

# **Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees**

## **2016-2017**

This *Code of Practice* must be read in conjunction with the *General Regulations for Students*, the *Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations* and any other Guidelines and Policies relating to Research degrees.

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# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

## Introduction

1. The purpose of this Code is to provide guidelines both for academic staff involved in research supervision and for research students working for MPhil and PhD degrees at SOAS. It is intended to ensure that research students are fully and effectively supervised and that every effort is made for research degrees to be completed within the prescribed period of study of three years full-time enrolment (six years part-time).<sup>1</sup>
2. The aim of this Code to establish a set of standard procedures for all departments in the School based upon common structures and a definition of specific responsibilities on the part of all those principally concerned. Supervision of research students is, however, influenced by many factors including the nature of the individuals involved, the type of research undertaken, and the character and requirements of the discipline pursued. Some variation between departments and with regards to individual research projects is therefore not only inevitable but desirable. Departmental practice and individual arrangements with regards to a research project may supplement this Code, but must not deviate substantially from its aims and provisions.
3. Applications for variation from the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the Code of Practice require approval from the Associate Dean (Research) for the relevant Faculty.
4. Discipline specific variations to the provisions in the code of practice are outlined on the relevant Departmental or Faculty web pages.

## MPhil and PhD Degree Definitions

5. Students registered for research degrees at SOAS are formally registered for degrees of SOAS, University of London and subject to the Regulations of the School.
6. The scope of the PhD thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after three years full-time study.
  - 6.1 The thesis shall:
    - a) Not exceed 100,000 words, excluding bibliography and appendices. Appendices must only include material which the examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis but to which they may refer if they wish;
    - b) be written in English;
    - c) consist of the candidate's own account of his/her investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration at the School;
    - d) form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power;
    - e) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;
    - f) demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented;
    - g) satisfy the examiners with regard to literary presentation; and
    - h) merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to satisfactory progress and completion of a draft thesis students may enrol for a maximum of three further terms on Extension of Writing-up (Continuation) status. The deadline for submission of the thesis is 48 months from initial registration (84 Months part-time). Submission of the thesis for examination is not permitted after this deadline.

7. It is the responsibility of students to be aware of the regulations and procedures applicable to their degree registration. These are available online on the SOAS website (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/pgresearch/>).
8. Except during periods of approved overseas fieldwork research students are expected to be undertaking research for their degree while based at SOAS, University of London.
9. All new research students initially enrol on the MPhil/PhD programme until they have satisfied their Supervisory Committees of their suitability for transferring to PhD status. If a student is not considered to have produced work suitable for transfer to PhD they may be required to withdraw or to continue enrolment on the MPhil degree and be assessed for the award of MPhil.

The scope of the MPhil thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after two years full-time study

- 9.1 A successful thesis for MPhil award must:
  - a) Not exceed 60,000 words excluding bibliography and appendices. Appendices must only include material which the examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis but to which they may refer if they wish;
  - b) be written in English;
  - c) consist of the candidate's own account of his/her investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration at the School;
  - d) be a record either of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and shall provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly;
  - e) give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings and include a discussion on those findings;
  - f) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument; and
  - g) satisfy the examiners with regard to literary presentation.
10. A successful SOAS Research Degree Candidate will have successfully demonstrated completion of the following objectives:
  - a) Advancement of knowledge via completion of a successful thesis in line with the requirements outlined under items 6.1 or 9.1 above.
  - b) Training as a researcher via completion of relevant discipline specific, methodological and generic research skills training.
  - c) Successful definition, development and completion of a research project within constraints of the SOAS PhD progression and examination requirements.
  - d) Understanding of ethical standards and research expectations for the discipline under examination.

### **Application and Arrival Procedures**

11. As stated in the *Postgraduate Research Prospectus*, in order to be fully considered for admission you will need to submit a formal application and ensure that it is complete (all documentation and acceptable references received) by the relevant deadline. Applications deemed incomplete by the Doctoral School Section of the Registry will not be academically considered until they are deemed to be complete. While informal discussion between potential supervisor and student is welcomed, decisions on admissions should be communicated to prospective students only through the Doctoral School Section of the Registry.

