



University of  
St Andrews

## Postgraduate research senate regulations

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# POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SENATE REGULATIONS

All policies directly referred to in the Senate Regulations can be found via the [Governance Zone](#).

In addition to the regulations set out below, the [Overarching Regulations](#) also apply.

## Admissions

1. Students become eligible for an award from the University of St Andrews only if:
  - a. For postgraduate research programmes that do not contain credit bearing elements, they have spent at least 50% of the prescribed study period as a matriculated student of the University; or
  - b. For postgraduate research programmes containing credit bearing elements, they have earned at least 50% of the credits contributing to the award in modules offered by the University as well as having spent at least 50% of the prescribed study period as a matriculated student of the University.
2. Where a programme contains credit bearing elements, the policies on [Recognition of Prior Learning](#) or [Advanced Standing Credits](#) may apply.

## Matriculation

3. All postgraduate research students shall be allocated supervision in accordance with the policy on [Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students](#) and both students and supervisors must comply with the requirements set out in that policy.
4. Students and their principal supervisors shall agree a training programme as set out in the [Research Skills Training](#) policy. This may include participation in modules on either an assessed or unassessed basis.

## Programmes and Awards

5. Unless otherwise stated in an agreement with another institution, postgraduate research degrees shall be awarded to candidates who have met the programme requirements within the allocated time period, as described below, satisfied the examination committee and fulfilled the fee requirement.

**Table 1**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Prescribed full-time study period</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
MSt(Res) and MSc(Res)	12 months	A thesis of up to 30,000 words
MPhil	24 months	A thesis of up to 60,000 words
MD	24 months	A thesis of up to 50,000 words
PhD	36 months	A thesis of up to 80,000 words
DPerf	36 months	120 credits of supplementary studies <b>and</b> A portfolio of professional projects <b>and</b> A thesis of up to 15,000 words

Award	Prescribed full-time study period	Requirements
DProf	36 months	120 credits of supplementary studies <b>and</b> A portfolio of professional projects <b>and</b> An integrative critical analysis of up to 15,000 words
EngD	48 months	A thesis or portfolio of up to 80,000 words <b>and</b> A programme of supplementary study amounting to approximately 25% of the programme

6. Where part-time study is approved, the study periods will be adjusted accordingly in line with the [Length of studies and associated fees for postgraduate research students](#) policy. The minimum engagement for part-time study is 50% of the full-time equivalent.
7. The earliest a postgraduate research student can submit their final assessment is after matriculating into the final year of study and paying all required fees.
8. Students who are unable to complete within the prescribed study period will be allowed a continuation period as defined in the [Length of studies and associated fees for postgraduate research students](#) policy. In exceptional circumstances students may request an extension period as described in the same policy.
9. Postgraduate research degrees must meet the standards below, in accordance with the [QAA Characteristics Statements](#).

**Table 2**

Award	Required standard
MSt(Res) and MSc(Res)	The thesis is expected to constitute an original contribution to knowledge consistent with what may reasonably be expected of a diligent student after one year of full-time research. It should be clearly written, well argued and should indicate a satisfactory knowledge of the field of study. The thesis will give evidence of the candidate's capacity for independent research.
MPhil	The thesis is expected to constitute an original contribution to knowledge consistent with what may reasonably be expected of a diligent student after two years of full-time research. It should be clearly written, well argued and should indicate a satisfactory knowledge of the field of study. The thesis shall give evidence of the candidate's capacity for independent research.
MD	The thesis or portfolio shall constitute a significant and original contribution to knowledge or understanding consistent with what may reasonably be expected of a diligent student after two years of full-time study. It should be clearly written, well argued and should indicate a satisfactory knowledge of the field of study. It should contain material worthy of publication in some form.
PhD, EngD	The thesis or portfolio shall constitute a significant and original contribution to knowledge or understanding consistent with what

Award	Required standard
	may reasonably be expected of a diligent student after three years of full-time study. It should be clearly written, well-argued and should indicate a satisfactory knowledge of the field of study. It should contain material worthy of publication in some form.
DPerf	A body of work judged by the examiners to represent an outstanding level of professional development by a performing artist. The work will make a significant contribution to the candidate's chosen artistic sphere. The candidate will be able to articulate the context for the work and how it enhances their artistic practice.
DProf	A portfolio of work judged by the examiners to represent an outstanding level of professional practice development by an established practitioner, during the course of full-time employment. The work will make a significant contribution to both the candidate's chosen professional sphere and the understanding of practice in their organizational context. The candidate will therefore be able to articulate the context for the work and how it enhances professional practice.

### Progression

10. All research students will undergo an annual progress review in accordance with the policy on [Progress Reviews and Termination of Studies for Postgraduate Research Students](#).
11. A student may request to move to a different postgraduate research degree in accordance with the [Postgraduate Change of Registration](#) policy.
12. If serious concerns emerge regarding a student's progress, their studies may be terminated, or they may be re-registered to a lower degree, in accordance with the Progress Reviews and Termination of Studies for Postgraduate Research Students policy.

