

Regulations for Research Degrees:

Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Professional Doctorates  
PhD by Published Works

2021/22

Contents

[1. General Principles 4](#_Toc83037658)

[2. Programmes of study 6](#_Toc83037659)

[3. Research Degree Regulations 7](#_Toc83037660)

[3.1 Scope of application 7](#_Toc83037661)

[3.2 Duration of Programmes 7](#_Toc83037662)

[3.3 Admission 8](#_Toc83037663)

[3.4 Exemption from part of the programme of study 8](#_Toc83037664)

[3.5 Pre-registration 9](#_Toc83037665)

[3.6 Interim and Annual Monitoring Review 9](#_Toc83037666)

[3.7 Confirmation of Registration 11](#_Toc83037667)

[3.8 Upgrade from MPhil to PhD (for students initially registered on the MPhil Programme) 12](#_Toc83037668)

[3.9 Change to mode of study 14](#_Toc83037669)

[3.10 Extensions and interruption of studies 14](#_Toc83037670)

[3.11 Causes of concern 15](#_Toc83037671)

[3.12 The Supervisory Team 16](#_Toc83037672)

[3.13 Completing status 17](#_Toc83037673)

[3.14 Examination of Research Degrees 18](#_Toc83037674)

[3.15 Examiners 18](#_Toc83037675)

[3.16 Examination arrangements 19](#_Toc83037676)

[3.17 Examination outcomes 21](#_Toc83037677)

[3.18 Copyright and intellectual property 23](#_Toc83037678)

[3.19 Award and Conferment 23](#_Toc83037679)

[3.20 Appeals and complaints 23](#_Toc83037680)

[3.21 Academic Misconduct 23](#_Toc83037681)

[Annex 1 - Regulations for Professional Doctorates 24](#_Toc83037682)

[1. Structure of Programme 24](#_Toc83037683)

[2. Duration of Programme 24](#_Toc83037684)

[3. Assessment of Taught Courses 25](#_Toc83037685)

[4. External Examiners 25](#_Toc83037686)

[5. Standard Progression Points 25](#_Toc83037687)

[6. Completion of Part One and Eligibility to be Assessed for Progression to Part Two 25](#_Toc83037688)

[7. Progression to Part Two 26](#_Toc83037689)

[8. Boards of Examiners 27](#_Toc83037690)

[9. Professional Master’s Degrees 27](#_Toc83037691)

[Annex 2 - Regulations for PhD by Published Works 28](#_Toc83037692)

[1. Eligibility 28](#_Toc83037693)

[2. Application 28](#_Toc83037694)

[3. Supervisors 29](#_Toc83037695)

[4. Examination Arrangements 29](#_Toc83037696)

[5 Examination Process 30](#_Toc83037697)

[6. Submission of revised thesis 33](#_Toc83037698)

[7 Disagreement between examiners 33](#_Toc83037699)

[8 Copyright and intellectual property 34](#_Toc83037700)

[9 Award and Conferment 34](#_Toc83037701)

[10 Appeals and complaints 34](#_Toc83037702)

[11 Academic Misconduct 34](#_Toc83037703)

[Annex 3 – Doctoral Degree Awards and Intermediate Awards 36](#_Toc83037704)

**Introduction**

St Mary’s University produces a suite of documents that outline the formal regulations and procedures for postgraduate research degrees and provide operational guidance to students and staff:

* *The Regulations for Research Degrees* outline the rules governing the formal stages of postgraduate research programmes including registration, progression and assessment.
* The *Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* details the procedures and practices that apply to all aspects of undertaking and administering postgraduate research programmes.

These and other key documents are available on St Mary’s Research website.

## 1. General Principles

1.1 St Mary’s University assures its academic standards for research degrees through engagement with external reference points established by the Quality Assurance Agency Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and through the QAA *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality – Research Degrees*. This is demonstrated by the development and implementation of the *Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.

The standards of the University’s awards are regulated through the *Regulations for Research Degrees*.

1.2 The rules and procedures relating to research degrees’ work, including written and oral examinations, are set out in this document.

These Regulations exist to ensure that students are assessed fairly and objectively, while maintaining the University’s high academic standards.

Ignorance of these rules and assessment requirements will not constitute a defence in any disciplinary procedures. Queries about the Regulations should be directed to the Head of Registry.

1.3 The University Regulations on assessment aim to make the assessment processes inclusive, fair, consistent and clear to both staff and students. The Regulations also reflect the expectations and relevant indicators of the QAA *UK Quality Code*.

1.4 These Regulations and their underlying principles apply to provision approved by the University and delivered by the University or by its collaborative partners leading to awards or academic credit of the University. They apply to all work that formally contributes to the award of the University, at whatever point in a programme the work is undertaken.

1.5 Collaborative Partner institutions authorised by the Academic Board to deliver St Mary University’s research degrees on its behalf shall comply with these Regulations.

1.6 Any exemption or variation from these Regulations shall be exceptional (for example to address the requirements of a professional, statutory and regulatory Body) and must be approved in advance by the Research Degrees Committee and Academic Board.

1.7 These Regulations will be applied consistently to ensure equity of treatment of students regardless of their discipline or their mode of study.

1.8 These Regulations have been approved by Academic Board and the University Research Committee. Responsibility for their implementation and application lies with the Research Degrees Committee. They should be read in the context of the *Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.

## 2. Programmes of study

2.1 The University offers programmes of study on a full- and part-time basis leading to the award of:

(i) Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

(ii) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

and the following Professional Doctoral programmes:

(iii) Doctor of Education (EdD)

(iv) Doctor of Ministry (DMin)

(v) Professional Doctorate in Strength & Conditioning (DProf)

2.2. Programmes of study are determined for each student individually and will consist primarily of supervised research, assessed through a submission of work and an oral examination, together with a complementary programme of research skills development.

2.3 An MPhil is awarded, following an approved programme of supervised research, to either:

(i) A student who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners;

(ii) A student who, having produced published work, artefact or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it within its academic context, has presented that material and defended the commentary by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

2.4 A PhD is awarded, following an approved programme of supervised research, to either:

(i) A student who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners;

(ii) A student who, having produced published work, artefact or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it within its academic context resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge, has presented that material and defended the commentary by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

2.4 The degree of Doctor of Philosophy may also be awarded on the basis of a portfolio of published work, (see Annex 2), in which case the programme of study will consist of supervised preparation of the portfolio and a supporting statement.

2.5 This route to a doctorate is for candidates who have research publications which are already published and in the public domain. It is expected that the candidate’s submission will demonstrate that, through the course of their research, they have considerable professional knowledge in their field at least equivalent to that gained by PhD students through the supervision process. The candidate does not have a supervisory team but a Director of Studies will be appointed by the University to assist and guide the candidate as necessary.

2.6 Professional Doctoral programmes consist of a taught element (Part 1) and a programme of supervised research leading to the preparation and submission of a thesis (Part 2). Such programmes conform to the principles of the following Regulations and are also subject to the regulations contained in Annex 1.

## 3. Research Degree Regulations

### 3.1 Scope of application

3.1.1 These Regulations apply to programmes of study leading to the award of Master of Philosophy, Doctor of Philosophy, including the Doctor of Philosophy awarded on the basis of a portfolio of published work, and Professional Doctorates.

3.1.2 The Regulations apply to students who register for PhD and MPhil degrees from 1st April 2021.

3.1.3 The Regulations will also apply from 1st May 2021 for students currently registered on PhD and MPhil programmes at Liverpool Hope University or the University of Surrey, who wish to transfer to a St Mary’s award.