12. Where an applicant meets the School's normal admissions criteria for research degrees at least two selectors must be involved in the selection process. It is the responsibility of the departmental Admissions/Research Tutor and the Associate Dean (Research) in the relevant faculty to ensure that applications are processed expeditiously and a potential first supervisor identified. The Registry should be fully informed of any additional requirements (e.g. with respect to language training). Where appropriate an applicant's file may be passed to another department for consideration.
13. All students are required to meet the School's standards for proficiency in English. If on arrival, or subsequently, it becomes evident that the student's knowledge and use of English is inadequate for the purpose of a research degree, he or she may be required to undertake English language tuition and a timetable for this should be agreed between the supervisor and student.
14. During the first six weeks following registration all research students should be assigned a Supervisory Committee of three academic members. The student, the members of the Supervisory Committee, and the Registry should all be informed in writing of the composition of the committee by the departmental Research Tutor.
15. A research student should have a first supervisor, who is a member of the Department or Centre with which he/she is registered. Exceptionally, where a student's research project crosses more than one field of study, a first supervisor can be appointed from another Department or Centre. A supervisory committee may appropriately include supervisors from two different Departments or Centres (subject to approval by the relevant Associate Dean(s) (Research)), but primary responsibility for the student is taken by the first supervisor. It is expected that all members of the Supervisory Committee are actively involved in aspects of supervision.
16. All research students (including those studying part-time) are normally required to attend a research training programme and to fulfil the stated requirements of the course. Any further training or skills required should be discussed upon enrolment by the student and supervisor and, where necessary, the approval of the Associate Dean (Research) should be sought.
17. For visa nationals, it is the student's responsibility to ensure they obtain a visa that permits study on the programme for which they have been accepted.

## **Modes of Study and Enrolment**

### **Full-time/Part-time Study**

18. Students at SOAS are normally registered on a full-time basis for research degrees but may also enrol on a part-time basis subject to approval of the supervisor and relevant department. Students enrolled on a full-time basis are required to complete active research and a draft thesis within three years of initial enrolment. Students enrolled on a part-time basis are expected to be in attendance for half the equivalent full-time enrolment and complete their active research and a draft thesis within six years of initial enrolment.

19. Students wishing to enrol on a part-time basis must sign a *declaration that they are not intending to study on a full-time basis*. The conditions for part-time study are as follows:
- a) Part-time study is half full-time and the expected attendance and supervision will be on that basis, even if the student attends methodological or other courses alongside full-time students in the first year.
  - b) A part-time PhD programme is normally six years. For students on the +4 pathway the part-time PhD programme is eight years.
  - c) Consideration of transfer to PhD status normally takes place in the sixth part-time term. For students on the +4 pathway consideration of transfer takes place during the twelfth part-time term.
  - d) If a thesis is submitted for examination earlier than the expected period of part-time enrolment the student will be deemed to have been studying on a full-time basis for some or all of the programme, with reference to the number of terms they are submitting in advance, and additional fees will be due retrospectively (pro rata at the fee level prevailing at the time of submission). Entry to research degree examination will not be permitted until any outstanding fees have been paid.
20. Subject to satisfactory progress and production of a draft thesis by the relevant deadline, all students (whether full-time or part-time) may enrol for a maximum of three further terms on Extension of Writing-up (continuation) status during which time they retain the right to submit the thesis for examination.

### **Terms / Calendar Years**

21. Taught course term dates do not apply to SOAS research students. SOAS research degrees are year-long programmes with the enrolment running from the first day of the academic session until the day preceding the first day of the next academic session. The School's convention is to use academic terms and calendar years for enrolment periods. For research students terms begin in September, January and April/May and end the day before the beginning of the next term. The summer vacation period counts as an extension of the summer term and does not in itself count as a separate enrolment period.

### **Minimum Registration/Enrolment Period**

22. Research degree registrations at SOAS must normally extend over at least two years of full-time study or four years of part-time study.
23. Research students normally enrol for the equivalent of three years of full time study but in exceptional cases and subject to the support of the supervisory committee and the Association Dean (Research), submission for examination may be permitted in the third year of full-time study.
24. Students who transfer from other institutions may have shortened deadlines for progression and submission as a result of previous study. The School will advise applicants of the deadlines and requirements in their offer letter.

### **Extension of Writing-up (Continuation) Status and Interruption of Study**

25. Students and supervisors are expected to familiarise themselves with the regulations relating to these forms of registration status before seeking continuation or interruption and to comply with the relevant School regulations and procedures concerning them.