### Presentation of a research thesis

13. All postgraduate research degrees will be assessed in accordance with the [Assessment of Postgraduate Research Students](#) policy.
14. A thesis should normally take the form of a specially composed monograph. A written thesis may be replaced with a different form of assessment, in all or in part, which has equivalent academic standing. Alternative forms of assessment must be approved as part of the programme requirements or by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost). In exceptional circumstances the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) may give permission for the thesis to be presented in a different medium.
15. Candidates for a doctoral degree may apply to be examined on the basis of a portfolio of published work as per the requirements in [Annex 3](#).
16. The final submission for a research degree shall be presented in English. In exceptional circumstances, or for doctoral degrees in the School of Modern Languages, the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) may give permission for another language to be used. In the case of a thesis written in a foreign language there shall be a summary in English of between 2000 and 3000 words in addition to the abstract in English.
17. Reprints of published papers are not permitted in a thesis, but work previously published by the student may be incorporated in the thesis as described in the [Assessment of Postgraduate Research Students](#) policy.

18. If contributions from multiple authors and/or researchers are included in the submission, the candidate must acknowledge the contributions of others and indicate the level of contribution in the three critical areas of conception, execution, and writing.
19. An abstract of up to 300 words in English must be included with the submission.
20. The introduction of the thesis shall be prefaced by:
  - a. a declaration that the thesis has been composed by the candidate, and that the work of which it is a record has been done by that candidate, and that it has not been accepted in any previous application for any degree;
  - b. a statement of the date of the candidate's admission as a research student;
  - c. a statement by the supervisor that the Regulations have been fulfilled;
  - d. a statement of access or embargo to the thesis;
  - e. where a third party has been utilised to correct the written language in the thesis, a statement indicating that such assistance has been used.

### **Examination**

21. The assessment of research degrees consists of a thorough review of the final submission, followed by an oral examination where required or deemed necessary by the committee. Assessments shall be conducted in accordance with the rules set out in the [Assessment of Postgraduate Research Students](#) policy.
22. MSc(Res) and MSt(Res) degrees will be assessed by a panel of at least two internal examiners and moderated by an external examiner. An oral examination is not required, although the committee may request one if they deem it necessary.
23. Doctoral candidates must undergo an oral examination. In exceptional circumstances, and only with the express approval of the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost), the oral examination for a doctoral candidate may be waived. Oral examinations may be waived for research master's degrees, if it is the unanimous opinion of the examining committee that the thesis should be accepted.
24. The examiners shall recommend to the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) one of the outcomes set out in [Annex 1](#).
25. Where corrections are requested following an initial examination, the correction period will start only once the candidate has been informed of the decision of the examining committee.
26. In exceptional circumstances, or for students studying part-time, an extension to the period permitted for corrections may be approved by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost).
27. The convenor of the examining committee is responsible for reviewing and accepting minor revisions which do not require a candidate to resubmit the thesis.
28. The Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost), once satisfied that all the requirements of the Regulations have been observed, shall convey the joint recommendation of the examiners to the Senatus Academicus.
29. The candidate shall, unless previously agreed, provide an approved electronic copy of the final thesis in an approved format to the University Library. MSt(Res) and MSc(Res) students are not required to submit a copy of the final thesis to the Library.

### **Resubmission**

30. Where students are required to revise and resubmit their thesis, they shall be permitted an increased word limit as detailed below:

**Table 3**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Resubmission word limit for entire submission</b>
MSt(Res) and MSc(Res)	35,000 words
MPhil	70,000 words
MD	60,000 words
PhD, EngD, DProf	90,000 words
DPerf	17,000

31. On resubmission of the thesis and payment of the appropriate fee, the examining committee shall be reconvened and a further examination conducted. The examining committee may waive the requirement for an oral examination if it is the unanimous opinion of the examining committee that the thesis be accepted.
32. If an oral examination is required, the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) may recommend the appointment of an appropriate neutral third-party observer.
33. If the original examining committee cannot be reconvened, the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) shall have the power to appoint a new committee to examine the thesis.
34. The examining committee shall make one of the recommendations set out in [Annex 2](#).