### 3.2 Duration of Programmes

3.2.1 The minimum and maximum periods of study for the awards covered by these Regulations are as listed below**:**

**Programme Lengths**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Programme** | **Minimum period of registration** | **Maximum period of registration** |
| MPhil Full-time | 20 months | 36 months |
| MPhil Part-time | 40 months | 60 months |
| PhD Full-time | 30 months | 48 months |
| PhD Part-time | 48 months | 84 months |
| PhD by published work | 12 months | 18 months |
| Professional Doctorate Part-time | 48 months | 84 months |

### 3.3 Admission

3.3.1 The minimum requirements for admission to a Research Degree programme of study are that an applicant should:

(i) Submit an outline research proposal with the potential to satisfy the criteria for the intended award;

AND  
(ii) Normally possess a Master’s degree which matches the descriptor for a Level 7 qualification in the UK Framework of Higher Education Qualifications;

OR An equivalent academic qualification;

OR Evidence of equivalent experience and learning acquired in a professional

context;

(iii) Evidence of proficiency in spoken and written English at IELTS 6.5 in

accordance with St Mary’s standards for English language requirements.

3.3.2 An applicant may not be admitted to a research degree unless the applicant has first been accepted through the admissions procedures specified in the *Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.*

3.3.3 For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of published work, applicants are required in addition to have an extensive record of published work which is admissible for consideration as academic work and must demonstrate that they can produce scholarly writing at an appropriate level. See Annex 2.

They will be required to provide evidence of:

(i)The publications on which the application is based must have been accepted for publication or published.

(ii) At least five publications as sole or co- author.

3.3.4 For the Professional Doctorates (see Annex 1), applicants should:

(i) Submit a summary statement to indicate how undertaking study at the level of a professional doctorate relates to the applicant’s professional context;

(ii)Have at least three years’ significant and relevant experience in a professional area appropriate to the programme of study.

3.3.5 An applicant will only be admitted to a research degree programme where:

(i) The University is able to provide appropriate supervision and training;

(ii) The applicant would have access to the necessary resources;

(iii) Any issues relating to commercial funding, intellectual property and research ethics have been considered and are being addressed appropriately.

### 3.4 Exemption from part of the programme of study

3.4.1 An applicant who has undertaken, but not completed a programme of postgraduate research at another university or at St Mary’s University but has subsequently withdrawn from studies, may be considered for exemption from part of a programme of study at the University.

3.4.2 In order to qualify for consideration, the applicant’s previous research must:

(i)Correspond, in terms of the level and area of work, to the proposed project of research at the University;

(ii) Have been undertaken at a university, or a similar institution of appropriate

standing and be certified by a competent officer at that institution;

(iii) Have been undertaken over a period of at least 12 months of full-time study,

or 24 months of part-time study no more than seven years before the proposed

date of initial registration at the University;

(iv) Not have been counted already towards the award of a Research Degree

at any institution.

3.4.3 Applicants to Professional Doctorates may under exceptional circumstances request exemption, on the basis of prior certificated learning, from one or more of the Part One courses. Such students will be expected to complete the programme in less time than those admitted to study the full programme. The reduced duration will be calculated on the basis of the number of credits from which the student has been exempted, and shall be communicated to the student as part of the formal notification of the outcome of the request for exemption.

3.4.4 Applications for exemption are considered by the Research Degrees Committee before the applicant first registers on the programme of study. If the application is approved, the Committee will clarify whether any conditions apply.

3.4.5 In all cases a student must complete at least 12 months of full-time study or 18 months of part-time study at the University before submitting work for the final examination, subject also to the requirements of final submission.

### 3.5 Pre-registration

3.5.1 Excluding applicants to Professional Doctorates and Doctor of Philosophy by published work, applicants who fulfil the admissions requirements and the potential to study for a PhD programme but whose proposal requires further development, may be offered the opportunity to pre-register on the programme.The pre-registration period is designed to enable students to develop their research proposals with the assistance of the proposed Director of Studies and the use of University resources.

3.5.2 The pre-registration period is for a maximum of twelve months and the applicant is required to enrol with and pay fees to the University.

3.5.3 During the pre-registration period, applicants work with potential supervisors to develop and improve their research proposal for submission with an accompanying application for full registration on the PhD programme.

### 3.6 Interim and Annual Monitoring Review

3.6.1 Students will be required to undertake an interim and annual review with their supervisory team to monitor and support their progress except for those students registered for PhD by published work and Part 1 of the Professional Doctorate (see Annex 1).

3.6.2 **The Interim Review**

Directors of Study are required to produce an interim report on student progress against any previously determined objectives; identify any issues to note with the research supervisory arrangements or resources available, proposing strategies to overcome these; and a note of any actions required in the next six months to be revisited at the Annual Monitoring Review.

The report will be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee for review and action as necessary.

3.6.3 **The Annual Monitoring Review**

The purpose of the annual monitoring review is to monitor the progress of each student on a regular yearly basis and to ensure that the supervisory process is working well.

* + 1. Each student must submit an Annual Monitoring Report. This will usually be between May and July each year. A student who is taking an approved interruption of studies at that time must submit instead an update of their plans not more than two months after re-registering. The Annual Monitoring Report comprises:

(i) A record of the supervisions which have taken place over the previous year;

(ii) A written account of work which has been undertaken and a plan of work

which remains to be done, including where appropriate a plan for the format

of the final submission;

(iii) An account of research training undertaken by the student during the year,

including sessions attended in person or accessed online on the

Researcher Development Programme.

* + 1. The Director of Studies will arrange a meeting between the student and all the members of the supervisory team to discuss the Annual Report and the student’s progress generally. Each member of the supervisory team will add written comments to the Annual Monitoring Report, recording the outcomes of the meeting and giving views on the student’s progress over the previous year and the plan of work which remains to be done.
    2. The Annual Monitoring Report, including the supervisors’ written comments, will be considered by the Research Degrees Committee against the following criteria:

1. Evidence of satisfactory progress over the previous year;

(ii) Evidence that the student is working at an appropriate level;

(iii) Evidence that any developments or changes to the project are appropriate

and can be supported;

(iv) Evidence that the plan of work which remains to be done can realistically

be achieved within the normal period of study.

* + 1. The Research Degrees Committee will determine any action to be taken in light of the Annual Monitoring Report. This may include:

1. Confirmation that progress satisfactory and that the student is eligible to re-register for the coming academic session;

(ii) Confirmation that progress is not yet satisfactory and that re-assessment is

required in order to become eligible to re-register for the coming academic

session.

(iii) An application to temporarily interrupt studies;

(iv) Changes to the supervisory arrangements;

(v) Progress is considered not satisfactory and studies are terminated or, in the

case of a student whose registration at PhD level has previously been

confirmed in accordance with Regulation 3.7 below, a recommendation is

made to re-register at MPhil level and submit within the timeframe outlined

in Regulation 3.2 above.

(vi) In exceptional circumstances, students may request to defer their annual

monitoring review meeting due to mitigating circumstances as set out in the

Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

* + 1. A student will only be eligible for a single re-assessment opportunity in any given academic session. Where a student has been reassessed, the annual review will normally lead to one of the following two outcomes:

(i) Progress now satisfactory: eligible to re-register for the coming academic session;

(ii) Progress still not satisfactory: studies terminated.

### 3.7 Confirmation of Registration

3.7.1 PhD students (excluding those who are on the route for a PhD by published work or are on Professional Doctorate programmes) will be required to have a formal confirmation review to confirm their registration.

* + 1. Confirmation of registration will normally take place 15 to 24 months after registration for full-time students and 24 to 36 months for part-time students.
    2. The Confirmation Review Report presented by the student must include supporting evidence as follows:

(i) A significant piece of scholarly work produced by the student, such as draft

chapters for the final submission of normally 20,000 words in length,

or in the case of a student who is undertaking performance- or practice-

based research a combined submission of scholarly writing and creative

work in the ratio which has been agreed with the supervisory team; the

content of the piece of scholarly work should be such as to provide

evidence demonstrating the student's ability to sustain work and

scholarly writing at doctoral level;

(ii) A written account of work which has been undertaken and a plan of work

which remains to be done, including a plan for the format of the final   
 submission.

