Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

QMU
PhD CANDIDATE HANDBOOK
2017/2018

PhD Regulations

The [PhD Regulations (2015)](#) regulations govern all PhD candidates who commenced studies after Sept-2015.

All PhD candidates should read these regulations.

Contents

A1. Welcome from the Head of Graduate School

Welcome to Queen Margaret University's Graduate School. We are delighted that you have chosen to undertake your doctoral study with us, and we look forward to supporting you with your programme of study over the next few years.

Enrolling on a doctoral degree is one of the biggest decisions you will make regarding your study or career choices. Gaining a doctorate level qualification requires significant personal sacrifice and commitment to long hours of work or as my own supervisor told me: 'a doctorate is 80% perspiration and 20% inspiration!!' The sense of achievement at the end, though, is immense, and gaining a doctorate opens up many opportunities for career advancement.

Too many doctoral candidates view their study as a 'lone' activity, involving many extended hours strapped to a computer writing large chunky chapters, as well as negotiating the complexities of ethics committees, field work challenges, supervision demands and time management. Instead we would encourage you to see your doctoral programme as a period of learning – the launch-pad for future career development and progression. Gaining a doctorate is a beginning, not an end. So, make sure to engage in the community of doctoral candidates, supervisors and academics that exists at QMU, because in the end it is the community of learning that grounds your study and gives you the strength to write 'just one more word!!' – As a comparison it may help you to remember, running a marathon is a step-by-step process, whilst writing a thesis is done word-by-word!

Aims of the Graduate School

Our Graduate School was established in 2009 and restructured in 2015 to incorporate all of our doctoral candidates on PhD and Professional Doctorate programmes. The School's overarching mission is to maintain and enhance the quality of the doctoral candidate experience at QMU. Specifically, the School has a remit to:
- Ensure high quality graduate education
- Maximise the quality of the candidate experience
- Ensure timely research progression and completion rates
- Share good practice on research supervision
- Represent graduate issues within and outside the university
- Oversee and continuously review doctoral degree administration
- Maintain a vibrant community of doctoral candidates
- Grow the doctoral candidate population and seek opportunities for new international business
- Promote an inclusive and interdisciplinary research environment for PhD and Professional Doctorate candidates
- Promote collaboration within the University and with external partners

You will find further information on the Graduate School throughout this Handbook, including details of colleagues who can support you with different queries and stages of your journey. If

you are unsure who to contact, please send a message to our generic email address: graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk. Typically, our Graduate School Officer will be your first point of contact and they can let you know whether there is anyone else you need to contact with your query.

Once again, welcome to the University and the Graduate School. I look forward to meeting you at induction.

BMc Conack

Professor Brendan McCormack

Head of the Graduate School BMcCormack@qmu.ac.uk

Graduate School graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk

A2. The Graduate School Structure

Graduate School Academic Board (GSAB)

Many of the processes and stages of the doctoral candidate journey are considered and approved via the University's Committee structure. The main Committee with responsibility for progressing doctoral candidate business is the Graduate School Academic Board (GSAB). The Board is convened by the Head of the Graduate School, and the Graduate School Officer is Secretary to the Board. The GSAB oversees all doctoral candidate business. All major decisions affecting your progress will be processed through the Board.

Senate
Convened by
Professor Petra Wend
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Research Strategy Committee
Convened by
Dr Richard Butt
Deputy Principal

Research Ethics Panel
Convened by
Dr Chee-Wee Tan
Lecturer

Research and Knowledge Exchange Centres

Graduate School Academic Board
Convened by
Professor Brendan McCormack
Head of the Graduate School

Dr Lindsey Fox
Graduate School Officer

Fraser Rudge
Quality Enhancement Officer

Lucy Hinds
Quality Enhancement Officer

Virag Hamori
Quality Enhancement Administrator

Graduate School Support Team

Dr Lindesay Irvine
Professional Doctorate Programme Director

Dr Wendy Beautyman
Research Development & Support Lecturer

Academic representation from Health Sciences

Professor Nigel Gleeson
Postgraduate Research Coordinator (HSci)

Dr Vivienne Chisholm
Postgraduate Research Coordinator (ASM)

Academic representation from Arts, Social Sciences & Management

Student representation from Doctoral Student Association

Graduate School Academic Board Membership

For information, the current membership and remit of the GSAB is provided in Appendix 1. There are no doctoral candidates on the Board because of the confidential nature of some of the reserved business. However, Working Groups that include candidates will be formed where any policy development work undertaken by the Board requires candidate consultation. The Doctoral Student Association (DSA) is instrumental in the candidate consultation processes.

The Graduate School is primarily supported by a team of individuals within the University, some of whom are detailed in the figure above and who will be most relevant to you as you progress through your doctoral journeys. These are the:

- Head of Graduate School
- Postgraduate Research Coordinators
- Professional Doctorate Programme Leader
- Lecturer in Research Development and Support
- Graduate School Officer

Postgraduate Research Coordinators (PRCs)

Each school (Health Sciences and Arts, Social Science and Management) has a dedicated Postgraduate Research Coordinator (PRC). They are supported by the Professional Doctorate programme leader.

Your current PRCs are:

- Prof Nigel Gleeson (Health Sciences) (NGleeson@qmu.ac.uk)
- Dr Vivienne Chisholm (ASSAM) (VChisholm@qmu.ac.uk)
- Dr Lindesay Irvine (Professional Doctorate) (LIrvine@qmu.ac.uk)

Their main duties include:

- Implement agreed systems for ensuring high quality doctoral education, including providing advice and guidance to both doctoral candidates and supervisors.
- Advise on and oversee the doctorate applications and admissions procedure and to allocate candidates to supervisors.
- Consider rand approve doctoral candidates' requests on behalf of the GSAB
- Work with CAP to ensure that appropriate training is given to supervisors and doctoral candidates.
- Attend to matters which contribute to the quality of postgraduate learning and to satisfy QAA requirements.

They hold alternate drop in sessions once every two weeks throughout semester – the date/time of which are sent to candidates and supervisors via email (but usually Wednesdays between 12-1pm or 1–2pm). If you need to see them please feel free to speak with them during one of these sessions, or if more urgent, email them directly to arrange a private appointment.

Administration Team

All aspects of the Graduate School's administration are managed within the Governance and Quality Enhancement (GQE) Team. Your key contact is the Graduate School Officer (GSO) who is responsible for much of the day to day running of the Graduate School.

They are primarily responsible for providing high quality, professional administrative and policy support to the Head of the Graduate School and GSAB, in support of the Graduate School aims to maintain and enhance the quality of the doctoral candidate experience at QMU.

The GSO's primary duties include:
- Provide expert advice and support to the Head of Graduate School, the Postgraduate Research Coordinators, academic and professional services colleagues, doctoral candidates and external stakeholders, for example doctoral examiners. This includes advice on regulations, including those relating to assessment and matters of compliance.
- Provide committee secretariat to the Graduate School Academic Board and liaise with the Convener to agree the agenda, draft and produce papers and policy statements, and produce and publish minutes in line with agreed timescales, ensuring the efficient operation of business, and the effective follow-up of any action resulting.

- Monitor doctoral candidate progress and ensuring candidates meet progression targets in line with programme regulations. This includes a full review of annual progress reports (APRs) and reporting on these to the Head of Graduate School, PRCs and Graduate School Academic Board.
- Coordinate and organise all administration related to doctoral progression e.g. submission of reports, assessed seminars and viva schedules within appropriate deadlines.
- To implement and enhance policies and procedures related to stages of the doctoral candidate journey, including: pre-entry advice, admission and registration, candidate progression, changes to pattern or duration of study and examination.

The Graduate School Officer is supported in their duties by other members of the Governance of Quality and Enhancement team including:

- Governance and Quality Enhancement Officers; and
- Governance and Quality Enhancement Administrator

All enquiries relating to doctoral candidate business and administration should be directed to the Graduate School in the first instance – the email address is graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk, where either the GSO or someone from the Graduate School team will respond accordingly.

A3. Campus Welcome & Induction

Doctoral candidate orientation at QMU consists of:
1. Induction
2. Study Week One
3. Orientation to the Division/School
4. Orientation to the supervisory team (and associated staff and fellow candidates); and
5. Matriculation (administered by QMU Registry department)

New candidates receive a letter in advance of the first study week, which provides information on matriculation, the induction schedule, accessing the University, and other important information (e.g. links to the appropriate regulations).

Induction

QMU academic years commences in September, which is the primary intake month for doctoral candidates (another intake happens in January). Attendance at the induction session is required as on the first day you will meet a variety of staff from the Graduate School team, as well as other members of the doctoral candidate community. Typically the first day covers the following:
- Campus Health & Safety
- Campus Tour
- Candidate Representation (i.e. the Doctoral Candidate Association and the Candidates' Union)
- Overview of the PhD / Professional Doctorate Regulations
- Research Skills Training Programme overview.

You must bring the following items with you to your Induction Programme:

1. **Photographic ID** (acceptable forms of Photographic ID are a passport, driver's licence or European Union Identification Card. Credit/debit cards are not acceptable forms of ID.

2. **Original academic certificates and transcripts** of your Bachelors and, if applicable, your Masters degrees.

3. Students on a Tier 4 Student Visa will be required to go to a pre indicated Post Office to collect their Biometric Identity Document (BID) within ten days of arrival in the UK. **International students must show their passport, certificates/transcripts, visa and BRP** to the Graduate School Officer or Registry Officer in order to fully complete matriculation.

Study Week(s)

Whether candidates commence studies in September or January, **all candidates must attend all first year study weeks**. The week includes workshops and seminars to help familiarise yourselves with the University systems. More information is provided in Section A4.

Orientation to Division/School

Supervisory teams are responsible for organising initial Divisional or School orientations, and they are best placed to identify the most relevant activities for their candidates. You will also be introduced to the Research Centre within which you will be situated.

Continuing doctoral candidates can be an incredibly useful source of support for new candidates, both in terms of transmitting key information about practical issues and in helping you to feel part of the research community within the Division/School.

Supervisory teams will do their best to facilitate interactions between doctoral candidates in these early stages. Importantly, you will also be introduced to members of the Doctoral Student Association (DSA) and it is strongly suggested that you become involved with the social and training opportunities that the DSA provides.

Orientation to the Supervisory Team

Your provisional supervisory team will either have been notified to you in your offer letter or be confirmed shortly after you arrive at the University. During induction (and preferably before then), you should make contact with your supervisors to arrange a time to meet with at least one member of the team during your first week at QMU. During orientation, supervisors work closely with the Graduate School Team to help candidates settle into the University environment and access the required specific resources and facilities. Your supervisors can also introduce you to other academic staff and candidates, as appropriate to your studies.

Matriculation

All candidates are required to formally register with Queen Margaret University every year they are studying; this registration process is referred to as Online Matriculation. Once you have matriculated, you are entitled to pursue your course and access online facilities. The process will takes around 15 Minutes to complete so please ensure you set aside enough time to complete it.