## **Annex 1: Postgraduate Research Examination Outcomes**

1. In an examination for a research masters degree, the examiners shall recommend to the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost):
  - a. That the thesis be approved and the intended degree be awarded with no corrections; or
  - b. That the thesis be approved and the intended degree be awarded, subject to the making of any purely typographical corrections or revisions; or
  - c. That the thesis be approved and the intended degree awarded, subject to minor corrections to be completed within a period of three months; or
  - d. That the thesis not be accepted in its present form but that the candidate be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit a corrected thesis within a period of six months; or
  - e. That the thesis is not of sufficient merit for the intended degree, but that the candidate has met the requirements for and should be offered an appropriate lower award, where such an award exists; or
  - f. That the thesis be rejected and no award made.
2. In an examination for a doctoral degree, the examiners shall recommend to the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost):
  - a. That the thesis be approved and the intended degree be awarded with no corrections; or
  - b. That the thesis be approved and the intended degree be awarded, subject to the making of any purely typographical corrections or revisions; or
  - c. That the thesis be approved and the intended degree awarded, subject to minor corrections to be completed within a period of three months; or
  - d. That the thesis not be accepted in its present form but that the candidate be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit a corrected thesis within a period of 12 months; or
  - e. That the thesis is not of sufficient merit for the intended degree, but the candidate may be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit the thesis within 12 months for a further examination for the award of MPhil. This recommendation may be offered at the same time as recommendation G as an alternative option; or
  - f. That the thesis is not of sufficient merit for the intended degree, but that the candidate has met the requirements and should be offered an appropriate lower research master's degree. This may only be offered as an alternative to recommendation D; or
  - g. That the thesis be rejected and no award made. This may only be offered as an alternative to recommendation E.
3. Candidates offered options F or G at examination must be given two weeks after being informed of the decision to choose which option to accept.
4. If an examining committee recommends to the Senatus Academicus that the thesis should be resubmitted and re-examined, the candidate shall receive in writing from the convenor of the committee a detailed list of corrections and revisions deemed to be necessary by the examiners. The candidate shall be expected to take these into account in any resubmission of the thesis.
5. Where a candidate is required to resubmit their thesis, they must pay a re-examination fee and be re-examined, although the examiners may waive a further oral examination.

## Annex 2: Outcomes available at re-examination

1. The examining committee shall make one of the following recommendations to the Senatus Academicus:
  - a. That the thesis be approved and the intended degree awarded, subject to the making of any purely typographical corrections if required; or
  - b. That the thesis be approved and the intended degree awarded, subject to minor corrections to be completed within a period of three months; or
  - c. That the thesis is not of sufficient merit for the intended degree, but that the candidate has met the requirements and should be offered an appropriate lower award, where such an award exists; or
  - d. That the thesis be rejected and no award made.

Intended degree	Possible exit awards
PhD	MPhil; MSc(Res) or MSt(Res)
EngD	MPhil; MSc(Res); PG Dip
DProf	MPhil; PG Diploma
DPerf	MFA; PG Diploma
MD	MPhil, MSc(Res)
MPhil	MSc(Res) or MSt(Res)
MSc(Res)/MSt(Res)	none

## Annex 3: PhD by Portfolio

The following will apply in addition to the regulations for the degree of PhD by thesis.

### Presentation of a PhD by Portfolio of Published Work

1. Applications may be made to the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) for permission to submit for the degree of PhD a portfolio of published work such as books or papers in refereed journals in lieu of a thesis. This route is available to:
  - a. Matriculated students, provided they can demonstrate they meet the requirements set out in the [PhD by Portfolio of Published Work \(student route\)](#) policy.
  - b. Staff, including honorary staff, who have been employed or associated with the University for a minimum of three continuous years. Staff may be permitted to submit a portfolio without a corresponding period of enrolment as a PhD student, as described in the [PhD by Portfolio of Published Work \(staff route\)](#) policy.
    - i. The availability of this route does not preclude a member of staff applying for admission as a doctoral student and following route (a) above.
2. The portfolio shall include a 10,000 – 25,000 word critical discussion summarising the aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions covered in the portfolio. It should also indicate how the publications form a coherent body of work, what contributions the candidate has made to this work, and how the work contributes significantly to the expansion of knowledge.
3. The portfolio shall be accompanied by a declaration that none of the work contained in the books or papers submitted has been submitted by the candidate for a higher degree in any other university.



## **Annex 4: Doctor of Philosophy in creative writing**

For students pursuing a PhD in creative writing, the following will apply in addition to the regulations for the degree of PhD.

1. The degree is granted for the submission of a body of work judged by the examiners to be of publishable standard, in whole or in large part, which demonstrates inventiveness in the generation of new ideas and images where these lead to new or enhanced insights.
2. Candidates for the degree will be examined on the basis of a portfolio of original work and an accompanying research paper, discursive commentary or introductory essay which links the original work to the larger history, theory, or practice of relevant writing.
3. A creative writing thesis can be composed in one of two ways:
  - a. approximately 50% creative writing and 50% research material, discursive commentary, or introductory and contextual material; or
  - b. approximately 80% creative writing and 20% research material, discursive commentary, or introductory and contextual material.
4. Where the creative work is poetry rather than prose, one page of poetry is understood to be equivalent to approximately 1,000 words.
5. Students are required to indicate which of the pathways above they intend to pursue at the first annual progress review.
6. Both the quality of the original work and the research paper, and the relationship between the original work and the research paper, will be relevant factors in deciding the success of the submission for the degree.