* + 1. The Director of Studies will convene a panel composed of an independent Chair and the supervisory team. A panel event will take place attended by the student in which his/her work will be reviewed.
    2. The independent Chair will:

(i) Have undertaken confirmation training if they have had no prior experience

of reviewing a confirmation;

(ii) Not have had any involvement with the project or student that could give   
 rise to a conflict of interest.

* + 1. The Confirmation Registration panel will assess the application against the following criteria and make recommendations on the outcome to the Research Degrees Committee:
    2. Evidence from the work which has been undertaken and the plan of work which remains to be done that the project has the potential to meet the requirements for the final submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, including the intended contribution of the research and its scope for originality;

(ii) Evidence demonstrating the student’s ability to sustain work and scholarly   
 writing at doctoral level;

(iii) The adequacy of progress to date with the programme of work and the   
 suitability of any adjustments made to the project, including steps taken to   
 address any problems which have been encountered;

(iv) Evidence that the plan of work which remains to be done can realistically   
 be achieved within the normal period of study;

(v) The suitability of the plan for the format of the final submission.

* + 1. The confirmation of registration review will normally lead to one of the following two outcomes:

(i) Progress satisfactory and registration confirmed: all subsequent annual

registrations to be for PhD;

(ii)Progress unsatisfactory and the student’s registration should not be   
 confirmed at this stage, but that the student may resubmit for confirmation   
 of registration on a single occasion only, normally three months later for full-   
 time students or six months later for part-time students, with or without   
 further oral examination.

* + 1. The independent Chair will supply the candidate with a written statement within a reasonable period after the meeting of the action to be taken in order to satisfy the criteria for confirmation of registration.
    2. Students are only eligible for a single re-assessment which will normally lead to one of the following three outcomes:
    3. (i) The student be permitted to continue registration on the degree;

(ii) Progress satisfactory for MPhil only;

(iii) Progress unsatisfactory, studies terminated.

3.7.12 The Chair will submit a recommendation to the Research Degrees Committee who will confirm the outcome for each student.

### 3.8 Upgrade from MPhil to PhD (for students initially registered on the MPhil Programme)

* + 1. Students who initially choose to register for an MPhil may apply, with the approval of their Director of Studies, to undertake the upgrade to PhD process.
    2. This process is to determine, on the basis of the work which has been undertaken for the MPhil and the plan of work which remains to be done, whether a student who has registered initially for the degree of Master of Philosophy should be permitted to undertake further study with the aim of submitting work for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
    3. The application to upgrade is normally made shortly after the student has produced a significant piece of scholarly work and should normally be submitted within two years of initial registration for full-time students and three years of initial registration for part-time students.

3.8.4 The application must include supporting evidence, as follows:

(i) A significant piece of scholarly work produced by the student, such as a   
 draft chapter for the final submission of approximately 20,000 words in

length, or in the case of a student who is undertaking performance- or

practice-based research a combined submission of scholarly writing and

creative work in the ratio which has been agreed with the supervisory   
 team; the content of the piece of scholarly work should be such as to   
 provide evidence demonstrating the student's ability to sustain work and   
 scholarly writing at doctoral level;

(ii) A written account of work which has been undertaken and a plan of work  
 which remains to be done, including a plan for the format of the final   
 submission.

* + 1. An upgrade panel will be convened by the Director of Studies, comprising   
       an independent Chair and the supervisory team.

3.8.6 The upgrade panel will assess the application against the following criteria   
and make recommendations on the outcome to the Research Degrees   
Committee:

(i) Evidence from the work which has been undertaken and the plan of work   
 which remains to be done and that the project has the potential to meet the  
 requirements for the final submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,   
 including the intended contribution of the research and its scope for   
 originality;

(ii) Evidence demonstrating the student’s ability to sustain work and scholarly   
 writing at doctoral level;

(iii) The adequacy of progress to date with the programme of work and the   
 suitability of any adjustments made to the project, including steps taken to   
 address any problems which have been encountered;

(iv) Evidence that the plan of work which remains to be done can realistically   
 be achieved within the normal period of study;

(v) The suitability of the plan for the format of the final submission.

3.8.7 Having considered the upgrade panel’s recommendations, the Research

Degrees Committee will:

(i) Approve the upgrade to PhD; or

(ii) Not approve the upgrade to PhD and permit the student one further attempt; or

(iii)Not approve the upgrade and recommend that the student remains on the   
 MPhil programme.

* + 1. Upgrades which are approved are backdated to the date of the student’s initial registration on the programme i.e. the maximum time allowed to submit the thesis will be calculated on the basis of the PhD durations set out in Regulation 3.2 starting from the date of initial registration for the MPhil.
    2. If a student does not achieve the upgrade on the first attempt, s/he will be given one further opportunity to submit a revised application within three months or six months later for part-time students. The independent chair will provide feedback on the student’s first application within a reasonable period of time.
    3. If a student does not achieve the upgrade after two attempts, or does not submit an application, they will remain registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy.
    4. For a second examination, the only outcomes shall be:

(i) Progress justifies transfer: all subsequent annual registrations to be for PhD;

(ii) Progression unsatisfactory: remain on MPhil and all subsequent   
 registrations to be MPhil;

(iii) Progress unsatisfactory: studies terminated.

* + 1. A student who has achieved the upgrade may transfer back to the degree of Master of Philosophy at any time up to the date of entry for the final examination, in which case the Research Degrees Committee will clarify the period of study and any deadlines or other conditions which apply.

### 3.9 Change to mode of study

* + 1. Students may, at any point up to one year before the end of the maximum duration between initial registration and the submission of the thesis or portfolio, formally request a transfer from part-time study to full-time study or vice-versa.
    2. Such requests shall be initially considered by the Director of Studies and the supervisory team. The Director of Studies will submit a recommendation to the Research Degrees Committee for approval. Registry Services will inform the student that the change of mode of study has been approved and the student’s programme end date will be adjusted accordingly.

### 3.10 Extensions and interruption of studies

* + 1. A student retains the right to permanently withdraw from a research degree.

3.10.2 **Extension of Studies**

The Research Degrees Committee will consider requests for an *extension* where there has been:

* 1. Failure or unavailability of specialist equipment or resources required for research that causes significant delay to progress that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal;
  2. A gap in supervision where a supervisor leaves or is absent for more than three months and cover has not been put in place that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal. There will need to be a demonstrable impact on the progress of the project;
  3. Where there has been a breakdown in the supervisory team/student relationship that has impeded progression on the programme. This will need to be evidenced by notes from meetings with either the supervisory team, Doctoral Programme Lead or Research Services;
  4. Physical and/or mental health-related circumstances that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal.
     1. A student may apply for an extension of up to six months to the maximum period of registration or re-submission period, by submitting a request to the Research Degrees Committee. If a student is not granted an extension and has reached the maximum period of registration, then their registration will be terminated on the grounds that it has lapsed. A request for extension requires the support of the supervisory team.
     2. All requests for extension will be made by the student on the standard pro-forma and accompanied by supporting evidence. Requests for extension without supporting evidence will not be considered by the Research Degrees Committee. Students are required to provide a timeline for submission with interim, testable milestones.

* + 1. Students in receipt of funding are advised to check the terms of their scholarship before making a request for extension. International students are also advised to check their visa status before making a request for extension.

* + 1. Retrospective applications for extensions will not be considered without valid extenuating circumstances.