Visit the Matriculation and Enrolment webpage [here](#) for detailed information regarding the matriculation process, including step by step instructions on how to matriculate.

Matriculation is managed by the QMU Registry department so if you have any issues or queries please contact them directly on Registry@qmu.ac.uk, phone them on 0131 474 0000 (request Registry when prompted) or visit them in person at Student Services, Level One of the main academic building.

A4. Research Skills Training (Doctoral Study Weeks)

This sub-section covers some of the typical training needs of doctoral candidates and support available at QMU. It is recognised that candidates need training of different sorts at various stages of their degree, and that this training should encompass general personal development, as well as the more focused needs of the research project.

There are three levels of research training internal to QMU:
1) 3 x Research skills training weeks delivered in September, January and April. These weeks are **mandatory** for all full time 1st year and part time 1st & 2nd year candidates.
2) 2 x Research Skills Training weeks delivered to 2nd (FT) and 3rd/4th (PT) doctoral candidates during doctoral study weeks in May and November.
3) 1 x Research skills training week delivered to 3rd year (FT) and 5th/6th year (PT) doctorate candidates in March.
4) Specific training arranged by your individual Schools e.g. equipment / laboratory training etc; and
5) Individualised training provided or organised by you and your the supervisory team.

Doctoral Study Weeks

Research skills training or Doctoral Study Weeks are coordinated by the Centre for Academic Practice (CAP) and focus on developing the skills and knowledge you require in order to successfully implement and progress your doctoral research projects. **These study weeks are for all PhD and Professional Doctorate candidates.**

The programme has the following aims:
- to enhance candidates' skills at the generic level by providing first year candidates (and beyond) an opportunity to develop skills in retrieving, managing, analysing and assimilating information
- to foster communication and presentation skills
- to provide opportunity for candidates to learn about a variety of research methodologies
- to develop candidates' understanding of the importance of ethics in research
- to help candidates identify and plan their own training needs by means of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework

In addition, the programme aims to serve as a forum for sharing experiences and building a supportive research culture for candidates.

By the end of the programme, candidates will be able to:
- identify and plan their own training needs by means of engaging with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework
- use the library effectively and efficiently
- use Reference Manager
- explain the differences between, and the usages of, the major research families (qualitative and quantitative)
- explain what is meant by 'research ethics' and be able to go through the process of gaining ethical approval for a project

- use Pebble Pad for Personal Development Planning
- develop a research question
- explain and present research to a non-specialist audience

The September sessions typically include:

- Using E-resources for research using Reference Manager
- Working with your supervisor
- Developing your research questions
- Understanding the philosophical foundations of research methodologies
- Using Personal Development Planning
- Planning & managing research
- Understanding and using the Vitae Researcher Development Framework

January sessions typically include:
- Preparing for Probationary Viva (PhDs)
- Presenting initial ideas for doctorate research (oral presentations)
- Research ethics - Theory and practice
- Reviewing and critiquing the literature
- Delivering effective presentations

April Sessions typically include:
- Taking forward your Learning Action Plan (Prof. Docs)
- Delivering effective presentations
- Presenting doctorate research (oral presentations)
- Writing for Publication
- Reflexivity and critical analysis in research

In addition to the Doctoral Study Week Programme, CAP have drop in sessions for SPSS, NVivo and Refworks, as well as workshops on preparing for the viva, and career development and employability for doctoral candidates.

The University offers a diverse range of generic skills training that is valuable to all doctoral candidates, regardless of their research specialism. However, you should also identify your own particular training needs by completing a Training Needs Analysis Form (available as Appendix 3), which should be completed at the beginning of their doctoral study journey and revisited regularly to ensure that all of your training needs are being met. Doctoral supervisors will be able to help you with this as you progress through your programme.

Professional Development

A doctoral degree is principally a training programme that aims to equip an individual with the skills and experience necessary to act as an independent researcher. This could lead to a range of careers: in academia, in scientific research, in business or in clinical practice.

In consequence, it is appropriate as a doctoral candidate that you consider some of the broader professional development issues. These are potentially addressed by a number of actions.

Within the context of the approved programme of work there will often be opportunities for professional networking and dissemination activity of relevance both to the project in hand, and future work in the field. Supervisory teams will encourage candidates to take part in research seminars or professional workshops and to develop contacts with professionals working in their discipline.

Personal Development Planning / E-Portfolio / Careers Service

Doctoral candidates are expected to utilise the Vitae Researcher Development Framework planner (included in Appendix 3 of this handbook). However, you may also wish to make use of the e-portfolio facility. This can be used both as a record of progress for the benefit of supervisors and as a record of career development. Advice on this is available from the Centre for Academic Practice.

Specific career advice may also be relevant. Support from the University's Careers and Employability team is available to all postgraduate candidates. The Careers and Employability team can advise you how to plan for your future career, helping you decide upon a direction and how to ensure you work effectively towards success. They can also help you with your job search, providing you with advice and guidance throughout the process. They can help you raise your profile and ensure future employers are aware of all your skills, knowledge and abilities.

Please see the Careers and Employability webpages for more information. You can contact them at any time at careers@qmu.ac.uk. They also hold regular weekly drop-in sessions every week in the Employability Centre on Level 1.

Academic Writing Support

The Centre for Academic Practice (CAP) offers writing support in a variety of different ways.

Monthly writing retreats are offered where participants are given time and space within which to write. These writing retreats are based on campus, and participants are encouraged to bring all of the source materials, such as articles, books and papers, with them in preparation to getting down to the task of writing. Residential writing retreats are offered where participants engage with the writing process over a period of two to three days. These retreats are conducted outwith the University, and there is an associated charge.

Workshops on writing for publication are also offered and candidates are encouraged to check Moderator messages for upcoming CAP workshops that may be applicable to them.

The Royal Literary Fund provides Queen Margaret with two Fellows who are available to meet with candidates who require support with any aspect of their written English. Meetings are completely confidential and the RLF fellows, although based at Queen Margaret, are independent from the University; thus offering a very useful outside eye to candidates engaged in extended writing projects. You can contact RLF Fellows by emailing RLFWritingSuppport@qmu.ac.uk. This support may be particularly valuable to those candidates who have English as a second language.

A5. Researcher Development and Enhancement Programme (READ)

READ stands for Researcher Enhancement and Development and aims to support you to develop and enhance your knowledge, skills and abilities in creating and interpreting new knowledge through conceptualising, designing and undertaking projects and research.

The programme is designed around a study week framework

Year 1 (full time)	September Induction [study week]	January [study week]	April [study week] Including doctoral student conference
Year 2 (full time)	November study week[enhanced researcher skills]	May study week[practical researcher skills]	
Year 3 (full time)	March study week [Resilience in research]		

Apart from these formalised contact points throughout the year, you will have the opportunity to participate in internal and external research seminars, conference presentations and networking opportunities relevant to your field and stage of researcher development, many of which can be accessed via VLE recordings and webinars. You can avail yourselves of any opportunities from any of the study weeks available if you feel they are relevant to your ongoing development.

The benefits to you

The READ programme offers you the additional qualification of a Doctoral Certificate in Researcher Enhancement and Development in addition to your doctoral qualification, this is in recognition of the work that you do to support your doctoral studies, for example, you will already be monitoring your own development needs and, where appropriate, you will decide on learning activities based on those needs. As a doctoral candidate you are probably already keeping some form of critically reflective diary about your doctoral journey; it is this critical reflection that is summatively marked for academic credit.

For full time candidates there will be three points within the academic year when you can submit your reflective diary for summative assessment (pro rata for part time candidates). It needs to be emphasised that the READ programme is only providing academic credit for work that you are already engaged with, therefore there is no additional workload associated for you.

At the end of the programme you will have a Doctoral certificate in researcher enhancement and development which will allow you to demonstrate to potential employers a list of transferable skills proving your capability of working at SCQF level 12.

Transition arrangements

Current candidates who wish to participate in the doctoral certificate programme may apply through the RPL system for recognition of prior learning during their doctoral studies, to a maximum of 20 level 12 credits.

What you would need to do

If you are full time you will submit a piece of work for summative assessment (20 credits) annually which is a cumulative assessment process. At the end of three years, you will have accumulated 60 credits, which equates to a doctoral certificate in researcher enhancement and development, this is in addition to your doctoral qualification. This timetable is pro rata for part time candidates.

Assessment routes for full and part time students		
Full time candidates PhD and Professional Doctorate	One assessment to be submitted once a year	Candidates will be offered three points within the year when they can submit their work for assessment
Part time candidates PhD and Professional Doctorate	One assessment to be submitted over a two year period	Candidates will be offered six points within the two year period when they can submit their work for assessment

By the end of the three years you will have constructed three ePortfolios that consist of evidence to support your ongoing researcher development through use of blogs, reflexive accounts, critical commentaries and mappings. This is accompanied by a critical reflective report of your learning (2000 words).

An example of how a full time PhD candidate might engage with READ

Nancy is a full time PhD candidate, using the Vitae RDF planner she identified that she needed specific training in writing for publication but she was also interested in how she might disseminate her research to diverse groups. Nancy attended several "writing for publication" workshops and a half day workshop on "writing with clarity". Nancy used the Vitae RDF planner to evidence the workshops and seminars that she attended and was able to set herself mini goals or "actions" to keep her on track. Nancy also kept a critically reflective diary of her journey and was able to use this to sort through things she wanted to understand in more detail.
Nancy availed herself of the "Researcher in Residence" scheme (which is only available to QMU doctoral candidates or researchers). She took one aspect of her research and made it relevant and interesting to P7 primary school children. Nancy used this experience to demonstrate her communication and dissemination skills, as well as time management and team building skills. Nancy was able to submit her RDF planner documents as well as a 2000 word critical reflection at one of the three points in the academic year.
Over the three year period of her PhD, Nancy was able to showcase her progress and development and at the end of her doctoral journey, Nancy had a portfolio of evidence that she was able to show to potential employers which demonstrated that she was able to work at SCQF level 12 and made it possible for her to highlight her particular skill set, and she also had a doctoral certificate in researcher enhancement and development in addition to her PhD.

Should doctoral candidates have any questions or queries about READ please email Wbeautyman@qmu.ac.uk

A6. Expectations for Study at Doctoral Level

The following table provides guidance on some of the expectations for QMU doctoral candidates[1].

Expectation	Full-time	Part-time
Time devoted to studies	Approx. 35 hours per week	Approx. 18 hours per week
Time on campus[2]	**Regular attendance** on campus is required by all candidates (approx. 3 days a week if not away on data collection) so that you can engage fully with the research culture and community.	Part time candidates based near campus should aim to study on campus **no less than once a month** and it is strongly encouraged that part time candidates to visit the campus as much as possible in order to engage fully with the research community.
Attendance at all first year doctoral study weeks	First year candidates **must** be present for Doctoral Study Weeks in September, January and April in their first year of study.	First year candidates **must** be present for Doctoral Study Weeks in September, January and April (these can be attended over years 1 & 2)
Formal and informal contact	Formal meeting with supervisors at least once a month. Other regular contact (e.g. phone/email) as defined in learning contract.	Formal meeting with supervisors at least once every two months. Regular other contact (e.g. phone/email) as defined in learning contract.
Attendance on campus for progression assessments	All PhD candidates are expected to be present on campus to complete their probationary assessment, assessed seminars and their final viva.	
Maximum period without contact with supervisor	Six weeks, after which the de-registration process will begin.	Twelve weeks, after which the de-registration process will begin.
International candidates	Full compliance with University Policy and Procedures that govern UKVI Tier 4 sponsorship.	Compliance with UKVI requirements for candidates visiting on Short Term Study visas (or any other relevant visa).