26. Research programmes are intended to be continuous. To meet the requirements for award research students are expected to demonstrate the ability to devise and manage a research project within the constraints of the degree requirements and deadlines. In some cases students may not be able to continue with their normal registration and an interruption of study may be sought through submission of an *Application for Interruption of Study Form* to the Doctoral School for the consideration of the Associate Dean (Research). Applications for interruption must be supported by the supervisor and will be granted only in exceptional circumstances such as pregnancy, serious illness or unforeseen extraordinary personal circumstances. Applications must include supporting documentation. Clarification of accepted supporting documentation is available from the Doctoral School. Interruption is considered on a term-by-term basis and the maximum period of interruption normally allowed in any research degree programme is three terms.
27. Extension of Writing-up (Continuation) and Interruption of Study may affect issues such as council tax exemption, travel discounts and visas. Students and supervisors should seek advice from the Doctoral School if they are unsure of these implications.
28. Students granted interruption status are not actively enrolled and do not have access to Supervision or Facilities during the period of interruption.
29. Interruption of study cannot normally be applied for retrospectively.

## **Programme Requirements**

### **Enrolment and Payment of Fees**

30. All research students must complete enrolment requirements stipulated by SOAS Registry at the start of their programme and at the beginning of each academic session for which they are enrolled. This includes payment of any required fees in accordance with SOAS policy.
31. Students returning from overseas fieldwork/research must complete re-enrolment requirements stipulated by Registry on return to SOAS.
32. Students who fail to comply with enrolment requirements will be referred to the Head of Registry for Consideration under the SOAS PhD Withdrawal Policy

### **Annual Progression**

33. Students enrolled on a research degree at SOAS are assessed by annual report to be completed by both supervisor and student. Students will not be permitted to progress and re-enrol for the following academic session without confirmation of satisfactory progression and expected completion within the degree requirements.

### **Logbooks**

34. Each research student is required to maintain their logbook with the support of their supervisor throughout their enrolment. The logbook should include a record of supervisory meetings, research training, research progress and issues arising.

## **Transfer to PhD**

35. SOAS research students are initially registered on an MPhil/PhD and, subject to satisfactory progress, subsequently transferred to PhD status.
36. For full-time students, consideration for transfer will take place in May/June of the first year except for students on the +4 pathway who will be considered for upgrade in May/June of the second year of full-time enrolment. Any extensions to this timetable are subject to the approval of the Associate Dean (Research) and all full-time students must be transferred to PhD before the start of the following academic session. Part-time students are considered for transfer to PhD in May/June of their second year of part-time enrolment except for students on the +4 pathway who would be considered for upgrade in the fourth year of enrolment. Students may not leave for overseas fieldwork unless they have completed the consideration for upgrade and submitted the Fieldwork Application Form to the Doctoral School.
37. The process of transfer to PhD is appropriate to the discipline but will involve consideration by the Supervisory Committee of the student's progress in meeting the requirements of the MPhil training programme, in preparing written work (including draft chapters), and in making oral presentations (including seminars) to a suitable standard. Where possible, the process should include a meeting between the student and his/her Upgrade Committee, at which the student may be asked to give an oral presentation.
38. A transfer should not be approved unless the student has fully satisfied the Supervisory Committee as to the student's competence in written and spoken English as well as to the research content of the thesis.
39. Transfer of registration must be approved by the Supervisory Committee on the appropriate Doctoral School Section form. Where the Supervisory Committee decides against transfer, this should be recorded on the Doctoral School Section form, which should also record whether this decision is final or subject to a further review of the student's progress. Where there is disagreement over transfer among members of the Supervisory Committee the matter should be referred by the departmental Research Tutor or Head of Department to the Associate Dean (Research).
40. The outcome of the process should clearly indicate that the research is in accordance with the Schools Ethics Policy and either:
  - a) that the student will be transferred to PhD status;
  - b) that the student's transfer has been deferred to a specific date and subject to certain stated requirements;
  - c) that the transfer is not approved, but the student can continue for an MPhil degree only; or
  - d) that the programme of study be terminated.

## **Training and Research**

41. The PhD involves three years of full-time supervised study (six years part-time) followed by submission of the thesis for examination no later than four years from initial enrolment (seven years part-time). For students on the +4 pathway this is four years full-time and eight years part-time. PhD work in the UK differs from the typical American PhD because it places greater emphasis on individual research and less on taught courses. It is expected that candidates will have already completed postgraduate taught courses in the form of a UK taught Masters degree (MA, MSc, MMus or LL.M for example), or an equivalent recognised by the School, and obtained good results before starting a PhD Programme.

