Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations (MPhil/PhD)

2015-2016

These regulations must be read in conjunction with the *General and Admissions Regulations for Students* and the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees* and any other associated School Policies, Procedures and Codes of Practice.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE REGULATIONS

1.1 **Application of postgraduate research degree regulations**
These postgraduate research degree regulations apply to all postgraduate research programmes offered by SOAS University of London ("the School"). These regulations apply to students from institutions other than SOAS University of London when they are enrolled on postgraduate research programmes delivered by the School.

1.2 **Taught degree regulations**
The School's *Taught Degree Regulations* do not apply to postgraduate research students except where postgraduate research students are taking individual taught modules as part of their programme.

1.3 **Code of Practice for Research Degrees**
In addition to these regulations, postgraduate research degree students are subject to the framework and requirements outlined in the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees*, published annually at the start of the academic year.

1.4 **Minimum regulatory requirements**
These regulations, the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees*, and the departmental/faculty programme and training specifications set out the minimum requirements of the School.

1.5 **Suspension of regulations**
Suspension of these regulations can be approved by the relevant Associate Dean for Research in consultation with the Head of Registry and Quality and the Head of the Doctoral School. If agreement cannot be reached then a final decision will be made by the Pro-Director for Research and Enterprise. If suspension is approved, the case will be reported in anonymous form to the next meeting of the School's Learning and Teaching Quality Committee (LTQC) and the School's Research Committee.

2. AWARD CRITERIA

2.1 **PhD Degree**
SOAS PhD degrees are awarded to students who have completed relevant research training, devised and implemented a research project within the degree requirements, and demonstrated that the work examined forms a significant, distinct and original contribution to the knowledge of the subject.

2.2 **MPhil Degree**
SOAS MPhil degrees are awarded to students who have completed relevant research training, devised and implemented a research project within the degree requirements, and demonstrated that the work examined demonstrates a thorough understanding and critical assessment of knowledge within the subject.

3. RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES

3.1 Period of registration for PhD
The PhD Programme is of three years full-time study or six years part-time equivalent.

3.2 Period of registration for MPhil
The MPhil Programme is of two years full-time study or four years part-time equivalent.

3.3 Minimum period of enrolment
Postgraduate research degree programmes must normally extend over at least two years of full time study or part-time equivalent.

3.4 Continuous study requirements
Postgraduate research degree programmes must be pursued continuously except where an Interruption of Studies has been approved by the School in accordance with the published procedure.

3.5 Student logbook
All postgraduate research students are required to use the Online Research Students Logbook.

3.6 Upgrade to PhD
Postgraduate research students enrolled on the MPhil/PhD degree programme are considered for upgrade to PhD enrolment within 9 months of full-time enrolment or part-time equivalent.

3.7 Submission of thesis for examination
Postgraduate research students must submit a thesis for examination no later than four years from enrolment (seven years part-time) or within the deadline prescribed by the School where students are admitted with credit from other institutions.

3.8 Examination procedures
PhD Candidates will be examined in accordance with the procedures and the requirements of a thesis outlined in section 6 of these regulations.

4. ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE, UPGRADE, AND PROGRESSION

4.1 Enrolment
Students must enrol upon initial registration for the postgraduate research degree and at the start of each academic session for the period of the degree except where Registry has approved fieldwork for the student during the period of enrolment.

4.2 Supervisory committee
All postgraduate research students are appointed a three person supervisory committee to support them in their research project.

4.3   **Initial enrolment as MPhil and upgrade process**
Postgraduate research students are initially registered as MPhil/PhD candidates and considered for upgrade to PhD enrolment during the first year of study. If the outcome of this is unsuccessful, students may be required to withdraw from the degree programme or to continue on the MPhil degree and be assessed for the award of MPhil within the requirements outlined in the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees*.

4.4   **Attendance requirements**

    4.4.1   Postgraduate research students are required to pursue a continuous course of study at the School under the direction of their supervisors.

    4.4.2   Postgraduate research students, whether full-time or part-time, are required to undertake research for their degree based at SOAS in London. Students should ensure that they are able to attend SOAS in person for teaching and meetings as required.