For a variety of reasons, some of you may be registered as "*off-campus*" candidates. This may be because you are studying part-time at a distance or have a collaborative agreement with another University. This can present some issues, for example, becoming isolated from the

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[1] All doctoral candidates must read the PhD or Professional Doctorate Regulations which govern their studies as these documents provide detailed information on attendance, supervision and progression. They are available to view on the Graduate School website here (look under the Regulations & Forms Section).

[2] Students who devote less time to their study may find that progress is inadequate, which can lead to de-registration.

QMU research community and doctoral cohort. Feeling isolated can be detrimental to motivation so **candidates studying off-campus at a distance are expected to:**

- Attend the three week long induction sessions held in Sept, Jan and April of their first year of studies.
- Visit campus to meet with supervisors, university colleagues and peers face to face *at least* 3 times during each academic year of study.
- Visit campus in person to defend your research proposal at your PhD probationary viva.
- Visit campus in person to present your PhD Assessed Seminars in years 2 and 3 (or 4 and 6 for part time candidates).
- Attend campus in person to defend your PhD research at final viva.
- Attend social events organised by the Doctoral Students Association (DSA) during study weeks, including the Annual Doctoral Researchers' Conference.
- Maintain contact with supervisors and the DSA, as getting involved can help you to feel included and will offer support if you are feeling isolated or demotivated.

Contributing to your research community and supporting your peers

Contributing to the research community is an important element of your academic success and social interaction is the most essential, pervasive, and persistent feature of a successful community. Therefore, it is very important that you integrate and stay in contact with your fellow doctoral candidates and academic researchers during your study period, as together the doctoral community of which you are a part of provides a strong support network

To help candidates integrate with each other, a number of social events are arranged by the Doctoral Students Association at various points during induction weeks and at ad hoc times throughout the year. For example, the Annual Doctoral Researchers' Conference is held during the April study week each year.

The Graduate School also arranges a number of Graduate School Seminars and numerous PhD Assessed Seminars, which take place throughout the year and during a dedicated Assessed Seminar Conference day in June each year. These are in addition to the seminars and conferences that will be offered by your individual divisions and research centres.

All doctoral candidates are strongly encouraged to become active members of the University research community. This can be achieved a number of ways but attending doctoral study weeks and internal seminars / conferences are the most obvious. Attendance and involvement openly shows that you are supporting your peers and also helps creates a sense of belonging within your research community.

The doctoral journey is a demanding one and the value of peer support and being an active participant in your local research community should not be underestimated.

A7. Responsibilities

You should have already been allocated your supervision team which will consist of at least two appropriately qualified and knowledgeable members of academic staff. Your supervisors hold equal and joint responsibility for the development of your research project, and similarly, they are equally and jointly accountable for your timely academic progression.

It is in all our best interests that you complete your PhD in a timely fashion: for full-time students, this will be 3 years (including writing up) with the aim of being awarded your degree within the 4 year maximum programme period. To help you achieve this, your supervisors will provide you with personal and academic advice and direct a research project following the guidelines set out by the University.

Responsibilities of your supervisors

Supervision

Your supervisors should:

- Ensure that your research project can be completed fully, including preparation and completion of the thesis, within the time available.
- Ensure that a clear agreement is made with you on the frequency and nature of supervisory contact required at any particular stage of the project. The frequency of such sessions should be at least once a month (pro rata for part time candidates) although there is some flexibility depending on your progress and stage of research.
- Confirm on a monthly basis the following information with the Graduate School: dates of meeting, those in attendance, academic topic of discussion, confirm satisfaction with your academic engagement and progress.
- Comply with the attendance monitoring requirements of the department/University and notify staff of the Graduate School of any such absence in advance of the absence occurring (*NB: International students on Tier Four UKVI visas are additionally bound by the University's regulations for sponsorship, which are communicated separately*).
- Notify the Graduate School at an early stage if your attendance or progression gives them cause for concern.
- Hold written records of your formal supervisory meetings for the duration of your registration. They should keep any relevant or significant correspondence, including emails, that relate to your degree
- Agree with you a procedure for dealing with urgent problems (e.g. by telephone, e-mail and/or the arrangement of additional meetings at short notice).
- Should, in discussion with you, establish and maintain a satisfactory timetable for the research, including the necessary completion dates for each stage, so that the thesis may be submitted within the scheduled time.
- Read all the written work submitted in accordance with the agreed timetable and provide constructive and timely criticism. The supervisor should advise you of any obstacles to providing timely feedback, e.g. periods of time away from the University, particularly when you are approaching submission.

- Assist you with disseminating your research both internal and externally – this may be at a divisional or Graduate School seminar, or external conference.
- Provide advice, where appropriate, on publication of your research.
- Advise you well in advance of any planned periods of absence from the University. If both supervisors are absence for a significant (i.e. more than the length of time between supervisory meetings), they should ensure that appropriate arrangements for alternative supervision are made and that you are informed of them.

Academic progress

Your supervisors should:

- Ensure that you are informed of any inadequacy of standards of work that is generally expected from a research candidate and should suggest remedial action, or training, as appropriate.
- Report immediately any instances of academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, collusion, fabrication of research results etc) to the Graduate School for investigation under QMU Disciplinary regulations.
- Provide a detailed written record of your progress through submission of the Annual Progress Report. It is essential that the APR is completed and returned within the requested timescale.
- Provide advice and guidance on successful completion of your probationary viva and assessed seminars. At least one of your supervisors should be in attendance at this progression stage vivas/seminars.
- Work with your assessment panel to address areas of concern / feedback provided by your assessment panel.
- Report any concerns regarding *seriously inadequate progress* to the Graduate School in a timely manner.

Prior to thesis submission

Your supervisors should:

- Initiate the procedures for the appointment of examiners approximately 3 months before you submit your thesis. Failure to do so will lead to delays in dispatching your thesis and arranging the viva examination.
- Read and comment on a draft of the complete thesis before submission.
- Ensure that you understands the procedures for the submission and examination of the thesis and assist you in preparing for the oral examination, including offering a mock viva if you so wish.
- If you are asked to submit amendments or resubmit the thesis in full, they should continue to provide support and supervision throughout this post viva period.

Candidate responsibilities

As a doctoral candidate, you are also held to certain responsibilities regarding your postgraduate degree.

General

- Ensure your personal details are up to date with Registry.
- **Maintain appropriate and high standards of behaviour** when dealing with others, including fellow students, members of staff and any other relevant stakeholders when acting in the capacity of a University representative.
- **Read, understand and comply with the University's regulations** that govern doctoral programmes.
- **Check your University email account(s)** on a regular basis (not less than monthly), so as not to miss important messages.
- **Attend campus regularly** (as advised in Section A6) and agree in advance with the supervisor any period(s) of absence from the University and seek appropriate permission.
- **Report your holidays and absences** - Bursary candidates are entitled to a maximum of six weeks' holiday per year, plus public holidays. Dates for holidays should be agreed with the Supervisory Team in advance. All other doctoral candidates may take holidays at their own discretion, subject to meeting the usual requirements of study and any visa restrictions. However, holiday absences away from study should not normally exceed 6 weeks in any academic year. <u>If you are a Tier 4 sponsored candidate, please refer to Section A6 for more information on logging of authorised absence periods</u>.

Supervision

- **Establish and maintain the supervisory team working relationship -** Once induction week is over, you will need to take some time to sit down with your supervisors and draw up a **learning contract**. The learning contract is an agreement between the candidate and their supervisory team. Both parties agree expectations, including how often they will meet and frequency of communication. The template for the learning contract is provided as part of your Outline Proposal progression step. Within the learning contract, you will agree, and be guided by your supervisory team, the timescales for submitting written work to the team, and the timescales for reading and providing feedback on written work. Another consideration will be how you and the team communicate with each other, via email, face to face meetings, Skype, or some other method. Candidates may find it helpful to draw up a flexible timetable for milestone events throughout the duration of the research. Whilst QMU regulations provide clear guidance and minimum standards for the management of supervision, there is flexibility to accommodate individual circumstances (for example the stage the candidate has reached) and preferences (for example format of meetings). The learning contract needs to be flexible to take these variations into account in recognition of the individual nature of the doctoral candidate journey. The Learning Contract should be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

- **Organise meetings with your supervisors.** All candidates are required to maintain regular contact with their supervision team **-** full time candidates must be in contact with their supervision team at least once every 6 weeks, and part time candidates at least once every 12 weeks. Your **formal meetings**, which normally take place in person, should be planned well in advance according to an agreed schedule and timeframe (i.e. monthly). The frequency of meetings will often be greater at the beginning and end of the candidate's programme. **Informal or unscheduled meetings** are very important for the supervisory relationship and help communicate the interest and enthusiasm of those involved. Informal meetings can happen in a number of ways, for example: face to face, via the telephone or Skype, or in written formats such as email. If such meetings result in an agreed action point, or if important matters are discussed, the supervisory team and candidate should exchange emails afterwards to confirm the substantive points. It is expected that there will be regular email correspondence between meetings and both candidate and supervisors should keep emails for future reference.
- **Keep a log of your formal supervisory meetings -** Candidates are **required** to keep a log of the dates they formally meet with supervisors, what is discussed, what work is to be carried out and by when. It is your responsibility to ensure that all meetings are logged and records kept. The format of the log will be decided by the candidate and the supervisory team, however, a template for a meeting log in included in Appendix 4 should you wish to use it. You and your supervisory team must agree to the content of the record and especially any action points and agreed deadlines[3]. The log should be shared by the candidate with the supervisors, and you each keep an agreed copy.
- **Discuss any problems with your supervisors** (e.g. access to / collection of data, information, facilities, equipment or supervisory relationship with the supervisor at the time - early identification and resolution of problems is vital as delaying reporting of an issue cause difficulties later on. Where you feel unable to raise the problem with the supervisor, then you should contact your Postgraduate Research Coordinator for advice.

Academic

- **Submit written (word processed) work to your supervisor regularly** and in good time, in accordance with the agreed timetables.
- **Take note of any guidance and act upon feedback** offered by the supervisors and assessment panels.
- **Ensure successful academic progression -** you must successfully satisfy your supervisors and the Graduate School Academic Board in regard to academic engagement and progression by pursuing your programme of study with due diligence. You must also successfully pass your programmes progression requirements. If you willfully and/or persistently neglect your academic work, or in the case of *seriously inadequate progress* being highlighted, then your registration may be terminated.
- **Complete your programme of research within the maximum period of study** i.e. submit thesis, pass examination and have been awarded your degree by Senate within 4 years (full time) and 8 years (part time).