42. A PhD at SOAS does include elements of teaching and of research training, especially in the first year of study (two years part-time). Training requirements vary between departments and full details of departmental training requirements will be available from the Faculty or Department.

### **Fieldwork**

43. SOAS defines fieldwork for research students as including periods of absence from SOAS during enrolment covering any practical research activity performed in places outside the control of the School, but where the School retains responsibility for the student. Specific activities covered might include, but not be limited to: participant observation, mass observation, interviewing, holding focus groups, archival research, conducting surveys, collecting samples, recording performances
44. Many students will undertake periods of research away from SOAS which would not require them to be enrolled on fieldwork status. This may be for shorter trips overseas or for research undertaken elsewhere in the UK. The supervisor and student must ensure that a clear record is kept of such arrangements and that any absence of over one calendar month is reported to the Doctoral School in advance by submitting a Fieldwork Application form for the consideration of the Associate Dean (Research).
45. A maximum of three terms' overseas fieldwork is normally permitted in a full-time PhD Programme. In many cases a research proposal will plan a period of extended fieldwork outside the UK during the second year of full-time registration. Any longer periods require the special permission of the relevant Associate Dean (Research) who will only approve cases where clear academic grounds have been presented by (or through) the supervisor. No student will be permitted to proceed to overseas fieldwork until transferred to PhD status and their fieldwork has been approved by the Doctoral School. Applications for fieldwork outside of the second year of full-time enrolment (or part-time equivalent) are subject to the approval of the relevant Associate Dean (Research). Such applications must satisfy the ADR that extended or late fieldwork will not affect completion of research within the deadlines for the degree. Students on the +4 pathway would normally undertake fieldwork in the third year of full-time enrolment (or part-time equivalent)
46. An *Application for Overseas Fieldwork* form must be completed in advance for each period of overseas fieldwork requested or for any amendments to previously agreed arrangements. This form must be submitted to the Doctoral School well before departing for the fieldwork. Non-standard fieldwork applications will need the approval of the Associate Dean (Research).
47. Any ethical issues arising during the fieldwork which were not anticipated during the process of ethical approval at upgrade must be referred to the Research Tutor who may potentially refer them to the Associate Dean (Research) for review.
48. Before overseas fieldwork is approved the student and supervisor should discuss in some detail and well in advance the purpose of this fieldwork, the following:
- the nature, location and duration of the research
  - the need for additional research funds (and any applications that need to be made as a result),
  - what visas, letters of recommendation and other documents need to be obtained before the fieldwork begins
  - what health measures may be necessary
  - a risk assessment of the proposed fieldwork

- how (and how often) contact between student and supervisor is to be maintained
49. A risk assessment of the proposed fieldwork must be made. It is the student's responsibility to assess the risk, to discuss this, as necessary, with the supervisor and others and to make sure that they take out appropriate insurance. The School advises all students to consult Foreign Office guidance and NOT to travel to countries or areas contrary to FO advice. Confirmation that a risk assessment has been undertaken must be given on the Fieldwork Application Form.
  50. At least monthly contact with the supervisor, by letter or e-mail, is expected. The logbook must continue to be completed during periods of overseas fieldwork. It is important for students to contact both the supervisor and the Doctoral School if fieldwork plans change.
  51. On returning from fieldwork, it is important for students to contact their Supervisor and the Doctoral School.
  52. On return, many supervisors expect a written report on the progress made during the fieldwork period.

### **Writing-up**

53. The third year of the PhD (or part-time equivalent) is normally devoted to drafting and re-drafting the chapters. A complete draft of the thesis is required by the end of year three. For students on the +4 pathway this requirement takes place during the fourth year of full-time enrolment (or part-time equivalent).
54. Subject to satisfactory progress and completion of a draft thesis by the end of year three (or part-time equivalent) students may enrol for a maximum of three terms on Extension of Writing-up (Continuation) status. For students on the +4 pathway Extension of Writing-up (Continuation) status would be considered at the end of the fourth year of full-time enrolment.
55. For MPhil candidates a completed draft thesis and transfer to Extension of Writing-up (Continuation) status is required by the end of year two (or part-time equivalent).
56. Under Extension of Writing-up (Continuation) status students will continue to have access to School facilities, including use of the SOAS Library, but are entitled to receive only a reduced level of supervision.
57. Extension of Writing-up enrolment is at a significantly reduced fee from full-time or part-time enrolment and is available on the understanding that:
  - a) the student is at an advanced stage of writing-up and requires only reduced supervision;
  - b) the student will complete writing-up and submit the thesis for examination within three terms or by their thesis submission deadline (whichever is sooner).