3.10.7 **Interruption of Studies**

The Research Degrees Committee will consider requests for an *interruption of studies* where there has been:

1. Bereavement through the death of a close relative or significant other that in   
   employment would lead to a reasonable employer to grant compassionate   
   leave. In such cases the Committee will require independent evidence of the   
   nature of the relationship;

(ii) Serious short-term illness or accident of a nature that, in employment, would   
 lead a reasonable employer to agree absence on sick leave;

(iii) A long-term (chronic) health problem suddenly worsening;

* 1. For part-time students in full-time employment only, a significant increase in their workload due to circumstances beyond their control. Those on the full-time programme who experience similar circumstances will be encouraged to change to part-time study, in the first instance;
* A period of maternity, paternity, or adoption leave taken;
* A gap in supervision where a supervisor leaves or is absent for more than three months and cover has not been put in place;
  1. A break down in the supervisory team/student relationship resulting in a

material impact on the progress of the project;

* 1. A recommendation from Student Wellbeing Services for a learning adjustment that necessitates a temporary withdrawal;

(ix) Difficulties in research beyond the student’s control;

(x) Failure or unavailability of specialist equipment or resources required for   
 research that causes significant delay to progress;

(xi) Other exceptional circumstances.

* + 1. Where an interruption of studies is approved, the student’s registration will be extended by the same period of time as the withdrawal period.
    2. Retrospective applications for interruption of studies will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances.

3.10.10Students in receipt of funding are advised to check the terms of their scholarship before making a request for temporary withdrawal. International students are also advised to check their visa status before making a request for temporary withdrawal.

### 3.11 Causes of concern

**Unsatisfactory academic progress**

* + 1. A student’s registration may be terminated on the grounds of unsatisfactory academic progress. Consideration of academic progress is undertaken at the interim and annual review points during each academic year as well as the confirmation of registration review and upgrade, where requested, from MPhil to PhD. The recommendation will be ratified by the Research Degrees Committee.

**Loss of contact**

* + 1. In cases where the student appears to have withdrawn from the research degree and failed to make contact with the Faculty/Institute (normally for three months or more), it will be sufficient for a recommendation of termination to be made to the Research Degrees Committee solely on the basis of evidence showing that reasonable efforts have been made to contact the student at the last email provided and warning the student of the consequences of not contacting the Faculty/Institute within ten working days.

**Fitness to study**

* + 1. The University’s *Fitness to Study Policy -*  <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/policies/fitness-to-study.aspx> applies to research

students and should be consulted where there are concerns about a student’s fitness

to study and/or practice.

### 3.12 The Supervisory Team

* + 1. Each student will be assigned a Director of Studies and, except for those registered for PhD by published work, one research supervisor as a minimum.
    2. In addition to the Director of Studies and research supervisor/s, a research adviser may be allocated to a supervisory team due to their specific subject specialist knowledge pertinent to the student’s programme of research.
    3. The Faculty/Institute Doctoral Programme Lead, who is responsible for the overview of the research degree programmes in each Faculty/Institute will follow the process for changing a supervisory team as outlined in the *Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and seek approval from the Research Degrees Committee for any changes to supervisory teams.
    4. Students will have a minimum number of supervisory sessions per calendar year as specified in the *Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.*

3.12.5 Students and supervisors will agree at the outset a programme of discipline-

specific and skills courses, as necessary. Students and supervisors will regularly review this and formally report on progress every six months.

* + 1. Student progress will be formally monitored at six-month intervals through the interim review and end of year review procedures (see Regulation 3.6).
    2. The responsibilities of members of the supervisory team are set out in the *Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.*

***Director of Studies***

3.12.8 The Director of Studies will be responsible for the overall direction and development of the student’s programme of study. They will normally:

* 1. Hold a doctoral award;
  2. Possess academic expertise in an area relevant to the student’s discipline;
  3. Hold the non-probationary appointment of Professor, Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow or Research Fellow at the University and have an expectation of holding such an appointment with the University for the remainder of the student’s period of study;
  4. Have a minimum of one successful completion at doctoral programme level.

***Research Supervisor***

3.12.9 The research supervisor should normally:

(i) Hold an appointment as Professor, Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Research Fellow, Professorial Teaching Fellow, Senior Teaching Fellow and Teaching Fellow and have an expectation of holding such an appointment with the University for the remainder of the student’s period of study, or else should be a suitably qualified and experienced individual from outside the University;

(ii)Hold a doctoral award and/or;

(iii)Have had prior experience of supervising doctoral students and hold a level 7 qualification;

(iv) Possess academic expertise in an area relevant to the student’s discipline.

***Research Adviser***

3.12.10A research adviser may be appointed in situations where additional  
expertise is required which would be of benefit to the research student and project.

### 3.13 Completing status

3.13.1 A student may apply to register at the beginning of an academic year in the completing status mode whilst they are in the final stages of preparing the thesis or portfolio. The following criteria must be fulfilled for a student to transfer to the completing status mode:

(i) That the Director of Studies confirm that they are satisfied that submission of the thesis or portfolio within six months is feasible;

(ii) That all data collection is complete and the students will no longer be using specialist resources for their research.

3.13.2 In order for the request to be considered, the following must be provided:

(i) A detailed plan covering both student and supervisory team responsibilities for submission within the first six months of completing status or by the end of registration, if completing status will last for fewer than six months;

(ii) A draft table of contents for the thesis;

(iii) An indication on the annual monitoring review outcome that the supervisory team supports the transfer to completing status.

3.13.3 The application to register for completing status will be agreed by the Doctoral Programme Lead (or equivalent) in the Faculty/Institute and will be approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

3.13.4 If the thesis is not submitted within the initial six month period of completing

status, then an updated plan for submission within the remaining period of

registration will be required in order to continue on completing status.

3.13.5 Retrospective applications for completing status will not be considered.

### 3.14 Examination of Research Degrees

**Requirements for the final submission for the degree of MPhil, Professional**

**Doctorates or PhD (except that by published works).**

3.14.1 Except for the provisions of (b) below, the final submission for the degree of

Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy will comprise a piece of scholarly

writing with a full bibliography and references. The submission will not exceed 60,000 words for the degree of Master of Philosophy and the Professional Doctorate programme and 100,000 words for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The word counts include references in the text, footnotes and endnotes but exclude the bibliography and any appendices.

3.14.2 A student who has undertaken performance- or practice-based research may include in the final submission, creative work which has been generated as an integral part of the research process and that, together with the piece of scholarly writing, substantiates the argument(s) of the research project. The form that the final submission takes will be determined at the point of project confirmation, so that the piece of scholarly writing is a minimum of between 20,000 and 30,000 words in length and the scope of the submission as a whole meets the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy, as appropriate. The final submission must be accompanied, where appropriate, by an archival record (such as video or photographic record) of the candidate’s practice. Such a record must be in a standard retrievable form.

3.14.3 The thesis or portfolio will be temporarily bound before it is examined. Three copies

will be submitted to Research Services for distribution.

3.14.4 No alterations or additions may be made to a thesis or portfolio after it has been

submitted, except with the agreement of the examiners.

3.14.5 Following recommendation by the examiners that an award be made, the final

version of record of the thesis or portfolio will be uploaded by the student to the

University’s online open-access research archive (SORA).

3.14.6 The final submission must be presented after the minimum period of study for the

relevant award and before the individual student’s period of study has expired.

### 3.15 Examiners

3.15.1 A student will be examined normally by at least two and not more than three

examiners, at least one of whom must be external and one internal to the University.