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[3] Logging supervisor meetings is required under QMU regulations to support your learning. In the unlikely event that any issues arise around supervision, these documents provide documented proof of your attendance and what you were asked to do by your supervisory team, which will be signed by all of you.

Prior to thesis submission

- Familiarise yourself with the procedures for the submission and examination of your thesis.
- Agree with your supervision team a date for formal thesis submission, so that they may set aside feedback time and prepare the necessary examination paperwork.
- Provide the supervisor with the opportunity to see a draft of the complete thesis.
- Schedule a date for a mock viva with your supervisors.

De-registration

Candidates should be aware that de-registration may be pursued by the University under any of the following circumstances:

a) *the candidate is not in reasonable contact with his/her Supervisory Team;*
b) *the candidate has not matriculated;*
c) *the candidate has not paid tuition fees as required;*
d) *the candidate does not submit an annual progress report for each academic year of study.*
e) *the candidate is making seriously inadequate progress, as determined by the Supervisory Team and/or the terms of the PhD Regulations;*
f) *the candidate fails to submit the final thesis within the maximum period of study;*
g) *the candidate fails to comply with any conditions set by the Research Strategy Committee, Graduate School Academic Board, Head of Graduate School, Dean of School or Supervisory Team.*

More details on de-registration processes are available in the doctoral regulations that govern your programme. They are available to read here (look under the Regulations & Forms Section).

A8. Graduate Teaching Opportunities

QMU doctoral candidates are able to take advantage of opportunities to gain experience teaching and lecturing at University undergraduate degree level.

Pre-teaching training course

All candidates who are required, to or chose, to teach on undergraduate or postgraduate taught module courses must take the **QMU Short Course in Facilitating Learning and Teaching**. This Course, which is delivered by the Centre for Academic Practice, runs twice a year. Please see the CAP website / events list for dates when the short course will be running and book yourself onto it if necessary. Please note that approval from the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme must be obtained by individuals working with taught candidates.

Guide for doctoral candidates who teach

The Doctoral Student Association, in partnership with CAP, have put together a helpful guide for doctoral candidates that teach. This should be available on the QMU website soon but in the meantime, if you would like to receive a E-copy of this document please request it by emailing graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk.

Bursary candidate teaching requirements

For bursary funded candidates, teaching is part of the funding requirements and you will be asked to undertake a number of School duties by your respective Schools. Please note that the Graduate School isn't responsible for organising the teaching requirements of doctoral candidates as this is administered separately by individual University divisions; bursary candidates should therefore receive information regarding their teaching schedules via their Head of Divisions.

The exact nature of the School duties will normally be decided before the start of each semester by the Head of Division, and this should be in consultation with you, the candidate, and your Supervisory Team. Wherever possible, duties should be linked to your career development. Duties should normally reflect your expertise and will be academic in nature. Duties may include (but are not limited to):

- Teaching (tutorials, seminars, practical classes, workshops)
- Research support
- Literature reviews
- QMU HUB or other website support
- Marking

Bursary candidates should be asked to undertake School duties as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Advisory allocation of contractual bursary candidate teaching hours.

Year	Full Time	Part Time	Notes
1	90 hrs	45 hrs	First year candidates will not be asked to work in the first semester.

2	180 hrs	45 hrs	Distributed over first and second semester
3	90 hrs	90 hrs	Third year, full-time candidates will not be asked to work in the second semester.
4	N/A	90 hrs	Distributed over first and second semester
5	N/A	45 hrs	Distributed over first and second semester
6	N/A	45 hrs	Sixth year, part-time candidates will not be asked to work in the second semester.

The total teaching hours represents six hours per week for full-time candidates, and three hours per week for part-time candidates, during term time. Flexibility is likely to be required with regard to the distribution of hours depending on the specialism and the timetabling of modules.

Where teaching is undertaken, an allowance should be made for preparation time, where relevant. The amount of preparation time will vary depending on the nature of the teaching and should be agreed between the Head of Division, you and your supervisory team. It is suggested that approximately half an hour of preparation time should be included for every hour of contact time. Preparation time should be included within the time allocated for school duties.

Full-time candidates are expected to set aside the equivalent of 35 hours a week for their research. It is suggested that full-time candidates should undertake no more than 12 hours a week of School duties and paid work on top of their PhD. Schools should not encourage candidates to work more hours than is compatible with their PhD research, however, schools may ask candidates to undertake duties in addition to these hours and it is up to the candidate and their supervisors to decide if this appropriate. Any additional work not covered by the bursary should be paid at the normal hourly rate (as agreed with the Head of Division), and will be subject to tax and national insurance contributions.

For your own benefit, you must maintain a record of the hours worked and type of School duty undertaken. You are entitled to decline to engage in School teaching duties beyond the hours specified by your bursary contract. If you are experiencing difficulties with the distribution of your teaching requirements and it is interfering with the delivery of your research, you should raise this with your Supervision Team, who should in turn highlight the issue to the Head of Division and seek a resolution.

Non-bursary candidate teaching opportunities

Non-bursary candidates who are interested in gaining teaching experience during their research programme are encouraged to directly contact their Head of Division. If you are interested in teaching then you will need to be staying local to the University or able to be on campus at the times the teaching is timetabled throughout semesters.

Payment

Bursary candidates will not receive payment for teaching hours within the limits of their contractual agreement (see Table 1). Bursary candidates should receive an hourly rate for any work completed above and beyond the contractual teaching requirements that are part of their bursary. Any non-bursary candidates should receive an hourly rate for all teaching duties undertaken. The hourly rate should be confirmed with/by the Head of Division prior to any teaching being undertaken. Human Resources for administering employee contracts and

Finance / Payroll departments are responsible for making salary payments into UK bank accounts. Payments to candidates for teaching duties will be subject to tax and national insurance contributions.

Human Resources Email EmploymentStatus@qmu.ac.uk (or visit in person on the 2nd floor)
Finance and payroll Email – FinanceOffice@qmu.ac.uk or Payroll@qmu.ac.uk (or visit in person at their reception desk on the 1st floor).

A9. Guidance to Doctoral Business

Many of the Graduate School's administrative procedures require completion of a form. Use of forms helps ensure consistency with regulations, completeness of information and accurate record keeping.

Requests and Forms

Provided below is guidance on the most common doctoral candidate requests received by the Graduate School. Please be advised that all requests require submission and consideration by members of the Graduate School Academic Board and approval of your request is not guaranteed.

All fully completed forms should be emailed to the graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk. Where a request requires proof of supervisor support (e.g. absence, suspension, extension) supervisors should email the form on their candidate's behalf as confirmation. Incomplete forms will not be accepted so please make sure all information requested is provided.

Change	Information and Guidance	Relevant Form
Extension to probationary assessment deadline	If you are unable to meet the 5 (or 10) month deadline for your probationary assessment, please make a request for an extension. Please ensure you provide justification for your request and explain why you haven't been able to submit your probationary report within the regulatory timeframe.	Probationary Assessment Deadline Extension Form - to be completed by you and supported by your Supervision Team.
Absence Request for Tier 4 visa candidates	All international candidates that are going to be absent from campus for 2 weeks or more must have their absence authorised BEFORE departure. Reasons for requesting approval for an extended absence include data collection, remote research or extended leave to holiday in home country. If your period of approved absence is longer than 4 weeks you must submit a monthly progress update the Graduate School and your Supervision team.	Absence Request Form - to be completed you and supported by your Supervision Team. Absence "Sign In" Form - to be completed you and cc'd to your Supervision Team.
Suspension of study	If you are prevented from making due progress by ill-health or another significant cause you may apply to suspend your studies for between 1 and 12 months in the first instance. A request for suspension on medical grounds must be supported by a letter from your doctor. The maximum total period of suspension is normally 24 months. No fee is payable during a full	Suspension request form - to be completed you and supported by your Supervision Team.

	year of continuous suspension. Retrospective suspension requests are not permitted unless there is a strong justifiable (usually medical) reason for not being able to have made a request for a suspension at the time it was required. **Therefore it is important to be proactive in submitting your application.** Suspension requests are considered by members of the Graduate School Academic Board.	
Change in mode of study	You may apply to change your mode of study from full-time to part-time or vice versa if you have good cause. It is not normally possible to request a change in mode of study retrospectively.	[Change in mode of study form](#) – to be completed by you, counter-signed by your Supervisory Chair.
Change in Supervisory Arrangements	During the course of your studies it may be necessary to make a change to your supervisory team. For example, this may be the case if a member of your team has any long term leave planned such as maternity leave or research leave or in the event that a supervisor experiences a longer than three month absence due to unforeseen circumstances. It may also be appropriate to request an additional supervisor if they can offer an area of expertise that is required for your research project.	[Change in supervision form](#) - to be completed by you in consultation with your supervisory team.
Extension to Programme Registration	An application for an extension to the period of study beyond the maximum (4 years full time and 8 years part time) may only be made in the *most exceptional* circumstances.	[Extension form](#) – to be completed by you and supported by your supervision team.
Withdrawal	If you are considering withdrawing from the PhD programme please contact your supervisory team and/or the Graduate School Team.	[Withdrawal form](#) - to be completed with you and cc'd to your supervision team.

If you need to discuss making changes to any aspect of your PhD programme and need some advice and guidance, please contact graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk and we will be happy to help.

A10. International Students

Documents required on arrival

All international fee paying students, regardless of their nationality or visa status, must provide their passport/visa/immigration documents to the University for checking. Immigration document checks take place at matriculation. If you are unable to provide your immigration documents you will not be able to matriculate.

The University is also required to check original copies of the qualifications which were used to obtain your place at the University. All new international students should bring original copies of your qualifications with you to matriculation.

If you are studying full time on a Tier 4 visa, when you arrive in the UK, you will have 10 days in which to collect your visa card (also know as a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) or Biometric Identity Document (BID). It is recommended that you go to the directed Post Office during your first week (induction week). You will be expected to bring your BID/BRP to the Graduate School Office or Registry Information Desk during induction week so that copies can be taken and the original documents verified.

Protecting your Tier 4 Student Visa

We are proud of the support we provide to International Students studying with us, and the contribution you make to the University community. The policies and procedures set out below are designed to ensure that you can continue to enjoy your education at Queen Margaret University whilst at the same time satisfying the legal requirements placed on you and the University by the UK Government.

- You can only study full time as part-time study may violate your visa conditions.
- You must be resident on a full time basis within the local area of Edinburgh.
- If you suspend your studies for a fixed period of time or withdraw from your studies the University will no longer be able to sponsor you and you will need to return to your home country. Failure to leave the UK will violate your visa conditions.
- You must not work more than 20 hours per week in term time (for doctoral candidates, your programme of study is continuous for the full academic / calendar year and so you can not work more than 20 hours per week at any time).
- The University cannot continue to 'sponsor' you if your academic progress and engagement is not satisfactory.