### **Entry to Examination**

58. The student will need to fill in the appropriate examination entry form for submitting the thesis. *This form should be completed and returned to the Doctoral School TWO MONTHS before the intended date of submission to avoid delays in appointment of examiners and arrangement of the examination.*

59. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to recommend examiners in accordance with the nomination guidelines. At least one of the examiners will be external to the School.
60. Only the following people are permitted to be in attendance at the viva:
  - a) the candidate
  - b) the nominated examiners
  - c) a supervisor; and
  - d) where required, a nominated Independent Chair
61. It is the responsibility of the student to see that the thesis is prepared in the approved format and with the required number of copies. It is especially important to follow the maximum length for MPhil (60,000 words) and PhD (100,000 words) theses. The bibliography is excluded from the word count; footnotes are included within the word count; appendices are excluded from the word count and should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish.
62. For both MPhil and PhD degrees candidates are required both to submit a thesis of the required standard *and* to defend their work to the satisfaction of the examiners in a viva (oral examination).
63. The examiners of a PhD thesis have a number of options open to them: they can deem the candidate as having fully met the requirements of a PhD (or ask for only minor amendments to be made); they can require more substantial changes to be made and the revised thesis represented within the School deadline for resubmissions. Full details on the options available can be found on the Doctoral School web pages.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Joint Responsibilities of Supervisor and Student**

64. It is a fundamental requirement that there should be regular meetings between the research student and his/her supervisor. These should normally be of at least one hour's duration. As a general rule, full-time students and their supervisors should meet fortnightly during the first year and monthly during subsequent years of the full-time enrolment (or part-time equivalent). It is to be expected that Supervisor and student availability may require adjustments to this schedule outside the School's taught course term dates. When this is the case arrangements must be agreed for these periods (whether by adjustment to the meeting schedule or by correspondence and/or telephone), to reflect that research degrees involve year round enrolment, study and academic support.
65. As far as possible, supervisor and student should agree an agenda for future meetings. They should keep a record of when meetings are held, the nature of (and deadlines for) any work to be completed or submitted, and the date and time of the next meeting. They are also advised to keep note of the main issues and problems discussed. This should be done via the logbook.
66. During the first year of full-time registration, the supervisor and student should work together to draw up a research plan and a timetable for the research, including any periods of fieldwork. The plan should clearly mark out the stage by which a student is expected to have completed a given point in the research, must take into account the restraints of time and resources and should allow for completion of active research and submission of draft thesis within 36 months of initial registration (72 months part-time) and submission of the thesis for examination within 48 months (84 months part-time). For students on the +4 pathway these deadlines are varied accordingly.

67. All research students (including those studying part-time) must attend a research training programme and fulfil any other stated requirements of their course. A skills need analysis should be made with the supervisor at the start of each academic year bearing in mind the demands of the doctoral project and the reasonable requirements of Early Career Researcher training. This should be recorded in the student logbook and matched against courses available. Where necessary the advice of the Doctoral Training Advisor may be sought, and the approval of the Associate Dean (Research) sought for exceptional training needs.
68. A supervisor should respond to any written work, either orally or in writing, within one month of it being submitted. If because of the length or complexity of the written work, or because of ill health, or pressing demands on his/her time, the supervisor is unable to respond within one month, he/she should inform the student of this at the time the work is submitted, or as soon as possible thereafter, and clearly indicate when a response will be given.
69. If a supervisor expects to be absent from SOAS for a period of more than one calendar month, he/she should inform the student and departmental Research Tutor accordingly. Where necessary alternative arrangements must be made to maintain active contact (e.g. by e-mail or through the Supervisory Committee). Likewise, a student expecting to be absent from SOAS for more than one month during term time (and outside agreed periods of fieldwork) must inform the supervisor, make alternative arrangements for supervision and ensure that a Fieldwork Application Form is lodged with the Doctoral School.
70. It is the responsibility of both the research student and his/her supervisor to maintain cordial and constructive relations with a view to ensuring effective supervision and satisfactory completion of the thesis. However, in situations where, in the view of the research student and/or supervisor, relations between them have broken down, the student or supervisor should ask the Departmental Research Tutor, or in cases where this is not appropriate, the Head of Department to propose an alternative supervisor. If it is not possible to resolve this at Departmental Level the issue should be referred to the Associate Dean (Research).
71. Particular attention must be given by the Departmental Research Tutor and Supervisory Committee to the impending retirement or departure of an existing supervisor or periods of research leave. It is the responsibility of the Research Tutor and Head of Department to ensure that arrangements are made well in advance, in consultation with the research student, concerning a replacement supervisor.
72. Both Supervisor and Student must ensure understanding of and adherence to relevant ethical standards and research expectations for the academic discipline.

