. You may request a review of the Examiners' decision in accordance with City's Appeal Regulations for Research Programmes (see [Senate Regulation 21](#)).
84. You are expected to pursue any grievances concerning the adequacy of supervisory or other arrangements which arise during the period of study through City's Complaints Regulations (see [Senate Regulation 26](#)).

## **R. Posthumous Award**

85. Posthumous Awards are approved by the Director of Student and Academic Services, upon the recommendation from Doctoral College Board of Studies, on behalf of Senate. All decisions are reported to Senate. The Doctoral College Board of Studies may

recommend that the award of a posthumous research degree be made where a candidate has died:

- a) after the thesis has been examined but before the oral examination can be held. In such a case the Board of Studies shall consider the material presented and any preliminary judgment of the examiners. Provided that the Board of Studies is satisfied that the work is the candidate's own, and that it meets the standard normally required for the proposed research degree to be awarded, it may recommend that an appropriate award be made.
- b) before submitting the thesis. In such a case the Board of Studies shall consider the available evidence of the research completed to date by the candidate. Such evidence shall normally be provided by the candidate's main supervisor. Examiners shall be nominated and approved by the Doctoral College Board of Studies. The Examiners shall be advised of the circumstances under which the material is being examined and shall be asked to provide an independent assessment of the material presented. The Examiners shall be asked for an opinion on whether the quality of the research is sufficient to warrant the award of a research degree. The following criteria must be satisfied:
  - enough of the research project must have been completed to allow a proper assessment to be made of the scope of the thesis;
  - the standard of the research work completed must be of that normally required for the award of the degree in question, and must demonstrate the candidate's grasp of the subject;
  - the written material available must demonstrate the candidate's ability to write a thesis of the required standard.

86. We may award a posthumous research degree drawn from Clause 4 of these regulations. The Doctoral College Board of Studies will make a recommendation to the Director of Student and Academic Services, where this is the case, who may approve on behalf of Senate

changes were last approved at Senate in May 2022