

ST GEORGE'S, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (SGUL)

REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

MPhil, PhD and MD(Res)

1. Programmes of study

1.1 SGUL will offer programmes of study leading to the award of the following research degrees of St. George's, a constituent College of the University of London.¹

(a) Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

(b) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

(c) Doctor of Medicine (MD(Res))

1.2 Programmes of study leading to the award of MPhil/PhD/MD(Res) will be determined for each student individually and consist primarily of research which is presented in the form of a thesis and assessed by oral examination, together with a compulsory element of competency development.

1.3 A student may be requested by their supervisor, as part of their programme of study leading to the award of MPhil/PhD/MD(Res), to attend one or more taught modules, normally forming part of another degree programme, if extra elements of training are required. In such cases the student will also be subject to any applicable regulations of that other degree programme. Such students could be permitted to undertake the assessments but any marks given would be for information and learning purposes only.

1.4 SGUL reserves the right to vary the content and delivery of programmes, to discontinue, merge or combine programmes and to introduce new programmes if such action is reasonably considered to be necessary. Such changes may occur either before or after admission. Students will be informed, as soon as is practicable, of any substantial changes which might affect their programme.

1.5 SGUL will publish a *Code of Practice for Research Degrees* on an annual basis, which will set out the framework for the management of research degrees and research degree students covering admission, supervision, progression, policy on teaching activities and submission. The Code of Practice is updated for publication for each academic year and each new version supersedes any previous versions. Supervisors and students are required to adhere to the *Code* in operation in each academic year.

¹ Students commencing study from October 2012. Alternative arrangements are in place for those students whose registration commenced prior to this date where the degree awarding power is the University of London.

2. Registration periods

2.1 In calculating the period of study for an individual student:

(a) account will be taken of whether the student is studying on a full or part time basis or has changed mode of study or qualification;

(b) any part of the programme of study from which the student has been granted exemption under the provisions of Section 4 of these regulations will be excluded.

(c) any period of time for which the student has been granted a formal interruption of studies under the provisions of Section 5 of these regulations will be excluded.

2.2 The normal minimum and maximum periods from initial registration to submission for research degrees are:

Category	Minimum	Maximum
MPhil		
Full-time	18 months	36 months
Part-time	36 months	72 months
PhD		
Full-time	24 months	48 months
Part-time	48 months	84 months
MD(Res)		
Full-time	12 months	24 months
Part-time	24 months	36 months

2.3 Excluding any periods of interruption: (a) students registered on full-time MPhil/PhD programmes must submit the thesis for examination within four years of full-time study; (b) students registered on part-time MPhil/PhD programmes must submit their thesis for examination within seven years of part-time study; (c) students registered on the full-time MD(Res) programme must submit their thesis for examination within two years of study (d) students registered on the part-time MD(Res) programme must submit their thesis for examination within three years of study. Students must submit their thesis for examination within the maximum registration period. It is, however, expected that they complete their degree within this time.

2.4 'Writing up' counts as part of the overall period of registration, and is one calendar year, regardless of mode of attendance. (See section 7 and *Code of*

Practice).

- 2.5 The RDC on behalf of the Academic Registrar may permit a student to interrupt their studies for up to a maximum of 24 months on financial or personal grounds. (if the request is for parental leave or health related, then this will not count towards the maximum period) on the recommendation of the student's supervisor and/or Postgraduate Coordinator and/or Head of Graduate School/Deputy Head of Graduate School & Associate Dean (Research Degrees) and agreed by Research Degrees Committee (this may be by Chair's action). Interruptions will normally only be granted for a maximum of 12 months in the first instance. Exceptional circumstances for consecutive interruptions over 12 months will be reviewed by the Research Degrees Committee. Interruptions cannot be backdated.
- 2.6 The Research Degrees Committee, on their own behest, can interrupt a student or at the request of the supervisory team, should this be deemed necessary.
- 2.7 Students who have interrupted their studies remain registered students of SGUL and subject to SGUL Regulations but do not have the right to attend classes, use SGUL facilities or receive tuition or supervision other than occasional access to tutors by arrangement.
- 2.8 The registration of a student will normally be terminated automatically once the maximum period of study ('registration period') is reached, and if the student has not entered the 'writing up' period. Extensions to a 'registration period' will be considered by the RDC (including by Chair's action) under the University's *Procedure for consideration for an extension to a maximum period of study*.

3. Admission

- 3.1 The admission and registration of students will be undertaken in accordance with the University's *Student Selection and Admissions Policy* and the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees*. All MPhil/PhD applicants are required to undertake an interview prior to an offer being made and the interview panel must include a member of the Research Degrees Committee, (this will be in addition to any member of the RDC who is on the proposed supervisory team). All applications will be reviewed by the Research Degrees Committee which has final responsibility for decisions on admission. The role of Research Degrees Committee is to ensure, in so far as it is possible, that an applicant is capable of achieving the standard of the award sought; that the subject of the research and research methods proposed will allow this to be achieved; that SGUL is able to ensure that suitably qualified and experienced staff act as supervisors; and that the appropriate resources required can be made available.
- 3.2 To be eligible for admission to an MPhil/PhD programme an applicant must:

- (a) be at least 18 year of age on the start date of the programme of study;
- (b) satisfy or be exempted from the general entrance requirements of St George's and which are available on the St George's website;
- (c) demonstrate proficiency in spoken and written English to the satisfaction of SGUL before commencing the programme of study, in accordance with the general entry requirements of SGUL as detailed on the SGUL website.
- (d) normally have an upper second-class honours degree (2:1) of a UK university or an overseas qualification of an equivalent standard obtained after a course of study extending over not less than three years in a university (or educational institution of university rank), in a subject appropriate to that of the course; *or*
- (e) a registrable qualification appropriate to the course to be followed awarded by a UK university in Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Studies, or a qualification of an equivalent standard appropriate to the course to be followed awarded by a university outside the UK; *or*
- (f) a postgraduate taught degree of a UK University or an overseas qualification of an equivalent standard in a subject appropriate to the course to be followed; *or*
- (g) a professional or other qualification obtained by written examinations and approved by SGUL as an appropriate entrance qualification for the MPhil or PhD degree.