3.15.2 Where the candidate is a member of staff at the University, both examiners will be external.

3.15.3 The examiners will be approved by the Research Degrees Committee on the recommendation of the Director of Studies. The aim of the approval process is to appoint examiners who will be able, and be seen to be able, to make a fair and independent assessment of the candidate and his/her work and to ensure the good standing of St Mary University research degrees through the consistent application of appropriate academic standards. To this end:

(i) The examiners will be of sufficient authority in the area to be examined to command the respect of the wider academic community;

(ii) The examiners will be familiar with current standards and procedures of research degrees in the UK and at least one of the examiners will have previous experience of examining a doctoral award in the UK;

(iii) The examiners individually will be experts in current research in the area to be examined; 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 sufficiently all aspects of the work to be presented by the student;

3.15.4 The examiners will be able to make an independent assessment of the

student’s work and will not previously have played an active role in supporting his/her

academic progress on the programme of study, nor have had any other involvement

with the student or with members of the supervisory team which might reasonably lead

to an allegation of bias, or an allegation they could have a personal interest in the

outcome of the examination.

3.15.5 Following his/her formal approval by the Research Degrees Committee, each examiner will be sent a letter of appointment and details of the University’s rules, regulations and guidelines for the assessment of Research Degrees.

3.15.6 An external examiner would not examine more than three candidates of the University in any five-year period without permission from the Research Degrees Committee.

3.15.7 An independent Chair will be recommended by the Doctoral Programme Lead (or equivalent) and approved, together with the examiners, by the Research Degrees Committee.

3.15.8 The independent Chair will be a senior member of academic staff of the University with experience of and training in the University’s procedures for examining research students. They will:

(i) Not have, nor have previously had, a personal relationship with the student;

(ii) Not have had any professional relationship with the student which may give rise to a conflict of interest (eg supervisory, collaborative research, co-authoring of papers);

(iii) Have experience of examining at doctoral level.

### 3.16 Examination arrangements

3.16.1 The examination for the MPhil and PhD will have two stages: firstly, preliminary

assessment of the thesis or portfolio and secondly its defence by oral or approved

alternative examination.

3.16.2 The Director of Studies will make known to the student the procedure to be followed for the submission of the thesis or portfolio (including the number of copies to be submitted for examination) and any conditions to be satisfied before the student may be considered eligible for examination.

3.16.3 The Director of Studies will arrange for the student, all supervisors, Research Services   
and the examiners to be notified of the date of the oral examination (viva voce).

3.16.4 Research Services will send a copy of the thesis or portfolio to each examiner, together with the examiner's preliminary report form and the University's Regulations and *Guidelines for the Examination of PhD, MPhil or Professional Doctorate Degrees,* and should ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.

3.16.5 Each examiner must read and examine the thesis or portfolio and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent preliminary report on it to Research Services.

3.16.6 In completing the preliminary report, each examiner should consider whether the

thesis or portfolio provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as set out in

Regulation 2.3 and 2.4) and, where possible, make an appropriate provisional

Recommendation, subject to the outcome of the oral examination.

3.16.7 Research Services must ensure that all the examiners have completed and returned their preliminary reports to the University before the oral examination takes place. These reports will be shared with the examiners and independent Chair.

3.16.8 Following the viva voce examination, the independent Chair will submit a joint recommendation examination report from the internal and external examiners to Research Services.

**Conduct of the viva voce examination**

3.16.9 The *viva voce* examination should normally be held not less than 30 days and not   
 more than 90 days after submission of the thesis.

3.16.10The content of the thesis, the conduct of the examination of a student and matters   
 related thereto shall be regarded as confidential to those taking part in the examination   
 and to appropriate officers of the University until such time as the outcomes of the   
 examination are agreed by the Research Degrees Committee.

3.16.11The *viva voce* examination is concerned with the content of the thesis, ensuring that   
 the work is the student’s own, and any related matters which the examiners consider   
 appropriate. Examiners will be expected to include in their judgement, consideration   
 as to whether and the extent to which a thesis is making a contribution to the literature   
 and could thereby, easily lend itself to publication in academic journals. The student   
 should expect to be questioned by the examiners on matters including: the focus of   
 the research, the applied value/implications of the research, existing literature, the   
 methodology used, the conduct of the research, the outcomes and conclusions.

3.16.12The *viva voce* examination will be conducted in the presence of the examiners at   
 St Mary’s University in Twickenham. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the   
 Research Degrees Committee, the examination may be arranged at another venue,   
 provided all parties, including the student, agree. Exceptionally, and subject to the   
 approval of the Research Degrees Committee, the *viva voce* examination may take   
 place via video-conference.

3.16.13One member of the supervisory team may be present at the *viva voce* examination.   
 However, a candidate may request not to allow a member of their supervisory team to   
 be present in the *viva voce* examination. Such requests should be made in writing   
 directly to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee. The member of the   
 supervisory team must not participate in the examination and may only speak at the   
 behest of the independent chair.

3.16.14No persons other than the above shall be present at or otherwise take part in the *viva   
 voce* examination.

3.16.14Recording of the oral exam will not normally be permitted.

### 3.17 Examination outcomes

3.17.1 Following theoral exam, the examiners should, where they agree, submit, on the

appropriate form, via the independent chair, a joint report and recommendation relating

to the award of the degree to Research Services.

3.17.2Following the completion of the examination, the examiners may recommend one of the   
 following outcomes:

* 1. That the degree be awarded. (They may be required to make minor typographical corrections to the thesis or portfolio, and/or to make other very minor non-substantive changes to the thesis prior to final submission of hard-bound copy);
  2. That the degree be awarded, subject to specified minor revisions[[1]](#footnote-1) being made to the thesis or portfolio to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within a period not exceeding three months;
  3. That the degree be awarded subject to specified major revisions being made to the thesis or portfolio to the satisfaction of the examiners within six months;
  4. That the degree not be awarded, but that the student be permitted to submit a revised thesis or portfolio within twelve months and be examined with or without a further *viva voce* examination;
  5. That, for those students registered for the PhD, that the degree not be awarded but that the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded, if appropriate, after specified minor revisions have been made to the thesis or portfolio, and if the student submits the thesis for that degree within six months;
  6. That for those students registered for the PhD, that degree not be awarded but the student be permitted to submit a revised thesis, for the degree of Master of Philosophy, by a specified date, (normally twelve months), with or without further research, and be examined with or without a further *viva voce* examination;
  7. That the degree not be awarded and with no recommendation regarding a resubmission of the thesis.

***Submission of revised thesis following minor and major revisions***

3.17.3 If specified minor revisions are required to the thesis, the independent Chair will inform the student, supervisory team, and Research Services, of the nature of the corrections in the form of a written list.[[2]](#footnote-2) The internal examiner will certify that any specified, minor revisions have been carried out satisfactorily. The recommendation of the examiners will be considered and approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

3.17.4 If specified major revisions are required to the thesis, the independent Chair will inform the student, supervisory team and Research Services of the nature of the corrections in the form of a written list.

3.17.5 Students will be required to submit a statement listing (with page number specified), the changes made against the changes required by the examiners

3.17.6 Where there are major revisions, the independent Chair will ask the examiners to

certify the completion of the major revisions. The recommendation of the examiners

will be considered and approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

(i) Recommend PhD award;

(ii) Do not recommend PhD award and the student's programme will be terminated.

***Re-submission of revised thesis for re-examination***

3.17.7 A student may submit a revised thesis once only, on the recommendation of the

examiners and with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee.

3.17.8 A student will be informed in writing within a reasonable period after the *viva voce*

of the reasons for the examiners' rejection of the original thesis, normally by being

sent by the independent Chair a statement of requirements prepared by the examiners

listing the principal aspects of the thesis which require improvement, a copy of which

will be appended to the Examination Report Form.

3.17.9 The student is entitled to supervisory support in the form of monthly meetings

during the resubmission period.

3.17.10In the case of any re-submission of a revised thesis for re-examination, the student will be liable for additional fees.

3.17.11Students will be required to complete an *Intention to Submit* form again but the

original examination team will remain in place.

3.17.12A revised thesis shall normally be examined by the original examiners but the

Research Degrees Committee may appoint different examiners in exceptional cases.