## **Annex 5: Doctor of Engineering (EngD)**

For students pursuing an EngD, the following will apply in addition to the regulations for the degree of PhD.

1. The Head of School shall appoint for each candidate an academic supervisor and an external supervisor who shall jointly oversee the development of the candidate and shall provide support and advice regarding the project(s) on which the student is working. The external supervisor shall be a member of staff of the external organization which is sponsoring the student.
2. The course of study and research shall comprise:
  - a. A series of supplementary studies which may include coursework and attendance at lectures and colloquia, amounting to approximately 25% of the time spent during the degree; and
  - b. Supervised research work comprising approximately 75% of the time spent during the degree and culminating in the submission of a thesis or research portfolio. This work shall be carried out in the University or at the premises of the external organisation which is sponsoring the student, in variable proportions according to the nature of the research.

### **Methods for presentation**

3. Every candidate for the Degree of EngD shall present a thesis or portfolio embodying the results of their special study or research.
4. A thesis should take the form of a specially composed monograph. A portfolio should take the form of documents such as published papers, unpublished papers containing

original scientific or engineering investigations and/or analysis, patents etc., together with an abstract in English which describes the contribution to knowledge and innovation demonstrated by the candidate.

## **Annex 6: Doctor of Performing Arts (DPerf)**

For students pursuing a DPerf, the following will apply in addition to the regulations for the degree of PhD.

1. The DPerf is offered in collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.
2. All students and supervisors are required to comply with the requirements of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's Policy for Supervisors and Students in the Doctor of Performing Arts Programme.
3. The work of all students will be reviewed annually and the results reported to the Research Degrees Committee at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

### **Methods of presentation**

4. Candidates for the degree will be examined on the basis of a portfolio comprising (A) a series of professional projects, (B) supplementary studies, and (C) written work.
5. The portfolio will take the form of:
  - a. A series of professional projects (normally four artistic projects and one development project). They will demonstrate an appropriately wide and deep professional practice at this level and form a coherent artistic unit; and
  - b. A collection of taught supplementary studies, chosen to complement the professional projects and designed to enrich and deepen the candidate's artistic practice. These may be theoretical, practical or research-related studies as appropriate; and
  - c. A body of written work which articulates the context for professional projects, and which reflects the student's artistic development and synthesises work undertaken in the supplementary studies. The written component will normally be 12,500 – 15,000 words.
6. The three elements are credit weighted. Across three years or part-time equivalent successful candidates will gain 360 credits for professional projects, 120 credits for supplementary studies, and 60 credits for written work. Credits for the supplementary studies may be awarded upon completion of approved taught modules but the credits for the professional projects and the written work will only be awarded following a successful viva voce examination. All credits must be obtained for the degree to be awarded.

### **Examination**

7. The examination of the portfolio shall follow the same rules and procedures as laid down in the Regulations for PhD except that the Research Degrees Committee of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland may appoint one internal convenor and two external examiners.

## **Annex 7: Doctor of Professional Practice (DProf)**

For students pursuing a DProf, the following will apply in addition to the regulations for the degree of PhD.

1. The DProf is usually a part-time programme. Candidates in full-time employment may only register as full-time students where there is written confirmation from the employer that a candidate will have sufficient time to dedicate to their studies; that is, in cases where the DProf will be integral to both the candidate's work and professional development.

### **Methods of Presentation**

2. Candidates for the degree will be examined on the basis of supplementary studies and a portfolio comprising (A) a series of professional projects and (B) an integrative critical analysis.
3. Supplementary studies at 5000-level shall total 120 credits.
4. The portfolio will take the form of:
  - a. A series of professional projects (normally three or four applied research projects). The projects will demonstrate an appropriately wide and deep professional practice at doctoral level, and address a coherent theme. The research from such work will normally take the form of journal articles (but may include policy and practice papers), which together total 35,000 – 40,000 words. The portfolio may include collaboratively written outputs, provided a statement agreed by all authors, confirming that the DProf candidate is the principal author of the work, is submitted with any such outputs; and
  - b. An integrative critical analysis, which articulates the context for the professional projects, reflects the student's professional development, and sets out the contribution to the advancement of practice in the field. The integrative critical analysis will normally take the form of a written report of 12,5000 – 15,000 words.
5. The three elements are credit weighted. Across the programme, successful candidates will gain 360 credits for professional projects, 60 credits for the integrative critical analysis, and 120 credits for supplementary studies. Credits for the integrative critical analysis will only be awarded following a successful viva voce examination. All credits must be obtained in order for the degree to be awarded.

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1.0	New postgraduate research regulations following a significant overhaul.	Approved	Emmy Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality	03/08/2023