3.3 To be eligible for admission to a MD(Res) programme an applicant must:

- (a) satisfy or be exempted from the general entrance requirements of St George's and which are available on the St George's website;
- (b) demonstrate proficiency in spoken and written English to the satisfaction of SGUL before commencing the programme of study, in accordance with the general entry requirements of SGUL as detailed on the SGUL website.
- (c) have obtained the MBBS degree of the University of London *or* some other registrable primary qualification in Medicine and be eligible for full registration or hold limited registration with the General Medical Council;
or
- (d) have obtained the BDS degree of the University of London and/or be eligible for registration with the General Dental Council.

(e) have a research proposal which has been approved (e.g. by an NHS Ethics Committee and R&D Committee);

- 3.4 Additional qualifications for admission may also be set as determined by SGUL.
- 3.5 Applicants possessing alternative qualifications may also be considered if they can demonstrate evidence of a broad general education, achievement of the specific learning outcomes required for the programme of study (including professional competencies and proficiency in spoken and written English). SGUL may set qualifying examinations where it is not satisfied that prior learning has been verified through reliable and valid assessment.
- 3.6 An applicant will be admitted only to a programme of study which SGUL has judged to be sufficiently different from any studies which the applicant has previously undertaken, whether at SGUL or elsewhere, except where such studies are to be counted as part of the applicant's programme of study at SGUL under the provisions of Section 4 of these regulations.
- 3.7 A contract is formed between SGUL and the applicant as soon as the offer of admission to SGUL has been accepted. Acceptance of an offer is expressly subject to the terms of this contract which include the requirement that students will comply with the conditions of registration and enrolment with SGUL.
- 3.8 Applications for the programmes of study must be made to a Research Degrees Committee in advance of one of the permitted start dates (01 October, 01 January and 01 April).

4. Exemption from part of the programme of study

- 4.1 An applicant who has followed elsewhere a programme of postgraduate research of at least 12 months of full-time study or 24 months of part-time study may be considered for exemption from part of an MPhil/PhD programme.
- 4.2 In order to qualify for consideration, the applicant's previous programme of research:
- (a) must be in a field and at a level appropriate to the proposed programme of study at SGUL;
 - (b) must have been undertaken at a higher education institution of appropriate standing and be certified by a competent officer at that institution;
 - (c) must have been undertaken no more than five years before the start date of the programme at SGUL;

(d) must not already have been taken into account in the award of a research degree.

5. Registration

- 5.1 Each student following a programme of study leading to the award of a PhD shall be registered in the first instance for the degree of MPhil, except where in granting exemption from part of the programme of study under the provision of Section 4 of these regulations, it is determined that the student has previously satisfied the requirements to be registered for the degree of PhD.
- 5.2 A student wishing to upgrade their registration to the degree of PhD must successfully complete a formal transfer examination as set out in section 9 below. The first attempt at upgrade must be completed within the first 9-12 months of full-time study and, exceptionally and with permission from the RDC, no later than 18 months of part-time study. If the student is not successful at the first attempt, they may be granted a second attempt before the end of the second year of full-time or the fourth year of part-time study.
- 5.3 A student who has upgraded their registration to the degree of PhD may opt to transfer back to the degree of MPhil at any time up to the date of entry to the final examination.
- 5.4 A student who has registered for the degree of MD(Res) may transfer to the degree of PhD by successfully completing a formal transfer examination as set out in section 9 of these regulations. If the application for transfer is successful, registration for the PhD will date from initial registration for the MD(Res) and registration for the MD(Res) will lapse.
- 5.5 A student who has transferred their registration from the degree of MD(Res) to the degree of PhD may opt to transfer back to the degree of MD(Res) at any time up to the date of entry to the final examination.

6. Annual enrolment and attendance

- 6.1 Students who have not interrupted their studies under the provisions of Section 2 must enrol for each year of their studies by paying, or by making arrangements acceptable to SGUL, to pay the appropriate tuition fees and any outstanding debts with SGUL and by completing the administrative procedures for enrolment as determined by the Academic Registrar.
- 6.2 It is a condition of enrolment that students agree to abide by and submit to the SGUL *General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study*, as made and amended from time to time by Senate.
- 6.3 Students registered for a research degree at St. George's are required to follow

a formal programme of study, including but not limited to induction and the Graduate School Skills programme (related-research training and transferable skills training), unless training has been demonstrated and evidenced from previous recent experience.