In being granted our sponsorship licence, a number of requirements are placed on the University by UKVI. These include:

- Keeping a copy of your passport and visa documents as well as holding safely and updating each student's contact details.
- Reporting to the UKVI any student who fails to enrol on their course within the enrolment period.

- Reporting any unauthorised student absences (including missing expected interactions or contacts).
- Reporting any changes in students' circumstances (e.g. temporary or permanent withdrawal, reduction in the length or hours of the course).

Attendance and progression monitoring

The University is your Tier 4 sponsor, and as your sponsor we are required by the UK Government to monitor your attendance and engagement in your studies during your full doctoral programme period.

Attendance on campus

As a full time candidate you are expected to live within a reasonable and reachable distance to the Edinburgh campus and to be on campus and studying for the recommended period each week (35 hours per week, with at least 3 days per week on campus) for the full academic year UNLESS you are on a period of authorised absence. Reasons for absence include (but are not limited to):

- Leaving campus to undertake research e.g. data collection or attending a conference
- Leaving campus for a period of annual holiday e.g. to visit friends and family
- Period of Sickness (including planned periods in hospital)

Any absence away from campus (whether academic or personal) must be authorised by the Graduate School and your supervisors **before** your absence begins. Planned periods of absence away from campus should not exceed 60 days.

You can inform us of your absence by emailing the following information to graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk (cc'd to your supervisors)

- Date of departure
- Date of return
- Your location during your absence period
- Reason for absence (e.g. data collection, conference, personal holiday. If absence is due to a medical reason, please submit supporting evidence)

The Graduate School will verify this with your supervisors and once authorised, we will use this information to log a formal "absence record" in your University records file.

If are going to miss Sign In for any reason, you must inform the Graduate School of your absence **before** the formal sign in week. Retrospective absence notifications will be recorded an unauthorised absence and we are required, by the UKVI, to report these unauthorised absences to the UKVI, along with any concerns regarding your compliance with the conditions of your visa.

Monitoring academic engagement and progress

In order to monitor your academic progress, your "expected contacts" with the University include (but not limited to):

- Formal sign in (in person) once per month at the Registry Information Point.
- Timely submission of formally assessed work associated with your programme of study (e.g. outline proposal, probationary reports/viva, delivery of assessed seminars, thesis)

- Attendance at formal monthly meetings with your supervisor(s)
- Submission of draft work to supervisor(s) as part of your programme of study.

Please note that the UKVI requires the University to monitor academic engagement and progression of all doctoral candidates on a Tier 4 visa, including those who are writing up their thesis or waiting for their viva.

Help us help you

We understand that as doctoral candidates you are autonomous, independent and capable adults undertaking important research. We also understand that the requirements of the UKVI placed upon the University in regards to monitoring your academic engagement & progression may become an administrative burden. However, this is a non-negotiable requirement that the University must ensure compliance with. So please remember to:

- Organise a formal monthly meetings with your supervisors so discuss your academic progress and stay in regular contact.
- Sign In with registry in person during the required sign in weeks throughout the year.
- Tell us about your planned absences BEFORE you leave campus (very important if you are going to miss a formal Sign In with Registry).
- Comply with all conditions of your Tier 4 visa.

UKCISA have produced a useful page of useful information for Tier 4 students' visa responsibilities. You will also find the complete list of information relating to your visa conditions on the UKVI website. Please help us by reading this information carefully.

> **All candidates' academic attendance and engagement is regularly monitored by supervisors and the Graduate School. For UKVI candidates, it will also be formally reviewed twice a year by the QMU UKVI Review Group. Please be aware that the University cannot continue to 'sponsor' you if you are not complying with the University's policies and procedures and / or your attendance and academic progress and engagement are not satisfactory.**

Advice and guidance for international candidates

Within the University, visa and immigration advice can only be given by the Recruitment & International Liaison Office. Students should not rely on advice from family, friends, or other staff in the University. Students can make an individual appointment by emailing international@qmu.ac.uk or calling in to the drop-in advice sessions on Mondays 1400-1700 and Thursday 1000-1200. Alternatively you can call the International Office on +44 131 474 0099.

A11. Student / University Services

There are a number of candidate / University services that you are likely to need whilst you are studying for your doctorate. Some of these are listed below for information.

Centre for Academic Practice

Webpage https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/cap/
General email CAPAdmin@qmu.ac.uk

The Centre for Academic Practice has an important role in the development and support of all those who teach and study at QMU. The Centre for Academic Practice is committed to providing support for researcher development for staff and PhD students within the University. Workshops and events are offered throughout the year, with some specifically geared for staff and others aimed at research students.

The Research Skills Training (RST) Programme, which is required for all research students, was designed in response to the Joint Statement of the UK Research Councils' Training Requirements for Research Students. The Programme runs in the first semester and there is a two-part assessment involving a presentation and a written 'Work in Progress' piece. In addition to the RST Programme, there are 'drop In' sessions for SPSS / statistics, as well as workshops related to preparing for the viva and career development / employability for doctoral candidates.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to suggest an idea for a workshop / event, please contact Dr Wendy Beautyman, Lecturer in Research Development and Support.

Doctoral Students Association (DSA)

Webpage https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/the-doctoral-student-association-dsa/
General email dsa@qmu.ac.uk

The DSA is a candidate-led initiative and they represent the voice of all doctoral candidates at QMU on a number of University-wide committees, including the Graduate School Academic Board (GSAB), the Research Strategy Committee (RSC) and the Candidate Experience Committee (SEC). This ensures that doctoral candidate needs and interests are well represented throughout the institution. DSA achievements so far include:
- Advice and Representation,
- Planning of Professional Development Opportunities,
- Information Sharing,
- Social Activities,
- The Annual QMU Doctoral Candidate Conference

The Graduate School encourages you to join the DSA Facebook Page and Twitter pages which will keep you up to date on DSA developments. Also keep an eye out for emails from the DSA where you can find information about academic and social opportunities throughout the year.

The DSA is a candidate-led initiative and therefore it needs highly motivated and enthusiastic candidates to ensure its continued success. The DSA Co-Chairs change on a yearly basis, and those entering their second year of doctoral study have the opportunity to put themselves forward for these positions and continue the work of the association. Becoming a DSA co-chair provides an excellent personal and professional development opportunity, and allows

candidates to use their own experiences to continually improve the lives of current and future doctoral candidates at QMU. If you are interested in becoming a member of the DSA Committee please speak to the current committee members for more information.

Registry

General email – registry@qmu.ac.uk
The Registry department deals with all aspects of the following:

- Matriculation and enrolment
- Tuition fees and charges relating to your programme of study
- Managing your details, from your student record and smartcard help to your module and course options.
- Transcripts and documents relating to your study
- Graduation

Library Services

Website https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/learning-facilities/library/
General email LRCHelp@qmu.ac.uk

Library Services are available physically through the Learning Resource Centre which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in addition to online through the remote desktop. As a doctoral candidate at QMU, you already have access to thousands of books, journals and online resources to support your research. In the Learning Resource Centre you will find:

- Books, journals and DVDs
- Group study spaces (with smart-boards)
- Quiet study spaces (with IT and somewhere to plug in your laptop)
- Silent study spaces
- Large open plan areas with terminals
- Comfy seating
- Workshops to help you find and use online resources

Online you will discover:

- eBooks, eJournals and databases (via our "Discover" service)
- LibAnywhere app to connect you to our services

Our Liaison Librarians can offer you specialist subject-related support, whilst our Research Support Librarian can offer advice and guidance on data management, publishing and social media.

IT Services

IT Services webpage https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/learning-facilities/it-services/

As a QMU doctoral candidate you will you have access to a wide range of IT facilities. See the Getting Started webpage for all you need to know about: online matriculation, logging in, email/webmail, mobile devices, WIFI access, HUB access, printing etc. Remote Access is also available via Citrix to candidates who are off campus.

ASSIST

The ASSIT Service deals with various requests from staff and candidates which they then pass on to the correct service, including all IT services e.g. resetting passwords, assisting with remote access, wireless network connections, logging off the Citrix/disconnecting users etc. If you are having issues with your IT / computer please report these issues using the Assist Helpdesk Service. There are 4 options:

- [Self Service Portal](#)
- Report by email on Assist@qmu.ac.uk
- Report by telephone 0131 474 0000 and request "Assist" when prompted
- In person at the Library Service Desk.

Student Support Services

Webpage https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/

There are a range of support services across the University that aim to support your study, wellbeing and personal development. Support is at the heart of making your experience at QMU a positive one. Our Candidate Services cover a range of professional and confidential areas:

- Student Funding Advice studentfunding@qmu.ac.uk
- Disability Service disabilityadvisers@qmu.ac.uk
- Student Counselling Service counselling@qmu.ac.uk
- Wellbeing Service Stayoncourse@qmu.ac.uk
- Healthcare and faith services – [website](#)
- Careers and Employability careers@qmu.ac.uk

For the full range of support services across QMU please see our Student Guide to Services at QMU online [here](#) or collect a booklet Student Services reception located on Level 1 of the main QMU academic building.

International Office

Webpage https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/international-students/
General email – international@qmu.ac.uk

[Visa and immigration](#) advice can only be given by the International Office. Candidates should not rely on advice from family, friends, or other staff in the University. Candidates can make an individual appointment by emailing international@qmu.ac.uk or calling in to the drop-in advice sessions on Mondays 1400-1700 and Thursday 1000-1200.

Students' Union

The [Students' Union](#) is located on campus opposite the main academic building and next door to the sports centre. The Union is a volunteer lead organisation specialising in enhancing the candidate experience. We offer advice & support, representation extra-curricular activities, volunteer opportunities and a commercial food beverage and events service.

The Union has a Help Zone (which can provide advice and guidance on academic support issues (e.g. extenuating circumstances, academic appeal, complaints, and disciplinary cases), accommodation (e.g. flat hunting, insurance, advice on tenancy agreements), personal physical

and mental health and stress busting. If you would like to speak with a representative from the Candidates' Union you can visit them in person, email them at union@qmu.ac.uk or phone on 0131 474 0000 (request "candidate union" when prompted.

The Students' Union is also responsible for the running many Clubs and Societies which all students, including doctoral candidates, are encouraged to join. More info on sports and societies can be found here.

Sports Centre

Queen Margaret University Sports Centre offers a range of facilities to staff, candidates and the general public including Fitness suite, Weights room, Exercise studio, Astroturf, Sports hall and Outdoor gym. Opening Hours are:
- Monday - Thursday 7.30am - 10pm
- Friday 7.30am - 8pm
- Saturday & Sunday 9am - 4pm

Accommodation

Webpage https://www.qmu.ac.uk/campus-life/accommodation/
General email: accommodation@qmu.ac.uk

The University Halls of Residence is located on campus right next door to the University's main academic building. There is standard and premium accommodation available and there is also a dedicated postgraduate block.