4.5   **Fieldwork**
Following completion of the consideration for upgrade to PhD, postgraduate research students may be granted permission for fieldwork away from SOAS subject to relevant provisions of the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees* and applicable departmental requirements.

4.6   **Annual progression**
Annual progression is subject to satisfactory annual report from the Supervisor being approved by Registry and the appropriate Faculty Associate Dean for Research.

5.   WRITING UP

5.1   **Timeframe for writing up**
Students on a full-time enrolment are normally expected to undertake writing up of the thesis during the third year of study following completion of fieldwork and/or data collection in year two. This timetable is adjusted accordingly for part-time enrolment.

5.2   **Extension of Writing-up status**

    5.2.1   Students are permitted the maximum of one additional year at the conclusion of their normal period of full-time or part-time study for completion of the writing-up of their thesis on Extension of Writing-up status.

    5.2.2   Conditions and requirements for the additional year of enrolment are outlined in the *SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees*.

6. <u>EXAMINATION</u>

6.1 PhD examination
A successful thesis for PhD Award must meet the following requirements:

(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 their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of enrolment 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
(h) merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form

6.2 MPhil examination
A successful thesis for MPhil award must meet the following requirements:

(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 their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of enrolment 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
(g) satisfy the examiners with regard to literary presentation

6.3 Entry to examination
Candidates must complete entry to examination by submitting the required paperwork to the Doctoral School Section of the Registry no later than two months before submission of the thesis for examination.

6.4 Nomination of examiners
The School will nominate examiners following a candidate's entry to examination. The examination will be undertaken by at least two examiners, at least one of whom will be external to SOAS.

6.5 Submission of thesis
Submission forms and two soft-bound copies of the thesis must be submitted to the Doctoral School Section of the Registry by the candidate's deadline for submission.

6.6 **Viva voce examination**
The supervisor will arrange a date for the student to undertake a viva voce examination as part of the examination and will notify the candidate, examiners and the Doctoral School.

6.7 **Outcome of the first viva for PhD**
At the first viva for PhD, eight possible outcomes are possible

(a) Pass
(b) Pass with minor corrections within 3 months of the release of the result
(c) Not pass, but with major corrections within 12 months of the release of the result
(d) Not pass, but with recommendation of award of MPhil
(e) Not pass, with a recommendation of MPhil to be awarded upon satisfactory completion of minor corrections
(f) Not pass, with a recommendation of MPhil to be awarded upon satisfactory completion of major corrections within 12 months of the release of the result
(g) Fail

6.8 **Outcome of the first viva for MPhil**
At the first viva for MPhil four possible outcomes are possible

(a) Pass
(b) Pass with minor corrections within 3 months of the release of the result
(c) Not pass, but with major corrections within 12 months of the release of the result
(d) Fail

6.9 **Re-entry for examination**
Candidates for MPhil or PhD who are 'Not pass, but with major corrections' are permitted one re-entry to examination. There are three possible outcomes for candidates re-entered for examination:

(a) Pass
(b) Pass with minor corrections within 3 months of the release of the result
(c) Fail

6.10 **Confirmation of results**
Advice and instruction may be given by the Examiners at or following the viva, but results are not confirmed until they are released by Registry. All results are provisional until confirmed by the Registry.

6.11 **Failure and no right to re-enter**
Should the outcome be 'Fail', a candidate is not permitted to re-enter for examination.

6.12 **Re-entry procedure**
Candidates who are 'Not pass, but with major corrections' are required to submit re-entry forms and pay the relevant fee two months before the date of re-submission.

6.13 **Award of degree**

Candidates will be awarded the degree only when they have satisfied the examiners, *and* submitted to Registry one hard-bound copy for SOAS Library (in accordance with the SOAS Binding Notes for Research Degree Theses) along with one electronic copy and a completed E-thesis Access Agreement Form.

7.   <u>**APPEALS**</u>

7.1   Further information can be found in the *General and Admissions Regulations for Students* (Regulation 23) and in the School's *Appeals Policy.*