- 6.4 The principal supervision of the research project leading to the thesis shall be undertaken by a supervisory team, with a nominated lead supervisor, in line with the policy outlined in the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees* and the SGUL Licence to supervise. The supervisory team is confirmed at the point at which the registration is approved by Research Degrees Committee.
- 6.5 The *Code of Practice for Research Degrees* states the arrangements by which St. George's maintains appropriate standards and enhances the quality of its postgraduate research degree programmes.
- 6.6 Transfer to 'writing up' status is only permitted on the recommendation of a student's supervisory team and Postgraduate Coordinator, and then with the approval of Research Degrees Committee via Chair's action. During the 'writing up' period all students will be able to use SGUL facilities, but guidance for staff and students on expectations for access to supervision and laboratory facilities is provided within the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees*.
- 6.7 In order to transfer to 'writing up' status, each student will be required to submit a Thesis Completion Plan and the 'transfer to writing up' form, supported by their Supervisor, Postgraduate Coordinator and Deputy Head of the Graduate School (Research Degrees). This will normally take place after 36 months for a full-time student (or equivalent part-time). In addition to completing the approved minimum period of registration, students must meet conditions before being permitted to move into 'writing up status', as stated in the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees*:
- (a) have upgraded to PhD status or confirmed entry to MPhil only, if registered on the MPhil/PhD;
 - (b) be in a position to submit the thesis, normally within six months, and no later than 12 months (irrespective of whether full or part time mode of attendance);
 - (c) have met any other Institutional or Faculty requirements
- 6.8 Students must submit a thesis for examination before the end of the 'writing up' period. A student who does not submit a thesis before the end of the 'writing up' period and/or who reaches the maximum period of registration would, under these circumstances, need to apply for an extension to the registration period through the SGUL *Procedure for consideration for an extension to a maximum period of study* (see 2.8). The student would also

return to a fully enrolled status on the same mode of attendance as before and, as such, be liable to pay the appropriate full or part-time fee for the remainder of their registration on their programme of study. No further writing up period will normally be permitted. Only in exceptional circumstances will an extension to the writing up period be granted by Research Degrees Committee.² Formal periods of agreed interruption (outlined in Section 2 above) would be taken into consideration in determining the maximum period of registration.

7. Reviews of academic progress

7.1 Continuation of registration of the student is dependent on satisfactory progression and the approval of Research Degrees Committee. Each student's progress will be reviewed every six months (normally in a cycle of April and October each year) unless the student has interrupted their studies under the provisions of these regulations.

7.2 The purpose of six-monthly reviews will be:

(a) to consider the student's academic progress and work achieved to meet the objectives set for the research;

(b) to confirm satisfactory completion of, progress towards or exemption from, the requirements to develop research competencies;

(c) to assess the amount of research completed and the extent of work outstanding;

(d) to determine new objectives and competency development requirements and a schedule of work which will help to ensure timely submission of work for the final examination.

7.3 Six-monthly reports will be considered by the Research Degrees Committee which may make recommendations for changes to the student's programme of study or supervisory team as a result. The Committee may also request more frequent reports where it considers this to be necessary.

8. Transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD, or MD(Res) to PhD

8.1 Students initially registered for the degree of MPhil may apply to transfer to the degree of PhD.

8.2 Students registered for MD(Res), with the approval of Research Degrees Committee, may transfer to the MPhil/PhD degree, provided they have not entered for the degree for the examination of an MD(Res); or from the

² 6.6 applies to those students who commenced their studies from September 2012.

MPhil/PhD degree to the MD(Res) degree provided they have not entered for the examination of the MPhil or PhD degree.

- 8.3 Transfer will take the form of submission of a written report and oral examination by at least two members of academic staff independent of the student's supervisory team. Guidelines for transfer reports and information on the transfer process will be published by the Graduate School. The transfer report should normally contain the following:

The report should be typewritten with double spacing. The report should not exceed 30 pages in length (excluding references and illustrations). The report should contain:

- An abstract or summary.
 - A brief introduction giving the background and purpose of the project.
 - A methods section giving the essential details of methods and techniques used. You should, however, be prepared to justify your methods in more detail in the *viva voce* examination.
 - The main results achieved so far, including statistical analysis if appropriate. Figures, tables, diagrams, and micrographs should be included where appropriate but need not be of professional quality. All illustrations should be accompanied by a legend. An attempt should be made to show that the work forms a logical progression in your study.
 - A discussion section including a separate indication of the future work that you feel should be undertaken.
 - A reference section, using a consistent system (e.g., Harvard or Vancouver)
- 8.4 The transfer examiners will make a recommendation to the Research Degrees Committee which may be to:
- (a) recommend transfer from MPhil to PhD *or*
 - (b) recommend that the student remain registered for the degree of MPhil but have a second attempt at transfer within a specified timeframe (normally six months), with a revised report and/or second oral examination *or*
 - (c) recommend that the student remain registered for the degree of MPhil with no further attempt at transfer.
 - (d) recommend that the student is withdrawn from their studies
- 8.5 The Research Degrees Committee will formally consider the transfer examiners' report and decide on whether their recommendation should be accepted. After this decision, the student will be notified of the outcome.
- 8.6 If the application for transfer is successful registration for the PhD will date

from initial registration for the MPhil (or MD(Res) and registration for the MPhil (or MD(Res) will lapse.

- 8.7 Students will have a total of two opportunities to apply for transfer to PhD. The second application should normally be within six months of notification of the unsuccessful first attempt.
- 8.8 If the application to transfer is refused on a second occasion and the student is not satisfied with the decision that he/she remain registered for an MPhil (or MD(Res) and submit for that degree, he/she may appeal in writing to the Academic Registrar (see Section 17).