Academic and University Calendars

Candidates can access up to date academic and university calendars here

B1. PhD Time Scales

PhD candidates are required to study for 3 years (full time) or 6 years (part-time) study to fully complete their body of research. Candidates are expected to submit thesis at the end of their 3rd year of study (or 6th if part time) and ideally no later than 3 years 6 months (or 7 years if part time). The full submission and examination process is expected to be concluded before the end of the maximum period of study (i.e. 4 years full time, 8 years part time).

	Full time	Part time
Prescribed period	3 years (36 months)	6 years (72 months)
Maximum period (continuation year)	4 years (48 months[4])	8 years (96 months)

Your key progression points are summarised in the table below. Use this to record your key submission deadlines.

Programme Start date: _____

End of prescribed period: _____ (thesis submission)

End of maximum period: _____ (achieve award of degree)

Progression Point	Regulation timeframe		Deadline for submission
	Full time	**Part time**	
Outline Proposal and learning contract	2 months	4 months	
Probationary assessment	5 months	10 months	
Assessed Seminar 1	End year 2	End year 4	
Assessed Seminar 2	End year 3	End of year 6	
PhD thesis and viva	End of year 3	End of year 6	
Annual progress reports	At the end of each academic year of study (usually requested in September each year)		

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[4] Candidates are entitled to use a "continuation period" of 12 months (full time) or 24 months (part time). By the end of this period the candidate must have completed thesis submission, examination, amendments and degree awarded. .

B2. PhD Progression Requirements

Throughout the PhD journey there are key progression points that all PhD candidates need to successfully pass in order to continue with their programme of research. These are summarised in the following section. It is the responsibility of the candidates to ensure their progression work is submitted in accordance with the PhD Regulations (2015) and within the deadlines set by the Graduate School.

All communications from the Graduate School will be communicated by email to candidate's university email account (and not personal accounts) therefore, it is imperative that candidates regularly check their University email account.

Hyperlinks to detailed guidance on each of the progression stage are available on Graduate School "PhD – Key Stages" webpage so it is advisable become familiar with this page.

Annual Progress Reports (APR)

It is the responsibility of the candidate and the Supervisory Chair to ensure timely submission of the Annual Progress Report to the Graduate School. These are usually required to be submitted by the end of October of each academic year, although all candidates and supervisors will be emailed with a specific deadline.

APRs submitted by candidates will not be shared with the supervision team. And APRs submitted by supervisors will not be shared with the candidate. Therefore, the APR provides an opportunity to summarise progress and achievements to date and to raise an issues of concern.

Following submission, the APRs are reviewed by the Head of Graduate School and the Postgraduate Research Coordinators. The PRCs will subsequently be in contact with either candidates or supervisors to offer assistance with resolving any highlighted concerns regarding progress and / or supervision.

Submission of an annual progress report is a mandatory progression requirement for all candidates and for continued programme registration.

Progression Point One - Outline Proposal and Learning Contract

The Outline Proposal should summarise your initial research question and proposed methodology. You will be asked to demonstrate that you have the required resources, facilities and training in place to carry out your proposed research project. A copy of the Learning Contract that you have agreed with your supervisory team should also be completed.

Progression Point	Full Time	Part Time	Hyperlink to Forms / Guidance
Outline Proposal	1-2 months from start date	2-4 months from start date	Outline Proposal Form and Learning Contract.

The Outline Proposal and Learning Contract should be submitted, within the timescales given in the table above. You should submit the form electronically to the Graduate School at graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk by the deadline given.

Incomplete forms will not be accepted so ensure that you have completed all sections and got supervisor signatures where required (electronic signatures are accepted).

Following submission, Outline Proposals will be considered the Graduate School Academic Board for formal approval. GSAB approval will be communicated to you by email from the Graduate School.

Candidates must have their Outline Proposals approved to continue to the next progression point.

Progression Point Two - Probationary Assessment

Section 6.3 of the PhD Regulations (2015) provides information on the requirements and process of the Probationary Assessment. Probationary assessment guidance for candidates is a comprehensive document that explains the process and expectations of the assessment of this progression stage. It is recommended that candidates read this guidance document at the start of their PhD programme.

Progression Point	Full Time	Part Time	Hyperlink to Forms / Guidance
Probationary Assessment	5 months from start date	10 months from start date	Please refer to the following documents for guidance on the PhD probationary assessment. Probationary Assessment Submission Form Probationary assessment guidance for candidates

In summary, the probationary assessment takes the form of a full research proposal, describing and justifying the research project. This proposal must include the topic, the main research question, the specific aims, a review of relevant literature, and the general methodology.

The word limit for the probationary assessment is 5000 (+ 10%). The word limit excludes appendices, tables and references. Submissions over the acceptable word limit will not be accepted.

The submission form and written report should be submitted electronically, within the timescales given above, to the Graduate School at graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk.   The template for the Submission Form is available via the Graduate School "PhD – Key Stages" section of the Graduate School / Current Students webpage or by clicking the hyperlink in the table above.

Following submission, the proposal will be reviewed by an assessment panel which will normally be composed of two members of QMU academic staff (not members of the supervisory team).

Candidates will then meet the assessment panel at a probationary assessment viva, which will be organised by the Graduate School approximately 6 weeks after your report submission. Flexibility is requested when arranging viva's to accommodate busy academic schedules and availability. **Both full time candidates and part time candidates are expected to be on campus in person to attend their viva**. In exceptional circumstances, however, it is possible for viva to take place via Skype. Candidates will need to inform the Graduate School in advance if this is the case.

Following the viva, the assessment panel will write a report to the Graduate School Academic Board providing feedback on both the written submission and the candidates' oral defence of their work. The panel will make one of the following recommendations on registration status:

a) That the candidate's PhD registration is confirmed.
b) That the candidate resubmits an amended version of their written report without a second viva.
c) That the candidate resubmits an amended version of their written report with a second viva.
d) The candidate is deregistered.

Candidates have two opportunities to resubmit with amendments in order to satisfy the probationary panel.

Candidates must pass the probationary assessment progression point in order to have their PhD candidacy confirmed and be permitted to continue with their research programme. A candidate who fails to pass the probationary assessment within two years of initial matriculation (full-time) or four years (part-time) will be de-registered (except where extenuating circumstances apply).

Progression Point Three - Assessed Seminar 1 (year 2 / 4)

All PhD candidates are required to participate in an assessed seminar in their second (full time) or fourth (part time) year of PhD study. The assessed seminar must be completed before the end of these academic study years.

Progression Point	Full Time	Part Time	Hyperlink to Forms / Guidance
Assessed Seminar 1	By the end of Year 2	By the end of Year 4	Refer to Section 6.4 of the PhD Regulations (2015) for regulations governing Assessed Seminars. Additional information is available from the PhD Assessed Seminar (Year 2 or 4) Guidance document.

The assessment takes the form of two parts: the first is the submission of a written report that provides a clear indication to an assessment panel that candidates are making satisfactory progress with their research. The second part is an oral presentation, where the candidate presents their work as a seminar to an assessment panel and member(s) of their supervision team and, preferably, to members of the wider academic community.

The primary focus of this assessment point is provide candidates with an opportunity to share their research plan and findings to date and for the assessment panel to provide helpful, formative feedback and advice based on their work so far.

Written Report

Candidates should submit a written report (no fewer than 3000 words in length). Acceptable submissions include:

- A specific chapter of the candidate's thesis (e.g. research methodology);
- An introduction to a specific study that is contributing to the overall PhD, including presentation of the study's results;
- A report in the format of a conference / seminar paper;
- A draft of a paper planned for academic publication / journal article;
- Submission of PowerPoint presentation slides (or equivalent) along with detailed explanatory notes;
- Submission of a seminar paper that has been accepted at an external conference and at which the candidate has (or will) orally present their work (see the Assessed Seminar 1 guidance document for more details).

It would normally be appropriate within the chosen format to present some aspect of methodology, preliminary data and analysis and any early conclusions that might have been drawn from the research to date. All reports should include (in an appendix if appropriate) the candidate's thesis completion plan for their 3rd (full time) or 5th/6th year (part time) of study.

Oral Presentation

Candidate's may choose their mode of presentation e.g. PowerPoint, Prezi or appropriate other. The preferred options for candidates to present their written submission to their assessment panel are:
- At the QMU Graduate School Assessed Seminar Day. This will normally be scheduled to take place in June of each academic year.
- At the Doctoral Candidate Conference, normally held in April of each academic year (as organised by the Doctoral Candidate Association, please note that the number of sessions slots for assessed seminars is restricted and is first come first served).
- At a QMU internal departmental / research centre seminar session, as organised by individual departments or centres.

All PhD candidates should consider it beneficial to their development and progress to attend QMU in person to present their seminar. However, in very exceptional circumstances,

and predominately only for part time candidates based aboard or at significant distance from campus, candidates may be permitted to present their seminar:

- At an external seminar or conference
- Via Skype / webinar

Again, more specific detail on presenting at an external conference, as well as details on the assessment criteria/outcomes is provided in the Assessed Seminar 1 guidance document.

Candidates must pass the Assessed Seminar 1 progression point in order to continue with their research programme.

Progression Point Four - Assessed Seminar 2 (year 3 / 6)

All PhD candidates are required to participate in an assessed seminar in their third (full time) or sixth (part time) year of PhD study.

Progression Point	Full Time	Part Time	Hyperlink to Forms / Guidance
Assessed Seminar 2	By the end of Year 3	By the end of Year 6	Refer to Section 6.4 of the PhD Regulations (2015) for regulations governing Assessed Seminars. Additional information is available from the PhD Assessed Seminar (Year 3 or 6) Guidance document.

The Assessed Seminar 2 should take place prior to the submission of the final thesis and is intended to act as an opportunity for candidates to prepare for their final viva. As such, the format of the written report should include a chapter from the candidate's thesis and their plan of how they intend to disseminate their research. Similar to the process of the Assessed Seminar 1, candidates are also required to orally present their work to their assessment panel and wider academic audience.

Candidates must pass the Assessed Seminar 2 stage in order to continue with their studies and thesis submission.

Progression Point Five – Submission of Thesis and Oral Examination

Section 9 and Section 10 of the PhD Regulations (2015) gives detailed information with regard to the submission of PhD theses and examination arrangements.   Please read the instructions carefully in relation to: formatting (including max. word counts), binding and submission; Nomination of Examiners process and Examination Arrangements and Outcomes.

Progression Point	Full Time	Part Time	Hyperlink to Forms / Guidance
Submission of Thesis	3 years from start date (4	6 years from start date (8	Refer to Section 9 of the PhD Regulations (2015) for guidance on

	years if continuation year used)	years if continuation year used)	examination regulations and Section 10 for guidance on formatting and binding of the thesis. The Doctoral Candidate Thesis Declaration Form must be completed and signed by **all** supervisors. This form must be submitted with the hard copies of the thesis. The Supervisory Chair should complete the PhD Nomination of Examiners form (fully complete with examiner's CV information) and email it to the Graduate School **approx. 3 months in advance** of thesis submission.
Payment of examination fee	Following submission of thesis		All doctoral candidates must pay an examination fee. Please see the registry webpages here for the most up to date fee.
Oral Examination (or viva)	After the submission of your thesis and candidate declaration form.		There are no forms for candidates to complete during this part of the examination process. Candidates will receive the Examiners' Joint Report via email from the Graduate School.