## **Supervisory Committee Responsibilities**

### **The Supervisor**

73. The responsibilities of the first supervisor are:
  - a) to agree with the student a suitable topic for research that can be completed and written up within the prescribed period of study. Full-time students are required to submit within four years (three full-time years and the Writing-up year) and part-time students within seven years (six part-time years and the Writing-up year). Candidates on the +4 pathway are required to submit within five years (four years full-time and the Extension of Writing-up year) and part-

time students within nine years (eight years part-time and the Extension of Writing-up year);

- b) to assist the student in making full use of the facilities provided by the School and to encourage him/her to play a full part in the intellectual and social life of the School;
- c) to assist the Research Tutor to appoint a full Supervisory Committee, normally within six weeks of the student's enrolment on the degree;
- d) to establish a timetable of regular meetings with the student. This is normally fortnightly during the first year and monthly during subsequent years of full-time enrolment or part-time equivalent at which all matters relating to, or affecting, his/her work are discussed;
- e) to oversee student maintenance of the logbook as required;
- f) no later than six weeks after registration to agree with the student the subject and basic structure of the research project, an appropriate research method, and a realistic plan of work, and to advise on any additional skills required;
- g) to ensure that a student training needs analysis is undertaken annually at the start of each academic session and needs matched to provision;
- h) no later than twenty-four months for PhD students, to agree with the student a realistic timetable for completion of the research and writing-up of the thesis. This must allow for completion of active research and a draft thesis within the deadline for submission.
- i) to monitor progress of the student in accordance with the agreed schedule and to advise the Research Tutor, Associate Dean (Research), and Doctoral School of any issues as they arise;
- j) to arrange (in consultation with the Supervisory Committee and the Research Tutor) for a replacement supervisor in the event of in excess of one calendar month;
- k) to maintain supervision during periods of research leave or to arrange for assumption of supervision by another member of the Supervisory Committee for the period of leave if continuing supervision is not feasible;
- l) to ensure that the project is progressed in accordance with the School's regulations and procedures in respect of on-campus research degrees;
- m) to inform the student about requirements for, and procedures relating to transfer to PhD; to initiate the transfer at the appropriate time; to liaise with other members of the Supervisory Committee concerning the transfer and to supply them with copies of written materials for assessment; to advise the Research Tutor and to inform the student of the result and consequences of the decision concerning transfer;
- n) where transfer has not been initiated following consideration for upgrade, to raise with the departmental Research Tutor and the Associate Dean (Research) the question of whether or not the student should be given a further opportunity to proceed to a PhD, remain as an MPhil student, or have his/her registration terminated;
- o) the supervisor must make himself/herself aware of the requirements of the student's funding body, report promptly on the student's progress when required

to do so by the Associate Dean (Research) or external funding bodies, and ensure, as far as possible, that the student completes within the prescribed period;

- p) to advise the student on correct research procedures, including the dangers of plagiarism, and to report to the Associate Dean (Research) any persistent research misconduct, including plagiarism;
- q) at an appropriate point in the student's study (and in accordance with SOAS regulations) make recommendations for the appointment of internal and external examiners and ensure that the student enters for the MPhil or PhD examination in good time (at least two months before submission) and submits the thesis within the School deadline; and
- r) to advise the student on SOAS regulations about research theses and procedures relating to research degree vivas and their outcomes.