9. Entry or re-entry to the final examination

- 9.1 The decision to submit a thesis for examination rests with the student. The award of the degree, however, can only be made after the student has completed the minimum period of registration and has met any additional provisions for submission under these arrangements.
- 9.2 Each student must submit their formal entry or re-entry to the final examination at least four months before submitting the thesis. Information on the entry process and forms will be published from time to time by the Graduate School.
- 9.3 If a student does not submit the thesis within 18 months of submitting the entry form, their entry to the final examination will be cancelled and they will need to submit a new examination entry form.
- 9.4 Students will be examined in accordance with the regulations in force at the time they submitted their formal entry or re-entry for the examination.
- 9.5 Only one re-examination will be permitted.

10. Appointment of examiners

- 10.1 The examiners for the thesis will be nominated in the first instance by the student's lead supervisor. The supervisor may contact potential nominees informally in order to establish whether or not they would be willing and able to act as examiners. Under no circumstances is the student undergoing examination to be involved in this process, in any way.
- 10.2 The supervisor's nominations will be considered by a panel made up of the Head of Graduate School and/or Deputy Head of Graduate School (Research Degrees) and at least three other members of academic staff outside the supervisory team including the relevant Postgraduate Coordinator.

- 10.3 Two, or exceptionally three (if Research Degrees Committee agree), examiners will be appointed to act jointly for each student as follows:
- (a) At least one of the examiners will be external to the University of London at the time that the nomination is made;
 - (b) One examiner will normally be a member of staff, or a visiting lecturer, or a visiting professor at a college or institute of the University of London when the nomination is made (this may include a member of staff at SGUL). If no suitable individual is available from elsewhere in the University, a second examiner who is external to the University may be appointed.
- 10.4 The aim of the appointment process is to appoint examiners who will be able, and be seen to be able, to make a fair and independent assessment of the student and their thesis. To this end:
- (a) the examiners will be of sufficient authority in the discipline to command the respect of the wider academic community and familiar with current standards and procedures of research degrees in the UK and the Republic of Ireland;
 - (b) the examiners will be experts in the field of the thesis; whilst it is accepted that each examiner individually may not have expertise in all parts of the precise topic, the examiners together should be able to cover all aspects of the work to be presented by the student;
 - (c) the examiners will be able to make an independent assessment of the student and will not therefore have played an active role previously in assessing the student's academic progress on the programme of study or have had any other involvement with the student or supervisor which might reasonably lead to an allegation of bias;
- 10.5 An examiner from outside the UK or Republic of Ireland may be appointed as long as the panel is satisfied that the examiner is familiar with the British higher education system and the general requirements and procedures for the award of the relevant research degree. In addition, it is expected that the other appointed examiner has sufficient examination experience.
- 10.6 Following their formal approval by the panel and, a successful right to work check for any examiner not employed by SGUL, each examiner will be sent a letter of appointment and details of the rules, regulations and guidelines for the assessment of research degrees, along with the thesis. Normally this will be done electronically but an examiner may ask for a physical copy of the thesis and the cost of this should be covered by the student and/or their supervisory team.

11. Requirements of the thesis

MPhil/ PhD

- 11.1 The PhD thesis will comprise a piece of scholarly writing of not more than 60,000 words for the degree of MPhil and not more than 100,000 words for the degree of PhD with a full bibliography and references and with a satisfactory standard of literary presentation.

[Note: 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.]

- 11.2 The scope of the thesis will be what might reasonably be expected after two or at most three years of full-time study for the degree of MPhil and after three or at most four years of full-time study for the degree of PhD.

- 11.3 The thesis will consist of the student's own account of their investigations with the part played by the student in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow researchers clearly stated by the student and certified by the supervisor(s). The presentation of another person's work in any quantity or form without adequately identifying it and citing its source in a way which is consistent with good scholarly practice in the discipline and commensurate with the level of professional conduct expected from the student will be considered under the regulations for Examination Offences or the regulations for Misconduct. Students will be required to submit a draft version of their thesis to Turnitin and must provide a signed statement from them and counter-signed by their supervisor that this has happened, and the thesis is deemed acceptable.

- 11.4 The thesis must normally comprise of work that has been carried out since the student's initial registration for a research degree programme at SGUL, subject to provisions of section 4 of these regulations, and shall not have been submitted previously for a degree or comparable award of the University of London or any other university or institution. Any work which has been incorporated in the thesis and has been submitted previously in this way must be clearly indicated.

- 11.5 A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, will not be accepted for submission as a thesis. Research work already published or submitted for publication at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the student alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of the thesis but may be adapted to form an integral part of the thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of the thesis.

Publications derived from the work in the thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of the thesis and should be referenced in accordance with good academic practice.

- 11.6 The thesis will be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument.
- 11.7 The thesis will give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of the research and its findings and include a discussion of those findings. For the degree of PhD, the thesis will additionally indicate in what respects the findings appear to the student to advance the study of the subject and, in so doing, demonstrate objectivity, the capacity for judgement in complex situations and autonomous work in the field of study and a deep and synoptic understanding of that field, the student being able to place the thesis in a wider context.
- 11.8 The thesis for the degree of PhD will demonstrate research competencies relevant to the thesis and be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form, for example as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals.
- 11.9 The thesis will be written in English.
- 11.10 A candidate must include in each copy of their thesis a signed declaration that the work presented in the thesis is their own and that the thesis presented is the one upon which the candidate expects to be examined.