Examiners may not recommend re-submission for a second time but may make one

of the following recommendations, as appropriate, and should do so within 90 days of

receipt of the revised thesis:

(i) That the degree be awarded;

(ii) That the degree be awarded, subject to specified, minor revisions[[3]](#footnote-3) being made to the thesis or portfolio to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within a period not exceeding three months;

(iii) That for those students registered for the degree of PhD, that the degree not be awarded but that the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded, if appropriate, after specified minor revisions have been made to the thesis or portfolio, and if the student submits the thesis for that degree within six months;

(iv) That the degree not be awarded and the student will be withdrawn from the programme.

3.17.13If the examiners are unable to agree on a recommendation, the independent

chair will mediate and confirm a recommendation. In such a case, the independent

chair will write a separate report detailing the rationale for both the mediation and the

recommendation which will be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee for a

decision.

### 3.18 Copyright and intellectual property

3.18.1 Dissemination of knowledge is one of the objectives of the University. Copies of

theses and portfolios accepted for research degrees are stored in an open-access

research archive and are available for anyone to consult. The thesis is the intellectual

property of the student and as such, they own the copyright Students are therefore

advised to mark the thesis as copyright once they submit the final document following

approval from the examiners.

3.18.2 Students are required to deposit their thesis in the St Mary’s Open Research

Archive prior to graduation. If there is a legitimate reason why the thesis should be embargoed, eg. commercial sensitivity or confidentiality, students should follow the appropriate procedure.

3.18.3 Postgraduate research students are required to adhere to the University’s

Intellectual Property Policy.

### 3.19 Award and Conferment

3.19.1 The degree shall be awarded to a successful student by the Research Degree

Committee on behalf of Academic Board. The date of the award shall be the date on

which the examiners make the recommendation.

3.19.2 Degrees shall be formally conferred at a congregation held for the purpose.

After the formal conferment, each graduate shall be given a degree certificate. The

certificate shall either be handed to the graduate or sent through the ordinary post to

the student's address as listed in the University records. A replacement certificate

can be issued only on receipt of a written request from the graduate and on payment

of the appropriate fee.

3.19.3 No student shall be entitled to the award of a degree unless all fees for tuition

have been paid and any other outstanding debts to the University cleared (e.g. Library

fines).

### 3.20 Appeals and complaints

3.20.1 The grounds for and procedures for appeals are set out in the University’s *Academic*

*Appeals Policy* and the grounds and procedures for complaints are set out in

the *Student* *Complaints Procedure.*

### 3.21 Academic Misconduct

3.21.1 The grounds of academic misconduct are set out in the University’s *Student*

*Disciplinary Procedure.*

## Annex 1 - Regulations for Professional Doctorates

### 1. Structure of Programme

1.1 All Professional Doctorate programmes will consist of 540 credits equating to

10 hours of student engagement per module.

1.2 The intended learning outcomes for all taught elements (Part One) of

Professional Doctorate programmes will be constructed to match the University’s

Qualification Descriptors for the award of Master’s degrees.

1.3 All Professional Doctorate programmes will consist of two parts as follows:

**Part One (Taught Courses)**

1.4 A taught course approved for the student’s route to the value of 180 credits, of

which all 180 credits will be at Level 7, and 60 credits will be specifically devoted to

preparation for the thesis (Part Two), to include the development by the student of a

formal research proposal.

**Part Two**

1.5 The preparation and submission of a thesis as set out in the *Regulations for*

*Research Degrees*.

### 2. Duration of Programme

**Normal durations**

2.1 Students will normally complete Part One over a period of two years part-time.

**Minimum and Maximum duration**

2.3 Students will submit their final thesis no earlier than four years and no later than seven years’ after initial registration.

**Extended Durations for Part One**

2.5 In the event of evidence demonstrating exceptional mitigating circumstances, the

relevant Board of Examiners will be empowered to extend the maximum duration

allowed to complete Part One by a maximum of one year.

### 3. Assessment of Taught Courses

3.1 Except where specified otherwise, taught courses will be assessed and

moderated in line with the St Mary University’s *University Assessment Criteria*.

3,2 For the Level M[7] courses, the marking scale used will be the University’s scale

for taught Masters Degrees.

### 4. External Examiners

4.1 Normally, one External Examiner will be appointed for each route.

They will be required to submit an annual report in accordance with standard

procedures

### 5. Standard Progression Points

5.1 The Board of Examiners will, on an annual basis, review the progress of those

students who have not yet undertaken all the assessment required for Part One.

5.2 The Board will normally determine that such students are eligible to continue with

their studies UNLESS:

(a) The student has failed, without providing evidence of mitigating

circumstances, to undertake tasks expected of them; or

(b) The student will be unable, as a result of interruptions, reassessments or

some other cause, to complete Part One by the deadline specified.

5.3 The Board will determine, for each module undertaken, whether students have

gained a Pass with Merit result or are eligible for a redemption opportunity. The

Board will also stipulate the date by which any redemption opportunity shall be

completed.

### 6. Completion of Part One and Eligibility to be Assessed for Progression to Part Two

6.1 The Board of Examiners will, normally at the end of the second year after initial

registration, review the eligibility of students to complete Part One and to be

assessed for to progress to Part Two.

6.2 The Board’s decisions will normally be in accordance with the following

regulations:

(a) In order to be eligible to complete Part One, a student will normally be required to

have passed [or been granted exemption from] taught courses to the value of 180

credits;

(b) In order to be eligible to be assessed for progression to Part Two, a student will

normally be required to have achieved, in the 180 credits of Part One, a level of

performance commensurate with the University’s regulations for the award of a

Master’s degree with Merit [the Research Proposal being treated as the equivalent of

a Dissertation];

(c) Students who fail to achieve a Pass with Merit grade for one or more taught

courses will normally be eligible to undertake further assessment by a date to be

specified by the Board;

(d) Students who fail a reassessment for one or more taught courses, or who obtain

less than 25 on the initial assessment for one of more taught courses, shall normally

be eligible to retake the relevant course[s] with attendance on one occasion;

(e) No student will normally be offered an opportunity to redeem a fail if, by so doing,

the student would exceed the maximum period allowed for the completion of Part One.

(f) Students who are eligible to be assessed for progression to Part Two, but who

formally indicate to Research Services that they wish to discontinue their studies, will

be eligible for the award of a Master’s degree [any eligibility for an award with Merit

or Distinction will be determined in accordance with the University’s regulations

for taught postgraduate programmes];

(g) Students who gain 180 credits, but EITHER remain ineligible, following the

redemption opportunities outlined above, to be assessed for

progression to Part Two, OR who formally indicate to Research Services that they

wish to discontinue their studies, will be eligible for the award of a Master’s degree

[without Merit or Distinction];

(h) Students who gain 60-179 credits, but EITHER remain ineligible, following the

redemption opportunities outlined above, to complete Part One, OR

who formally indicate to Research Services that they wish to discontinue their

studies, may be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate or a

Postgraduate Diploma [any eligibility for such an award will be determined in

accordance with the University’s regulations for taught postgraduate programmes].

### 7. Progression to Part Two

7.1 Where the Board of Examiners determines that a student is eligible to be

assessed for progression to Part Two, the student will be required to attend a

Confirmation of Doctoral Registration Interview conducted by the Supervisory Team

Designate and an Independent Chair within one month of the final marks having been

uploaded the student records system.

7.2 The Confirmation of Doctoral Registration Interview will focus on the potential of

the student’s Research Proposal to lead to research that meets doctoral standards,

and will normally lead to one of the following four outcomes:

(a) The student may progress to Part Two of the Professional Doctorate;

(b) The student is not yet eligible to progress to Part Two, but is required to undergo

a second interview, to be held no later no later than three months after the

publication of the outcome of the first interview;

(c) The student is not yet eligible to progress to Part Two and is required to revise

the Research Proposal AND undergo a second interview, to be held no later than

three months after the publication of the outcome of the first interview;

(d) The student is not eligible to progress to Part Two, and so is to be awarded a

Master’s degree with Merit.