### **Second Member of the Supervisory Committee**

74. The responsibilities of the second member of the Supervisory Committee are:

- a) where possible the second member of the Supervisory Committee should be selected before, or as soon as possible after, a research student's enrolment and no later than six weeks of the start of the research degree;
- b) to enhance or augment the supervision of the student by contributing additional guidance and expertise;
- c) to maintain an active involvement with the general progress of the student's work and to participate in decisions relating to his/her transfer to PhD, eligibility for enrolment on Extension of Writing-up (Continuation) Status or, where necessary, termination of registration; and
- d) to act on behalf of the supervisor during unforeseen periods of absence

### **Third Member of the Supervisory Committee**

75. The responsibilities of the third member of the Supervisory Committee are:

- a) where possible the third member of the Supervisory Committee should be selected before, or as soon as possible after, a research student's enrolment and no later than six weeks from the start of the research degree;
- b) where required the third member should enhance or augment the supervision of the student by contributing additional guidance and expertise; and
- c) to maintain awareness of the students progress in the degree and participate in decisions relating to his/her transfer to PhD, eligibility for enrolment on Extension of Writing-up (continuation) status or, where necessary, termination

### **Research Student Responsibilities**

76. The responsibilities of research students are the following:

- a) to attend meetings with their supervisor as and when arranged, to meet agreed deadlines for work, to agree an agenda for future meetings and bring to supervision meetings topics or research material for discussion, and to inform

the supervisor of any likely absence of more than one calendar month (apart from approved periods of fieldwork);

- b) to carry out their research effectively, to an approved standard, and within the prescribed period of study and deadlines.
- c) to participate in, and satisfy the requirements of their MPhil/PhD training programme and personal training needs analysis assessment;
- d) to agree and abide by a timetable for regular meetings with the supervisor, to submit written work (allowing sufficient time for the supervisor to read and comment on the work) and to make such oral or seminar presentations as may be required by the supervisor or departmental Research Tutor;
- e) to be aware of the School's regulations and procedures in respect of research degrees and to ensure that enrolment and registration requirements are completed correctly;
- f) to follow the School's procedures with respect to transfer to PhD;
- g) to complete such reports and returns as are required by the supervisor and Departmental Research Tutor;
- h) to maintain the logbook with details of supervisory meetings, research training, research progress and issues arising. An agreed record of the number and nature of supervision meetings will be particularly valuable for the completion by supervisor and student of the annual report forms and in any appeals procedure. The logbook should be completed for each meeting.
- i) to contact the other members of the Supervisory Committee as appropriate;
- j) to pursue research actively while based at SOAS, University of London, except during periods of approved interruption or overseas fieldwork.
- k) to remain in contact by appropriate and agreed means with the supervisor during periods of fieldwork;
- l) to bring any complaints or problems (including those of a medical nature) to the attention of the supervisor and/or Departmental Research Tutor, and to inform the supervisor of any problems seriously affecting the progress of research and writing;
- m) to consult in confidence with the Departmental Research Tutor (or, where appropriate, the Head of Department) if it is felt that a change of supervisor is necessary; and
- n) to follow the requirements of the School with respect to the submission and examination of research theses.

## **Departmental Responsibilities**

### **Departmental Research Tutor**

77. The main responsibilities of the Departmental Research Tutor are:

- a) to oversee the selection and admission of new MPhil/PhD degree students and the allocation and notification to those concerned of supervisors and Supervisory Committees except where the Department has appointed a Research Admissions Tutor to undertake this responsibility;

- b) to organise (and, where appropriate, run) a training programme for MPhil/PhD students;
- c) to ensure the distribution and the prompt completion and return of annual report forms and other reports concerning research students. Student progression is dependent on receipt of a satisfactory annual report from the supervisor and enrolment for the next year of the programme will not be permitted without this;
- d) to ensure effective knowledge and operation of departmental procedures for students' transfer from MPhil to PhD status;
- e) to ensure effective monitoring of the progress of students on Maintenance of Registration status;
- f) to ensure timely submission of Annual Research Programme Review to the Faculty Research Committee;
- g) to maintain, with the Doctoral School, an accurate and up-to-date record of a student's registration status; and
- h) in association with the Head of Department and the Faculty's Associate Dean (Research), to achieve or maintain satisfactory completion rates within the department.

### **Head of Department**

78. The responsibilities of the Head of Department are as follows:

- a) to exercise overall responsibility for the welfare, academic progress and support facilities of research students in the department;
- b) to ensure that the requirements set out in this Code of Practice are followed and in particular to ensure that the procedures for effective supervision and monitoring of students are fully implemented; and
- c) to delegate, where appropriate, responsibility for day-to-day organisation of graduate training and supervision in the department to a departmental Research Tutor, and to assist him/her in ensuring the maintenance of satisfactory submission, completion and success rates.