MD(Res)

- 11.11 The MD(Res) thesis will comprise a piece of scholarly writing of not more than 50,000 with a full bibliography and references and with a satisfactory standard of literary presentation.

[Note: 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.]

- 11.12 A thesis for the MD (Res) degree will deal with any branch of medicine, or surgery or medical or dental science.
- 11.13 It is a condition of the award of the degree that the clinical research involved in the thesis shall conform to high ethical standards. If the University is not satisfied on this point the degree will not be awarded, irrespective of the merit of the thesis in other respects.

- 11.14 The scope of the thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after two or at most three years of study.
- 11.15 The thesis shall consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree; [The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the candidate and certified by the supervisor.] Students will be required to submit a draft version of their thesis to Turnitin and must provide a signed statement from them and counter-signed by their supervisor that this has happened, and the thesis is deemed acceptable.
- 11.16 The thesis shall 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 and be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;
- 11.17 The thesis will give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, include discussion on those findings and indicate in what respects they appear to the candidate to advance the study of the subject; and, in so doing, demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study, (the candidate being able to place the thesis in a wider context), objectivity and the capacity for judgment in complex situations and autonomous work in that field;
- 11.18 The thesis will be written in English.
- 11.19 The greater proportion of the work submitted in a thesis must have been done after the initial registration for the degree.
- 11.20 A candidate will not be permitted to submit as their thesis one which has been submitted for a degree or comparable award of the University of London or any other university or institution, but a candidate shall not be precluded from incorporating in a thesis covering a wider field work which he/she has already submitted for a degree or comparable award of the University of London or any other university or institution provided that he/she shall indicate on their entry form and also on their thesis any work which has been so incorporated.
- 11.21 A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, will not be accepted for submission as a thesis. Research work already published or submitted for publication at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the student alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of the thesis but may be adapted to form an integral part of the thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of the thesis.

Publications derived from the work in the thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of the thesis and should be referenced in accordance with good academic practice.

- 11.22 A candidate must include in each copy of their thesis a signed declaration that the work presented in the thesis is their own and that the thesis presented is the one upon which the candidate expects to be examined.

12. Submission of the thesis for examination purposes

- 12.1 In accordance with the wishes of the examiners, they will be asked to submit either soft-bound copy/ies and/or electronic copies of their theses. The student may be required to submit a third soft bound copy of the thesis in the event that a third examiner is appointed at any stage in the examination process.

- 12.2 All components of the thesis must be presented for examination in a final form that is in accordance with the Instructions on the Submission, Format and Binding of Theses for Research Degrees.

- 12.3 A student may apply for permission to present the thesis in an alternative format where there is a demonstrable need. Applications must be submitted in writing by the student to the Graduate School no later than the time of the student's entry or re-entry to the examination and must be supported in writing by the student's supervisor(s). Applications will be considered by the Head of Graduate School or Deputy Head of Graduate School (Research Degrees). The student shall be notified in writing of the decision, the reasons for the decision and, if appropriate, the right to request within two weeks of notification that the decision be reviewed by the Principal or their nominee.

13. Conduct of the final examination

- 13.1 The final examination for MPhil/PhD and MD(Res) will be based on a thesis submitted by the student and an oral examination (*viva voce*), which, in all cases, will be conducted in English. The examiners may additionally require the student to undertake practical and/or written examinations on the subject of the thesis and/or other relevant subjects at times and places determined by SGUL.

- 13.2 A candidate shall take no part in the arrangement of the examination and have no formal contact with the nominated examiners, between the appointment of examiners and the oral examination.

- 13.3 All matters relating to the final examination must be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of previously unpublished material contained in a student's thesis until such time as the thesis has been placed in the public domain and any restrictions on access to the thesis which

have been granted by SGUL under the provisions of Section 17 of these regulations are removed.

- 13.4 Before holding the oral examination, or before preparing a joint report in those cases where the student is to be re-examined without holding an oral examination, each examiner will write an independent, preliminary report on the thesis. The preliminary reports will be submitted within two weeks of the examination but will not normally be made available to the student.
- 13.5 The oral examination will be held at SGUL unless both the student and SGUL agree that it is expedient to hold the oral examination elsewhere. The oral examination will normally be held within three months from the submission of the thesis. Online examinations or hybrid examinations are also permitted.
- 13.6 The student may invite the lead supervisor to attend the oral examination as an observer if they wish. The supervisor will not participate in the examination of the student unless invited to contribute by the examiners. Otherwise, the oral examination will be held in private.
- 13.7 Each oral examination will be chaired by an academic member of staff from St. George's, University of London. The independent chair may not be the candidate's supervisor, a member of the supervisory team or have played any significant part in the project or the assessment of the candidate (e.g., in formal progress reviews). The independent chair will oversee the oral examination, advise the examiners on the regulations but will take no part in the final academic judgement of the examiners. It is expected that the independent chair will normally have had experience of conducting at least one examination as an examiner. In exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, as an alternative or as an addition to an independent chair, and with the agreement of the candidate and the examiners, a recording of the oral examination may be made as an objective record of the examination. The recording will be retained by Graduate School for one year, after which time it will be destroyed. The recording would only be listened to in the event of an academic appeal or complaint, and then only by those investigating the appeal of complaint (section 17).
- 13.8 The student must bring to the oral examination a copy of their thesis paginated in the same way as the copies submitted.
- 13.9 After any oral examination, a joint final report shall be prepared by the examiners. The joint final report will be released routinely to students for their personal information.
- 13.10 Students with disabilities or other impairments may ask for reasonable adjustments to be made to the conduct of the final examination under the provisions of the *Procedure for Additional Assessment and Examination*

Arrangements. Such requests should be submitted to the SGUL Disability Coordinator at the time of the student's formal entry or re-entry to the final examination where possible and certainly no later than two weeks before the date of the oral examination.