For a second Confirmation of Doctoral Registration Interview, the only outcomes will

be:

(e) The student may progress to Part Two of the Professional Doctorate;

(f) The student is not eligible to progress to Part Two, and so is to be awarded

Master’s degree with Merit.

### 8. Boards of Examiners

8.1 For Part One, each Route will, in common with other taught programmes, have

its own Examination Board which shall operate in accordance with the St Mary

University’s Assessment Regulations.

8.2 The final task of this Board will be to confirm a student’s eligibility for assessment

for progression to Part Two.

### 9. Professional Master’s Degrees

9.1 Candidates who complete Part One but either do not complete Part Two or

whose thesis is judged to have Failed, will be eligible for the award of a Master’s

degree.

9.2 The degrees will be classified in accordance with St Mary University’s standard

regulations governing the granting of Master’s awards with Merit or Distinction.

## Annex 2 - Regulations for PhD by Published Works

### 1. Eligibility

1. Applicants may apply for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by published work on the basis that they fulfil the general admissions criteria for the Research Degree Programme (Regulation 3.3 above) and that:

* There are at least five single-authored or co-authored publications. If a publication is co-authored, then the candidate must provide written evidence of their contribution to the publication
* The publications on which the application is based must have been accepted for publication or published
* The applicant has at least three years’ significant and relevant experience in a professional area appropriate to the programme of study

### 2. Application

2.1 An applicant will only be admitted to a research degree programme where:

* The University is able to provide appropriate supervision and training
* The applicant would have access to the necessary resources
* Any issues relating to commercial funding, intellectual property and research ethics have been considered and are being addressed appropriately.

2.3 The applicant will send to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee:

(i) a list of the publications on which the application is based; (ii) a cover letter of no more than 500 words outlining:

* the area(s) in which the applicant has been working
* a brief description of the research undertaken
* a statement as to when and where the research was undertaken
* for any co-authored works, a statement as to the contribution the applicant made to the publication
* the applicant will also declare if any of the works on which the application is based have formed part of the submission for any other degree awarded to the candidate. Works submitted for another degree awarded to the candidate will not be accepted in the submission;

(iii) a letter of support for the application from an academic who knows the applicant professionally.

***Role of the Research Degrees Committee***

* 1. The Research Degrees Committee will review the application in order to determine:
  + whether or not the applicant meets the eligibility criteria to be a candidate for the award
  + whether or not the applicant has made a sufficiently strong case for candidature
  1. The Research Degrees Committee may refer the case to an independent reviewer.  
      The independent reviewer will be an active researcher in an area related to the   
      application and will not have had any personal or professional involvement with the   
      applicant which may give rise to a conflict of interest. The independent reviewer may  
      be internal or external to St Mary’s University.

***Application approval***

2.6 The Research Degrees Committee will be responsible for the approval or rejection of the application. A decision to approve an applicant for candidature will be made in the Committee’s best judgement. However, it must be clearly understood that the Committee is neither qualified nor empowered to predict the outcome of the examination process: this judgement can only be made by the examiners.

***Application rejection***

2.7 Where the Research Degrees Committee rejects an application, the applicant is at liberty to submit a revised application on one occasion only, on the condition that the revised application demonstrates a significant improvement such as additional published works.

### 3. **Supervisors**

3.1 Upon approval of candidature for the degree, the candidate will be allocated to a Faculty/Institute and the Faculty/Institute Doctoral Programme Lead will appoint a Director of Studies.

***3.2*** ***Director of Studies***

The Director of Studies will be responsible for the overall direction and development of the student’s programme of study. They will normally:

* Hold a doctoral award;
* Possess academic expertise in an area relevant to the student’s discipline;
* Hold the non-probationary appointment of Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer,

Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow or Research Fellow at the University and have an expectation of holding such an appointment with the University for the remainder of the student’s period of study;

* Have a minimum of one successful completion at doctoral programme level.

### 4. Examination Arrangements

**4.1** ***Submission of published works***

4.2 Within twelve months of confirmation of candidature, a candidate is required to submit to Research Services one temporarily bound copy of the submission for each examiner.

4.3 Candidates need to ensure that the range of publications demonstrates that their work forms a coherent and significant contribution to knowledge or scholarship. This should be of an acceptable national or, preferably, international, standing. For a substantial proportion of all the publications submitted, the candidate must be the sole or senior author. The work submitted must, in aggregate, be broadly comparable in quality and quantity to that expected to be embodied in a PhD thesis in the same discipline.

4.4 The submission will consist of:

* A bound portfolio of works accompanied by an analytical commentary that explains the unifying themes that run through the research and places the works

in the context of existing work in the field and the applicant's research career. This section should be between 10,000 and 15,000 words in length.

* In cases where the works are jointly authored by the applicant and other persons, the analytical section should also describe the roles played by those joint authors and contain percentage estimates of the applicant's input into each jointly authored work.
* appendices – candidates may wish to submit a full CV and any additional publications which do not form a part of the submission but which may help the examiners to see how the candidate’s research has developed over time
  1. A student will be required to notify, via their Director of Studies, the Chair of the   
      Research Degrees Committee of their intention to submit their work, at least 2   
      months

4.6 Prior to the expected submission date. Successful submission will trigger a change to the student’s registration status to ‘submission pending’ and authorise the Director of Studies to initiate the process for the selection and appointment of examiners.

4.7 The Director of Studies will be required to complete an examination entry form   
 no later than two months before the work is presented and approved by the   
 Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.

***Lapsed registration***

4.8 The registration of a candidate who fails to submit the thesis within twelve months of confirmation candidature will be deemed to have lapsed and will be terminated.

### 5 Examination Process

5.1 The candidate will submit the Entry Form for Examination no later than two months before submission of the thesis. The examiners will be nominated by the Director of Studies. The appointment of the examination panel is subject to the approval of the Research Degrees Committee.

***Examination Panel***

* 1. The candidate will be examined by *viva voce*. The examination shall be conducted   
      by at least two examiners. All examiners will be external to the University.

5.3 The examiners will be approved by the Research Degrees Committee on the recommendation of the Director of Studies. The aim of the approval process is to appoint examiners who will be able, and be seen to be able, to make a fair and independent assessment of the candidate and his/her work and to ensure the good standing of St Mary University research degrees through the consistent application of appropriate academic standards. To this end:

* The examiners will be of sufficient authority in the area to be examined to command the respect of the wider academic community;
* The examiners will be familiar with current standards and procedures of research degrees in the UK and at least one of the examiners will have previous experience of examining a doctoral award in the UK;
* The examiners individually will be experts in current research in the area to be examined; 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 sufficiently all aspects of the work to be presented by the student;
* The examiners will be able to make an independent assessment of the

student’s work and will not previously have played an active role in supporting his/her academic progress on the programme of study, nor have had any other involvement with the student or with members of the supervisory team which might reasonably lead to an allegation of bias, or an allegation they could have a personal interest in the outcome of the examination.

5.4 Following his/her formal approval by the Research Degrees Committee, each

examiner will be sent a letter of appointment and details of the University’s rules, regulations and guidelines for the assessment of Research Degrees.

* 1. An external examiner would not examine more than three candidates of the   
      University in any five-year period without permission from the Research   
      Degrees Committee.
  2. An independent Chair will be recommended by the Doctoral Programme Lead   
      and approved, together with the examiners, by the Research  
      Degrees Committee.
  3. The independent Chair will be a senior member of academic staff of the  
      University with experience of and training in the University’s procedures for  
      examining research students. They will:
* Not have, nor have previously had, a personal relationship with the student;
* Not have had any professional relationship with the student which may give rise to a conflict of interest (eg supervisory, collaborative research, co-authoring of papers);
* Have experience of examining at doctoral level.