### **Faculty Responsibilities**

#### **Faculty Research Committee**

79. The responsibilities of the Faculty Research Committee are:

- a) to oversee all matters relating to research degrees on behalf of the faculty including training, upgrade procedures, monitoring of progress, completion and success rates, examination procedures and quality assurance; and
- b) to provide a forum for all departments and student representatives to discuss matters relating to research students and research degrees;
- c) to consider Annual Research Programme Reviews from Departmental Research Tutors,

- d) to ensure comparability of upgrade procedures across departments and centres, and that information on them is available on departmental/centre websites.

### **Associate Dean (Research)**

80. The responsibilities of the Associate Dean (Research) are:

- a) to chair the Faculty Research committee;
- b) to consider applications for exceptions to the normal study pattern, entry requirements or degree requirements;
- c) to consider student issues from other Faculties where the relevant ADR is considered to have a potential conflict of interest; and
- d) to provide a Faculty report on Annual Research Programme Reviews to the Doctoral School Management Group;
- e) to represent the Faculty at the Doctoral School Management Group.

### **School Responsibilities**

#### **Doctoral School Management Group**

81. The responsibilities of the Doctoral School Management Group are:

- a) to run the facilities of the Doctoral School in liaison with the Research Student Association;
- b) to co-ordinate the management of the School's Postgraduate Research Degrees;
- c) to report to the Research and Enterprise Committee on policy and procedural changes relating to the School's research degrees and to seek approvals from REC where required; and
- d) To consider Annual Research Programme Review reports from Faculties.

#### **Registry and Doctoral School**

82. The responsibilities of the Registry and the Doctoral School are:

- a) to monitor and advise relevant departments and committees on quality assurance issues relating to research degrees;
- b) to oversee the administration of SOAS research degrees from application to award;
- c) to ensure the existence of clear and transparent procedures;
- d) to develop and encourage the sharing and promoting of good practice;
- e) to support departments and faculties in monitoring and review of procedures and performance;
- f) to provide advice to departments, staff and students on issues relating to research degrees; and

- g) to maintain clear and accessible information on regulations and procedures relating to research degrees on the Doctoral School Section web pages (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/doctorschool/>)

### **Student Services**

83. The responsibilities of Student Services are:

- a) to provide a prompt, confidential advisory and support service to SOAS students;
- b) to assist students to manage practical, personal and emotional concerns that may impact on their academic progress; and
- c) to provide advice on issues relating to disability, equality, general welfare, visa requirements etc.

### **Head of Doctoral School**

84. The responsibilities of the Head of the Doctoral School are:

- a) to have overall responsibility for the management of research degrees within the School; and
- b) to chair the Doctoral School Management Group and report to the School Research and Enterprise committee
- c) to report to Research and Enterprise Committee on issues arising from Annual Research Programme Reviews.

### **Complaints and Appeals**

#### **Complaints about Training or Supervision**

85. A student may complain about a perceived deficiency in research training or supervision under the terms of the Student Complaints Procedure. The matter should be raised informally with the supervisor or with the Departmental Research Tutor in the first instance but, if this fails to resolve the issue, the student can thereafter approach the Head of Department and, if necessary, the relevant Associate Dean (Research).

#### **Appeal Procedures**

86. Students should consult the *SOAS Appeals Policy* available on the SOAS Registry website. This covers appeals relating to Academic Misconduct, PhD Upgrade/Supervision Committee and PhD Viva Examination.

## **Further Reading**

### **a) Official Regulations and Procedures**

SOAS research degrees are subject to the SOAS Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations (MPhil/PhD) available on the Registry website here:

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/>

Students must also be aware of individual departmental procedures relating to issues such as research degree training. These are included in Faculty and/or Departmental handbooks and are available on relevant departmental web pages.

### **b) Internet Resources**

There are various places on the web to find further information and advice regarding SOAS research degrees including:

#### **Research at SOAS**

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/research/>

#### **SOAS Doctoral School**

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/doctoralschool/>

#### **Faculty and Departmental Websites**

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/academic/>

#### **Research Students Association website**

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/research/rsa/>

#### **SOAS Students Union**

<http://soasunion.org/>

#### **Student Advice and Wellbeing**

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/studentadviceandwellbeing/>

#### **SOAS Careers Service**

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/careers/>

#### **Information for Current Students**

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/students/>

#### **Equality and Diversity**

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/>

#### **School Policies**

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/admin/governance/policies/>