- 13.11 Where a student feels that their academic performance on the date of the oral examination may be substantially affected by unexpected medical or other personal circumstances, the student should inform the examiners of their situation no later than the start of the oral examination so that they can decide on whether or not to proceed. The examiners may require the student to submit evidence of their condition within seven days.
- 13.12 A virtual *viva voce* may also be carried out if it is not possible for all parties to be in the same venue at the same time. Ideally, the Chair and student should be in the same venue but this is not mandatory. All virtual examinations must be carried out in accordance with the instructions at 13.7. SGUL recommends the use of Microsoft Teams for this process.

14. Outcome of the examination

- 14.1 If the thesis fulfils the criteria for the awards set out in Section 11 of these regulations and the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination.

A subset of Research Degrees Committee, including a minimum of Head of Graduate School and Deputy Head of Graduate School (Research Degrees) will consider examiner reports and recommendations before confirming the award, and reporting the outcome to a full meeting of Research Degrees Committee.

The options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination are as follows:

(a) where the student's thesis meets the criteria for the specified award (see Section 11 above) and the student satisfies the examiners in all elements of the assessment, the examiners will make a formal recommendation for award to the Research Degrees Committee; or

(b) where the student's thesis broadly meets the criteria for the specified award and the student satisfies the examiners in all other elements of the assessment, the examiners will make a formal recommendation for award to the Research Degrees Committee, subject to the completion of minor amendments within three months (see Regulation 14.4 below); or

(c) where the student's thesis is thought to be able to meet the criteria for the specified award with additional work, the examiners will make a formal

recommendation to the Research Degrees Committee that the student be permitted to make major amendments within six months. A further oral examination will not normally be required where a six-month amendment period is given (see Regulation 14.5 below); or

(d) where the student's thesis, though inadequate, is thought to be able to meet the criteria for the specified award, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present her/his thesis in a revised form within 18 months for the PhD and MD(Res) examination and 12 months for the MPhil. The examiners may at their discretion require a further oral examination to be held (see Regulation 14.6 below); or

(e) where the student's thesis meets the criteria but the student fails to satisfy the examiners in any other element, including the oral examination, the examiners may permit re-examination in that element without resubmission of the thesis. If the student fails to satisfy the examiners at re-examination the examiners will either:

(i) recommend to the Research Degrees Committee that the student be recorded as a fail; or

(ii) recommend the student for consideration for a related, lower degree (where available) under the procedure outlined in Regulation 14.7 below; or

(f) where the student's thesis does not meet the criteria for the specified award but is suitable for consideration for a related, lower degree (where available) the procedure in Regulation 14.8 below should be followed. Major or minor amendments, or the re-presentation of the thesis within 18 months may be permitted by the examiners before the student is considered for the related, lower degree; or

(g) where the student's thesis does not meet the criteria for the award of a research degree and the thesis is unsuitable for minor or major amendments or re-presentation within 18 months the examiners will recommend to the Research Degrees Examination Board that the student be failed. A student who fails to satisfy the examiners will not be permitted to re-enter for the examination.

All the oral examination outcomes apply to all students regardless of when they first registered.

14.2 In all cases where the outcome requires a resubmission of the thesis and/or a further form of examination students must submit the thesis by the deadline and/or undertake the examination on the date set. Failure to do so will normally result in the student failing the degree, unless there are significant

mitigating circumstances which are deemed acceptable by Research Degrees Committee.

- 14.3 When the two examiners appointed are unable to reach agreement, they shall report this to SGUL, and to the Research Degrees Committee, which shall appoint an additional examiner who is external to the University. The examiners may also recommend the appointment of a third examiner at any time, if they consider it desirable. Whenever possible the additional examiner shall be of Professorial status and shall have considerable experience of examining for a research degree of the University of London.

Minor amendments

- 14.4 Where the examiners have made a recommendation for award subject to minor amendments the student will be given up to *three* months from the date on which the student receives notification of the corrections required. One examiner will be required to confirm, using the appropriate proforma that the amendments are appropriate and have been made within the specified time-frame. Which examiner will do this will be agreed between the examiners themselves. If the student fails to make the amendments in the time-frame or the examiner is unable to confirm that the amendments are satisfactory the procedure outlined in Regulation 14.8 below should be followed.

Major amendments

- 14.5 Where the examiners have recommended that the student be permitted to make major amendments to their thesis, the student will be given *six* months from the date of receiving the required amendments. The examiners will confirm, using the relevant proforma that the amendments are appropriate and have been made within the specified time-frame. If the student fails to make the amendments in the specified time-frame or the examiner is unable to confirm that the amendments are satisfactory, the procedure outlined in Regulation 14.8 below should be followed.