***Viva voce examination***

* 1. The *viva voce* examination should normally be held not less than 30 days and not

more than 90 days after submission of the thesis. Only with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee, the written agreement of the examiners and the candidate, the *viva voce* examination may exceptionally be held earlier.

* 1. The content of the thesis, the conduct of the examination of a candidate and matters   
      related thereto shall be regarded as confidential to those taking part in the   
      examination and to appropriate officers of the University until such time as the   
      outcomes of the examination are agreed by the University.
  2. Each appointed examiner will receive a copy of the thesis to be examined in advance   
      of the *viva voce* examination and will prepare an independent, written report on the

content and style of the thesis in advance of the examination. The reports will be   
 submitted and considered at the *viva voce* examination.

* 1. The *viva voce* examination is concerned with the content of the thesis and any  
      related matters which the examiners consider appropriate. The candidate should

expect to be questioned by the examiners on matters including: the focus of the   
 research, the existing literature, the methodology used, the conduct of the research,  
 the outcomes and conclusions.

* 1. The *viva voce* examination shall be conducted in the presence of the examiners at the   
      University in Twickenham. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the Research  
      Degrees Committee, the examination may be arranged at another venue, provided all   
      parties, including the student, agree. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the  
      Research Degrees Committee, the *viva voce* examination   
      may take place via video conference.
  2. One member of the supervisory team may be present at the *viva voce*   
      examination. However, a candidate may request not to allow a member of their   
      supervisory team to be present in the *viva voce* examination. Such requests   
      should be made in writing directly to the Chair of the Research Degrees   
      Committee. The member of the supervisory team must not participate in the   
      examination and may only speak at the behest of the independent chair.

* 1. No persons other than the above shall be present at or otherwise take part in the *viva   
      voce* examination.
  2. In examining the candidate the examiners should determine whether the works   
      submitted show that the candidate had carried out a programme of research at least   
      comparable with that required to prepare a PhD thesis in the field concerned, and   
      whether the thesis demonstrates:
* the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
* a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
* the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
* a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry

***Examiners' report***

* 1. After the examination, the examiners shall prepare a report on the *viva voce* examination, They shall preferably prepare a joint report but are at liberty to prepare   
      separate ones if they so wish.

***Examinations outcomes***

* 1. The examiners’ recommendations will be limited to the following outcomes:
* That the award of the degree of PhD should be made;
* That the candidate be allowed to resubmit the portfolio with a revised analytical commentary;
* That the material submitted in the portfolio falls short of the requirements, and the degree should not be awarded.
* In the case of recommendation in bullet point two above, the candidate must be provided with written guidelines on the additional material required and/or corrections to be made to the introductory section. In the case of recommendation in bullet point three, the candidate will be informed that no further submission of this portfolio will be accepted for consideration for the award of PhD.

### 6. Submission of revised thesis

6.1 In the case of any resubmission, the student will normally be liable for re-examination fees.

* 1. A student may submit a revised thesis once only, on the recommendation of the   
      examiners and with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee.
  2. A student shall be informed in writing within 10 working days after the *viva voce* of   
      the reasons for the examiners' rejection of the original thesis. This notification will   
      include a Statement of Requirements prepared by the examiners listing the principal   
      aspects of the thesis which require improvement, a copy of which will be appended to   
      the Examination Entry Form.
  3. The examiners shall determine the date by which the revised thesis shall be

submitted, normally twelve months from the date that the Statement of Requirements   
 is sent to the student. It is recommended that the student engages with supervisory   
 support in the form of monthly meetings during the resubmission period.

6.5 The procedure for submitting a revised thesis shall be the same as that for submitting   
the original one.

* 1. A revised thesis shall normally be examined by the original examiners but the   
      Research Degrees Committee may appoint different examiners in exceptional cases.   
      Examiners may not recommend re-submission for a second time but may make one   
      of the following recommendations, as appropriate, and should do so within 90 days of   
      receipt of the revised thesis:
* that the degree be awarded;
* that the degree be awarded, subject to specified minor revisions[[4]](#footnote-4) being made to any aspect of the thesis, other than the published works, to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding three months of receipt of the corrections;
* that the degree be awarded, subject to specified, major revisions[[5]](#footnote-5)being made to any aspect of the thesis other than the published works to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding six months;

### 7 Disagreement between examiners

7.1 If the examiners are unable to agree on a recommendation according to Regulation 5.15 above, the Research Degrees Committee shall appoint an additional external examiner to review the thesis and the original Examiners’ reports which will be anonymised. The additional examiner may require the candidate to undergo another *viva voce* examination. The Research Degrees Committee shall consider the reports of all Examiners before reaching a decision.

### 8 Copyright and intellectual property

8.1 Dissemination of knowledge is one of the objectives of the University. Copies of

theses and portfolios accepted for research degrees are stored in an open-access

research archive and are available for anyone to consult. Students are therefore

advised to mark the thesis as copyright.

* 1. Students are required to deposit their thesis in the St Mary’s Open Research

Archive prior to graduation. If there is a legitimate reason why the thesis should   
 be embargoed, eg. commercial sensitivity or confidentiality, students should follow   
 the appropriate procedure.

8.3 Research students are required to adhere to the University’s

Intellectual Property Policy.

### 9 Award and Conferment

9.1 The degree shall be awarded to a successful student by the Research Degree

Committee on behalf of Academic Board. The date of the award shall be the date

on which the examiners made the recommendation.

9.2 Degrees shall be formally conferred at a congregation held for the purpose.

After the formal conferment, each graduate shall be given a degree certificate.

The certificate shall either be handed to the graduate or sent through the ordinary

post to the student's address as listed in the University records. A replacement

certificate can be issued only on receipt of a written request from the graduate

and on payment of the appropriate fee.

9.3 No student shall be entitled to the award of a degree unless all fees for tuition

have been paid and any other outstanding debts to the University cleared

(eg.Library fines).

### 10 Appeals and complaints

10.1 The grounds for and procedures for appeals are set out in the University’s *Academic Appeals Policy* and the grounds and procedures for complaints are set out in the *Student* *Complaints Procedure.*

### 11 Academic Misconduct

11. The grounds of academic misconduct are set out in the University’s *Student*

*Disciplinary Procedure.*

## Annex 3 – Doctoral Degree Awards and Intermediate Awards

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Programme** | **Award title on certificate** |
| MPhil | Master of Philosophy |
| PhD^ | Doctor of Philosophy |
| DMin | Doctor of Ministry |
| EdD | Doctor of Education |
| DProf | Doctor or Strength and Conditioning |
| MEd | Master of Education+ |
| MMin | Master of Ministry+ |
| MSc | Master of Strength and Conditioning+ |

^ - by submission of a thesis and by submission of published work

+ - exit award titles for those registered for either DMin, EdD or DProf.

October 2021 v2

1. The phrase “minor revisions” shall be taken to include the correction of minor corrections, minor errors of fact, typography, grammar, style, syntax and/or layout of graphs/tables, additional sentences, tables, paragraphs or pages but not normally additional chapter(s). These revisions would enhance the readers’ understanding of the author’s argument but which does not alter the intellectual content and reasoning of the thesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The examiners may indicate in general terms a need to correct grammar and/or spelling, and, in addition, may return to the student an annotated copy of the thesis or portfolio. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Minor revisions” are those which do not involve further supervision or any further original research. Such additions might include, for example, additional sentences, tables, paragraphs or pages but not normally additional chapters. They may additionally include specified minor corrections. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See footnote 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See footnote 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)