De-registration and Withdrawal Information

All PhD candidates are required to pursue their programmes of study with due diligence. If a candidate willfully and/or persistently neglects his or her academic work, or in the case of seriously inadequate progress being highlighted in the probationary period, in the annual reports or the assessed seminars, the candidate's registration may be terminated.

De-registration may be pursued by the University under any of the following circumstances:

- The candidate is not in reasonable contact with his/her Supervisory Team;
- The candidate has not matriculated;
- The candidate has not paid tuition fees as required;
- The candidate is making seriously inadequate progress, as determined by the Supervisory Team and/or the terms of the PhD Regulations;
- The candidate fails to submit the final thesis within the maximum period of study;
- The candidate fails to comply with any conditions set by the Research Strategy Committee, Graduate School Academic Board, Head of Graduate School, Dean of School or Supervisory Team.

See the PhD Regulations (2015) for more detailed guidance on deregistration processes.

B3. The oral examination process

Organising your viva

Once you have submitted your thesis and declaration form and your examiners have been approved, the Graduate School will organise your oral viva with your examiners. The aim is to organise your viva approx. 6 weeks following thesis submission, as your examiners are entitled to at least 4 weeks to make their review.

The Graduate School will communicate the date and schedule for your viva by email so please make sure you are checking communications regularly.

Be aware that your examiners' availability may be limited due to other commitments, so you will need to be flexible in accommodating the proposed viva date / schedule. If there are any dates that you are definitely not available please make sure you let the Graduate School know before we proceed with viva planning.

You are required to attend your viva in person and this will take place at the QMU campus. Only in *very exceptional* circumstances will a viva be permitted to take place by video conference / skype.

Your supervisor will be invited to attend your viva examination, unless you request otherwise; you must indicate this on the Nomination of Examiners' form. Your supervisor is there as an observer and does not have the right to participate in the viva examination but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners.

Preparing for your viva[5]

Re-reading your thesis is the most obvious form of preparation. Try to anticipate questions, comments and criticisms, and prepare how you might respond / defend these. You won't be able to predict the actual questions asked by the examiners but this approach will encourage you to think actively about your work.

You should also refresh your memory of the relevant literature. Don't re-read all the papers you have referenced, but re-read some of the more recent key references especially if they have had a strong influence on guiding / supporting your research.

Practicing your viva will help. Arrange for a mock viva either your supervisors or eve a member of your independent assessment panel.

During your viva[4]

The purpose of the final viva is to allow your examiners to determine your understanding of the subject matter of your thesis. They will want to gather evidence that you have an appreciation of its significance and have established and expert knowledge in the field, as well as an awareness of the breadth of the subject area.

The examiners will expect you to:

- show a critical analysis of your own work and of that of others

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[5] Advice and guidance courtesy of Stanistreet, M (1996) Preparing for Your Viva. University of Liverpool.

- appreciate the limitations of the methods employed and the results you (and maybe others) acquired
- understand how the broad conclusions of your thesis support, add to or conflict with previous work
- know the major concepts and recent developments in your subject.

There is no formal procedure laid down for the conduct of the viva examination. Some examiners prefer to work through the thesis in the order in which it is written. Other examiners prefer to discuss topics. Very few examiners will perform a page by page criticism.

You are not expected to know your thesis by heart, but to refer to the appropriate page when the examiners wish to discuss a specific point. It may be helpful to bring with you to the viva examination with important pages highlighted so you can easily refer to important sections.

Try to answer the question as it is put, remembering that you are engaged in an academic conversation; yes / no answers should be avoided.

Be prepared to justify and defend your hypotheses, methods, ideas, results and conclusions. If the examiners challenge your interpretation but you feel that your case is a good one, muster your arguments and be willing to present your case firmly but courteously. If the examiners do pick up on some genuine weaknesses with your research, it is best to concede the point gracefully. Even if you feel the examiners are excessively critical do not become argumentative or allow the discussion to become heated as this will not be in your best interests.

Once the viva has concluded, you and your supervisor (if present) will leave the room and the examiners will discuss and agree the outcome of the examination.

If this is your first examination, the examiners have 6 options to choose from (as detailed in PhD Regulation 9.7.9):

a) the candidate to be awarded the degree.

b) the candidate to be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments, to be completed within two months of the Examiners' report being sent to the candidate.

c) the candidate to be awarded the degree subject to major amendments, to be completed within six months of the Examiners' report being sent to the candidate.

d) the candidate to be permitted to resubmit a substantially amended version of the thesis for re-examination, within twelve months of the Examiners' report being sent to the candidate. A second oral examination is obligatory, except where the Examiners specify in their report that this will not be necessary.

e) the candidate to be awarded the alternative degree of MPhil in lieu of PhD. The Examiners may require suitable amendments to be made, within a maximum of six months of the Examiners' report being sent to the candidate. This award may only be made if the Examiners are satisfied the candidate has met the criteria for the award of MPhil but is not able to meet the criteria for the award of PhD.

f) the candidate to be neither awarded the degree, nor permitted to resubmit, nor awarded an alternative degree.

Post viva

Once the examiners have agreed the examination outcome, you will be invited back into the room to be informed of their decision and an explanation given. In most instances, candidates are awarded the degree subject to amendments being completed and these should be explained to you. The viva is now over – thank your examiners kindly and depart.

The examiners now prepare a *Joint Report of the Examiners* and submit it to the Graduate School within 7 days of the viva. Once approved by the GSAB, it will be sent to you (cc'd to your supervisors) by email.

The Joint Report formally documents the examination outcome, details the list of amendments / corrections (if applicable) that you are required to make in order to be awarded the degree. It confirms the name of the person designated to check your corrections. A final deadline for submission of amendments will also be given.

Viva outcomes

a) the candidate to be awarded the degree.

Congratulations! You paperwork will be processed forward so that you can graduate (see Section below on *What happens once a Recommendation of Award has been made*).

b) minor or c) major Amendments

These are by far the most common examination outcomes award to candidates. If this is the case, the Joint report will detail the specific amendments that you must attend to in order to satisfy the examiners and be awarded the degree.

Once you have completed all amendments, you should submit the amended thesis to the Graduate School (graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk) – **do not send directly to your examiner(s).** It is also usual to submit a separate document that lists the amendments in a table and provides your comments on how you have attended to them. If you are in disagreement with the requested change, provide a narrative of defense of your decision[6]. It is helpful to provide thesis page numbers where the examiners may find evidence of any changes. Providing this document greatly helps speed up the review process.

The Graduate School will liaise with the examiner(s) and request that they review your amended thesis within 4 weeks of receipt. If they are satisfied the amendments have been completed in full and to their satisfaction; they will make a *recommendation of award* and you will receive an outcome of:

(a) the candidate to be awarded the degree. Congratulations!

If the Examiner(s) are not satisfied the amendments have been satisfactorily completed, you will be informed by the Graduate School and given the opportunity to make the required amendments within a period of two weeks. If after this, your thesis does not incorporate the required amendments, the examiner(s) must decide if the amendments that have been partially completed, still delivers a thesis that is worthy of a PhD. At this stage the examiners may award:

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[6] Please note that in this instance, you knowingly fails to make a required amendment at your own risk.

The Examiners may make one of the following recommendations:

   a) the candidate to be awarded the degree.
   b) the candidate to be awarded the alternative degree of MPhil in lieu of PhD; or
   c) the candidate to be neither awarded the degree, nor awarded an alternative degree.

If you are awarded a degree, the recommendation proceeds through the University committees as described above.

   d) resubmission and re-examination

In the event that your examiners ask you to resubmit your thesis, you will be permitted 12 months in which to attend to the required amendments and resubmit your thesis for formal examination once again. In this instance, the process of re-examination follows the pattern of a first examination. You will normally be required to attend another oral examination with the same examiners[7]. The outcomes of the second examination are restricted to a) award b) minor amendments e) MPhil or f) fail.

The process follows that as described under the relevant outcomes.

Note that a thesis may be resubmitted for formal examination only once and no candidate may be examined more than twice for a given degree.

   e) the candidate to be awarded the alternative degree of MPhil in lieu of PhD.

This outcome is very rare. But in this instance the Examiners may require suitable amendments to be made, within a maximum of six months of the Examiners' report being sent to you. This award may only be made if the Examiners are satisfied you have met the criteria for the award of MPhil but are not able to meet the criteria for the award of PhD.

   f) the candidate to be neither awarded the degree, nor permitted to resubmit, nor awarded an alternative degree.

Again, this outcome is very rare.

What happens once a recommendation of award has been made?

Your recommendation of award will be put to the following committees:

   a) The Graduate School Academic Board (GSAB)
   b) The Research Strategy Committee (RSC); and
   c) Senate

The final authority of awarding you your degree rests with the Senate **only**. Once Senate has approved your award you will receive a *Letter of Award* from the Graduate School with a request to submit copy of your final thesis and a signed copy of the Library Authorisation Form. Once you have done this, you will be eligible to graduate!

Key Dates

Please note that Senate meets approximately 5 times a year and the last meeting in June is the last opportunity for an award to be approved in time for July graduation.

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[7] Should any of the original Examiners be unavailable, a revised examination team must be approved by the Graduate School Academic Board.

B4. Bursary Information

The letter of award that you would have received when you received your Offer of Study sets out the conditions of the QMU Research Degree Bursary. These conditions are in addition to those regulations that operate for all research candidates and are specified in the PhD Regulations.

Duration of Award

Research degree bursaries are awarded for a period of 3 years of full-time study, 6 years part-time. Payment of the bursary is conditional on satisfactory progress and meeting all the progress requirements of the PhD as set out in the PhD Regulations.

Amount

The amount of the bursary per annum is as stated at the time of award. For the 2017/2016 the annual maintenance payment is £14,500 per annum. This annual amount is divided into 12 equal monthly payments which are paid directly into your bank account via BACS transfer on the 25th of each month. Full time candidates will receive the bursary amount / 12 months for 36 months. Part time candidates receive a monthly payment of 50% of the full time payment but for 72 months.

Please note that for a first year bursary candidate starting in September, the first monthly maintenance payment will be paid on 25th October so bear this in mind when managing your finances at the start of your programme.

A payment form will be provided to you at Induction - this form provides us with your bank details for the BACS payment. Please submit this to the Graduate School by the end of induction week, delays in receiving the information may result in delays in the first payment being made.

The bursary maintenance payment is administered by the QMU Finance department so if there are any issues with your payments please contact them directly on finance@qmu.ac.uk, phone them on 0131 474 0000 (request Finance when promoted) or visit them in person at their reception desk on the first floor of the QMU academic building.