Re-presentation of the thesis

- 14.6 Where the examiners have determined under Regulation 14.1(d) above that the student's thesis, though inadequate, is thought to be able to meet the criteria for the specified award, the student will be given *18* months (12 months for the MPhil) from the date of receiving the amendments to re-present her/his thesis in a revised form on one further occasion. A further oral examination may also be to be held. The examiners will confirm, using the relevant proforma that the amendments are appropriate and have been made within the specified time-frame. If the student fails to make the amendments in the specified time-frame or the examiner is unable to confirm that the

amendments are satisfactory, the procedure outlined in Regulation 14.8 below should be followed.

- 14.7 A student whose thesis is required to represent their thesis within 18 months will remain registered as a student. In the event that a student's revisions require more supervision and further access to SGUL laboratories or other facilities, he or she may be required to re-register as a fee-paying student for the period of supervision or access. A student who is required to resubmit must reenter for the examination by completing the entry form from Graduate School and will be required to pay a resubmission fee.

Failure to satisfy the examiners after minor or major amendments or after the representation of the thesis

- 14.8 Where a student fails to satisfy the examiners after minor or major amendments or after the re-presentation of the thesis under Regulations 14.4 or 14.5 or 14.6 above, the examiners will either:

(a) recommend to the Research Degrees Committee that the student be recorded as a fail; or

(b) recommend the student for consideration for a related, lower degree under the procedure outlined in Regulation 14.9 below. The examiners have the discretion to permit an additional calendar month for the student to make further minor amendments before making a final decision.

Consideration for a related lower award

- 14.9 Where additional time has already been granted for major or minor amendments or after the re-presentation of the thesis, no further additional time will normally be given to the student to prepare the thesis for examination under this regulation. For examination for the PhD degree only - where the examiners have recommended that the student be considered for a related, lower degree, the examiners may consider whether the student has met the criteria for the award of an MPhil degree given in Section 11 above. If the student's thesis does not meet the criteria, the examiners will recommend to the Research Degrees Committee that the student be failed.

15. Notification of results

- 15.1 Final results will be issued to students by the Academic Registrar or their nominee. Formal notification or confirmation of results will not be given to students deemed to be in tuition fee debt to the University.

15.2 The degree shall not be awarded until an appropriately hard bound copy and an electronic copy of the successful thesis, have been submitted to the Graduate School of SGUL, (see Section 12.2 of these regulations).

15.3 A diploma under the seal of SGUL shall be subsequently delivered to each candidate who has been awarded a degree. The diploma for the degree will bear the names of the student in the form in which they appear in the records of SGUL at the date of issue.

16. Availability of theses

16.1 One hard-bound and one electronic copy of a successful thesis shall be placed in the SGUL Library to be available for public reference, inter-library loans and copying.

16.2 A student may request a restriction of access (embargo) to the thesis for a period of up to two years in order to allow commercial exploitation of the research or pending a patent application. Restriction will not normally be granted where the thesis is said to contain sensitive or confidential material or material that would infringe the rights of any third party, as such material is inadmissible in a thesis submitted for a research degree.

16.3 Requests for restriction of access must be submitted in writing by the student to the Graduate School at the time of the student's entry for the examination and must be supported in writing by the student's supervisor(s). The request will be considered by the Head of Graduate School, who will decide, based on the particular circumstances.

16.4 The student shall be notified in writing of the Head of Graduate School's decision, the reasons for the decision and, if appropriate, the right to appeal against the decision by writing to the Principal within two weeks of notification.

17. Appeals against the outcomes of formal reviews and the final examination

17.1 Complaints/appeals not related to decisions of review panels or examinations will be considered under guidance issued in the Research Degrees Code of Practice and the published SGUL Student Complaints Procedure. This procedure relates applies to candidates for the following degrees: MPhil, PhD, MD(Res.) and includes formal reviews for MPhil to PhD and MD(Res) to PhD.

17.2 A student may appeal against the outcome of a formal review for upgrading to the degree of PhD, or the outcome of the final MPhil/PhD/MD(Res) examination, only on one or more of the following grounds:

(a) that the student's performance in the review or examination was substantially affected by circumstances of which the panel or examiners had not been made aware and which the student could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the outcome had been determined;

(b) that there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the review or examination, or administrative errors, where the process leading to the decision being appealed against was not conducted in accordance with the SGUL's procedure, such that there is reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome might have been different had the error not occurred;

(c) that there is evidence of prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the panel members or examiners such that the outcome should not be allowed to stand.

17.3 Appeals must be submitted in writing by the student to the Academic Registrar or their nominee within one month of the date on which the student was formally notified of the outcome of the review or examination. The student's submission must include:

(a) a statement of all the matters which the student wishes to be investigated and considered, which specifies how these matters relate to the grounds for appeal in paragraph 17.2 of these appeal regulations and lead the student to believe that the outcome of the review or examination was unfair;

(b) a statement of the student's desired outcome from the appeal;

(c) copies of all documentary evidence on which the student wishes to rely in the appeal, and where relevant an explanation for why the student was previously unable to submit any of the evidence or information for consideration by the panel or examiners;

(d) in the case of appeals made in reference to paragraph 17.2 of these regulations, a signed record by the student of all comments or remarks made by the panel members or examiners which, in the student's view, indicate prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment.

17.4 Where the Academic Registrar or their nominee determines that the student has met the grounds for appeal specified in paragraph 17.2, the case will be considered by a senior member of academic staff appointed by the Principal. This appointed member of staff will not be personally acquainted with the student and will also not be within the same Division. The appointed member of staff may dismiss any appeal which in their opinion does not fall within the remit of these regulations, fails to present reasonable grounds or fails to provide sufficient evidence in support of the student's claims. Where there are inadequate grounds for an appeal or insufficient evidence, the student may be

given one opportunity to address the deficiencies before a decision is taken to dismiss the appeal. Where the appeal does not fall within the remit of these regulations the appointed member of staff may recommend an alternative route for consideration of the student's concerns. If an appeal is considered to be frivolous or malicious, the student may be liable for disciplinary action under the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

- 17.5 Appeals which are not dismissed under the provisions of paragraph 17.4 of these regulations will be investigated by the Academic Registrar or their nominee on behalf of the appointed member of staff. The investigation will normally be conducted through written correspondence and may include requests to any individual or party for representations, additional information or an expert opinion.
- 17.6 A student who wishes to abandon or withdraw an appeal at any stage must inform the Academic Registrar immediately in writing. The appointed member of staff will determine how to proceed, taking account of the available evidence and the matters raised by the student in the appeal.
- 17.7 The findings from the investigation by the Academic Registrar will be presented in writing to the appointed member of staff, who will determine one of the following courses of action:
- (a) to reject the appeal, in which case the original outcome of the review or examination shall stand;
 - (b) to convene an Appeals Review panel, under the provisions of paragraph 17.11 of these regulations, to investigate the matter further through a formal hearing;
 - (c) to ask the original panel or examiners to reconsider their decision, normally after holding another review meeting or oral examination with the student, the outcome of which shall be final;
 - (d) to set the original review or examination aside and to arrange for another review or examination to be conducted, the outcome of which shall be final. In the case of an examination, this shall be with entirely new examiners appointed in accordance with Section 11 of these regulations. In the case of a review, stipulations may be made about the membership of the review panel.
- 17.8 In addition to the provisions of paragraph 17.1 of these regulations, the Academic Registrar may make any recommendations which they deem to be appropriate in the light of their investigation.
- 17.9 This procedure does not provide for requests for a review of the academic judgement of examinees to be considered.

- 17.10 The Academic Registrar will inform the student in writing of their decision and the reasons for it, as well as the student's right to request that the decision be reviewed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
- 17.11 An Appeals Review Panel shall comprise three persons from the School's Senate who are independent of the case, who are not members of the same Division/Faculty as the candidate making the appeal, and who are not personally acquainted with the candidate. The membership of the Appeal Review Panel will be:
- (a) a Professor or Associate Dean/Dean in the Chair;
 - (b) two other members of academic staff of the College, who have previously acted as an examiner for the award of a research degree.
- 17.12 An Appeals Review Panel, where appropriate, may seek academic and/or legal advice to assist it in making its decision. Advice will be sought from an appropriate source external to the School and independent of the examination. A legal representative on behalf of SGUL may attend the Appeals Review Panel.
- 17.13 The student has the right to appear before the Appeals Review Panel. The student may be accompanied to the hearing and/or represented by a person of their choice. A person who will be accompanied and/or represented must submit to the Academic Registrar not fewer than seven days before the date appointed for the meeting of the Panel the name, address and a description of the person accompanying/representing them and must state whether that person is a member of the University. The student's supervisor will be invited to attend the meeting if the student so wishes.
- 17.14 The examiners shall be invited to attend the meeting of the Appeals Review Panel.
- 17.15 The Appeals Review Panel shall normally conduct the proceedings in the presence of both the student and the examiners. The student and/or their representative have the right to be present throughout the meeting of the Panel, as have the examiners, until such time as the panel membership retires to consider its findings.
- 17.16 The documentation with which the Appeals Review Panel is provided shall include:
- (a) the written submissions of the student and of the examiners (should they wish to make a written submission);

(b) the final report(s) and the preliminary independent reports of the examiners;

(c) any other documentation either the student or the examiners wish to submit.

In addition, the Appeals Review Panel may request to see any other document it considers relevant to the appeal.

17.17 The procedure is for the student to address the Committee first and, during this part of the proceedings, they may call witnesses, if this has been agreed in advance. The examiners shall be invited to make any observations. Any questions by the student or the examiners shall be put through the Chair. The student may make concluding remarks. The members of the Appeal Review Panel may put questions to any of those present at any time during the proceedings. The Chair has the discretion to vary the procedure in any case where they consider it just to do so.

17.18 The Appeals Review Panel shall take one of the following decisions:

(a) to reject the appeal, in which case the result of the original examination stands;

(b) to request the examiners to reconsider their decision. The examiners shall normally be expected to hold another oral examination before reaching a decision as to whether the result should be changed;

(c) to determine that the original examination be cancelled and that a new examination be conducted. The new examination shall be conducted by examiners who did not take part in the original examination and were not involved in the appeal.

17.19 The decision of the Appeals Review Panel shall be final and shall be transmitted to the student in writing from the Academic Registrar, normally within ten working days of the meeting. The Appeals Review Panel shall provide reasons for its decision and note that it is the student's right to request that the decision be reviewed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

17.20 When a new examination is held in accordance with paragraph 17.7 above, new examiners shall be appointed in accordance with the procedure made by SGUL in accordance with the Regulations and Instructions to Examiners for the appropriate degree in force at the time the student originally entered the examination. The examiners may make any of the decisions open to the original examiners. The examiners will not be given any information about the previous

examination except the single fact that they are conducting a new examination following appeal.

- 17.21 The result of the original examination having been cancelled, the result of the new examination shall be accepted.

**Approved by Senate by Chair's action
29 May 2024**