In order to continue receiving your bursary you must be full matriculated and in active study for the agreed number of hours per week (35 hours for full time / 18 hours part time). The bursary is not regarded as income for tax purposes. Similarly, the University will not make any National Insurance contributions.

A candidate should not expect any further financial assistance from QMU in support of their period of study.

Research Budget

A research budget of up to £2000 will also be set up for each bursary holder. Arrangements are made with the Finance department for the lodging of funds to support a candidate's research under a unique budget code within their School. This budget belongs to the Academic School (either Health Sciences or ASSAM) not to the candidate, and formally it is the Dean of School

who has overall responsibility for its management. It is the Dean of School who will authorize payments from the bursary research budget. However, in practice, this will be done in very close co-operation with the Supervisory Team.

This budget is intended to cover expenses directly related to the research work, such as equipment [including software], consumables, travel, costs of data collection and analysis, course and conference attendance. Any material items or equipment purchased from this budget remain the property of the School.

A maximum of £1000 may be spent in the first year, and the remainder will be carried forward to the second year, when an additional £600 becomes available. PhD candidates may carry forward any money remaining from this £1600 to their third year, when the final £400 will become available (or pro rata for part time candidates).

The research budget lasts for the duration of the prescribed period of study only. Therefore, it is not available to continuing candidates in their grace period.

Other fees

The University will waive tuition and bench fees for bursary holders. However, bursary holders will be liable for any continuation fee (currently £500) and for the examination fee (currently £230) in common with all other research candidates.

The rate of the continuation or examination fee due is the fee set for the session in which it is due. Current rates are £500 and £230 respectively. These may be subject to change so please see the Registry webpages here for the most up to date information.

All research candidates will also be responsible for the costs of production of all copies of the thesis for examination.

Appendix 1 – Governance

Graduate School Academic Board

Many of the processes and stages of the doctoral candidate journey are considered and approved via the University's Committee structure. The main Committee with responsibility for progressing doctoral candidate business is the Graduate School Academic Board (GSAB).

The Board will oversee all doctoral candidate business. It will also deal with some of the business previously considered by the Professional Doctorate Programme Committee, although that Committee will continue in operation with a modified remit.

The membership and remit of the GSAB is provided on the following pages. The Board is convened by the Head of the Graduate School, and the Graduate School Officer is Secretary to the Board.

There are no candidates on the Board, because of the confidential ('reserved') nature of the business. However, any policy development work undertaken by the Board will require consultation with candidates, and in such cases an appropriate mechanism will be established to allow candidates to contribute to discussions and decisions, for example through a specially convened Working Group.

As you will see from the remit, all major decisions affecting your progress will be processed through the Board, in many cases following approval by a virtual panel (subset of the Board). You will therefore be interested in the dates of meetings, so that you know when to submit and also when you can expect a decision. All QMU Committee dates are published here.

Decisions taken by the Board will be communicated to you and your supervisors as soon as possible after the meeting. The Graduate School Officer will write to you with the agreed outcome and any follow up action required on your part. We aim to do this within two working days, but occasionally we might need a little longer.

In some cases, decisions about candidate progress are taken by Convener's Action. This typically happens when a decision is needed within a short time frame. For example, a candidate may need to seek an urgent suspension of studies on medical grounds. In such cases, it is best to contact the Graduate School Officer who can advise on the process and timescale.

Remit

The purpose of the Graduate School Academic Board is to provide an institution level forum for consistent decision making on matters relating to the Doctoral candidate journey. The Board may make recommendations for enhancement of the quality framework governing the Doctoral candidate journey, based on evaluation of reports and individual candidate cases.

Terms of reference

The Graduate School Academic Board has delegated authority from the Research Strategy Committee as set out below:

PhD and Professional Doctorate candidates

- To receive summary information on applications from the School Postgraduate Research Coordinators and the Professional Doctorate Postgraduate Research Coordinator.
- To approve the appointment of supervisory teams for new candidates and any subsequent changes to the composition of the supervisory team.
- To approve applications for prior credit
- To approve requests to suspend studies.
- To approve examination arrangements, including any exceptional arrangements, for example permission to hold the viva at a location other than QMU and permission to exceed the word limit.
- To approve requests to submit early and requests to extend the submission deadline, either for the viva or amendments thereafter.
- To consider Examiners' reports and make recommendations for award to Senate through the Research Strategy Committee.
- To approve requests to restrict publication on theses.
- To consider recommendations for de-registration and make recommendations to the Research Strategy Committee.
- To approve requests for change from part-time to full-time study, or vice versa.
- To approve requests for change from campus based to non-resident status, or vice versa.
- To respond to operational issues and make recommendations regarding the provision of appropriate resources and facilities.

PhD candidates

- To approve outline proposals including confirmation that adequate resources are in place.
- To approve assessment panel recommendations on probationary viva outcomes.
- To approve assessment panel recommendations on assessment seminar outcomes.
- To approve requests for extension to the submission deadline for outline proposals, probationary viva and assessment seminars.

Professional Doctorate Candidates

- To agree the assessment schedule.
- To approve changes to modules.
- To monitor quality and approve the annual programme report, including module evaluations.

Reports and reporting lines

- Consider an annual summary of all Doctoral candidate activity, monitoring provision against internal and external indicators in line with Chapter B11 of the QAA Quality Code.
- Consider periodic reports (generated through ISIS) on the status of all Doctoral candidates to maintain oversight of progress and identify any trends.
- Review a summary of candidate and supervisor progress reports and make recommendations for addressing issues of concern, factors to aid candidate progress or issues pertaining to supervisor/candidate relationships.
- Remit particular issues for discussion and/or review by standing Committees of Senate or of Court as appropriate.
- Submit relevant minutes to the Health Sciences and Arts, Social Sciences and Management School Academic Boards.
- Act and advise on issues remitted to it by other Committees of Senate and Court, and
- Submit minutes of its face to face meetings, and other key papers, including all award and de-registration recommendations to the Research Strategy Committee.

Membership

Convener	Head of Graduate School
Ex Officio	Postgraduate Research Co-ordinators
	Professional Doctorate Programme Leader
	Lecturer in Research Development and Support
Nominated	Six nominated research active staff with experience of Doctoral supervision and/or examination from each School/Institute
Secretary	Graduate School Officer

Method of Working

Virtual

Business is processed virtually on a fortnightly basis, following the approach established for the Research Degrees Panel. Summary reports of all decisions are presented to the full membership at the face-to-face meetings (see below for details).

Face-to-face

The Graduate School Academic Board meets at least four times a year. Additional meetings may exceptionally be called at the discretion of the Convener.

Research Strategy Committee

The Graduate School Academic Board reports into the Research Strategy Committee. The RSC has a remit to provide strategic leadership on all matters associated with the University's research knowledge exchange activities. It develops and reviews policies, strategies, and procedures that promote best practice in research and doctorate registration, education, supervision and examination. It also ensures that research conducted in the University complies with appropriate ethical standards. The GSAB Convener is a member of RSC and the minutes of GSAB meetings are presented in full to RSC. RSC considers full paperwork related to recommendations for the award of PhD or Professional Doctorate, as well as full paperwork for recommended de-registrations. Paperwork for other GSAB decisions is available to RSC on request.

Doctoral candidates can access the QMU Staff Intranet. You will find the RSC membership and remit [here](), as well as agendas, minutes and papers for business that is not confidential (unreserved business).

GSAB papers relating to individual candidates are considered under a separate part of the agenda (reserved business). These papers are only available to a restricted audience, and candidate members on RSC leave the meeting when the papers are considered.

Senate

The Research Strategy Committee reports into the University Senate. Senate has delegated authority from the University Court to maintain the academic standards of the University. No candidate may receive an award of the University (or be eligible to graduate), without this first having been approved by the Senate.

In line with this, Senate receives in full the joint reports of Examiners for PhD and Professional Doctorate viva examinations, as well as confirmation that the Examiners are satisfied any required corrections have been addressed to their satisfaction. Senate also approves the recommendations of all Boards of Examiners, including the Board of Examiners for the Professional Doctorate. Senate agendas, minutes and papers are available [here]().

Appendix 2 - Frequently asked questions

If you would like to suggest additional questions to be included within this section, please email: graduateschool@qmu.ac.uk

Period of registration

Q.   **What is the prescribed period of study?**
A.   Your prescribed period of study is either 3 years (full time) or 6 years (part time). Ideally, all candidates should be aiming to submit their thesis within this time frame.

Q.   **What is the continuation year and what is it used for?**
A.   The continuation year is a year beyond the usual three year period for full-time study. Formally this is your 4th year of study and thesis submission and examination processes should be completed by the end of your maximum period of registration. For part time candidates, the continuation year is a maximum of 24 months long.

Suspensions and extensions

Q.   **I would like to apply for a suspension or extension to my period of studies. How do I go about this?**
A.   You should discuss this with your supervisors in the first instance to find out whether they support your request. They can help you liaise with the Graduate School Officer to submit an application, if appropriate. If you want to submit an application for consideration by the GSAB, please see Section A7 of this document for links to the appropriate forms.

Q.   **Are suspension and extension requests always accepted / approved?**
A.   Not necessarily – this depends on the reason for the suspension and, in some   cases, evidence that a suspension is for a valid reason. For example, your GP   might   provide you with a letter of support. The Graduate School Academic Board will consider each application on its own merits before coming to a decision. You will be notified of the GSABs decision by email from the Graduate School.

Q.   **Can I apply for a retrospective suspension?**
A.   Retrospective suspensions should not be submitted. If there are *very* exceptional circumstances supported by evidence that explains why a candidate was unable to proactively apply for a suspension at the time it was required, then a request may be considered by the GSAB.

Changing mode of study

Q.   **I am considering changing from full-to part-time or vice versa. How do I arrange that?**
A.   You should discuss this with your supervisors to find out whether they support the suggested change. If your supervisors are supportive of the change, you will need to complete a "change in mode of study form". Please see Section A7 of this document for links to the appropriate forms.

Email and Hub access

Q.   **Why can't I get into my University emails?**

A.   Make sure that you have matriculated and that your email has been set up. You will also need to make sure you regularly update your password to maintain you access. If you are still experiencing difficulties, dial 0 and ask to speak to ASSIST or email them at assist@qmu.ac.uk. They will request that IT Services investigates and resolves your issues.

Q.   Why haven't I been added to the Doctoral candidate hub area?
A.   If you have matriculated (this needs to be done at the start of every new   academic year) then check that you are logging into the hub using your candidate account. Doctoral candidates have access to a candidate hub area as well as a staff hub area.

Training and resources

Q.   How do I book onto workshops for training?
A.   Generally a clickable link is provided when a Moderator message is sent out. Alternatively you can look on the CAP website for more information regarding upcoming events.

Q.   The training I need is not listed, who do I contact to ask?
A.   You can contact Dr Wendy Beautyman in the Centre for Academic Practice or email her at Wbeautyman@qmu.ac.uk and make a suggestion for future training events.

Q.   The book I want isn't in the library. How do I get it?
A.   The Library offers an interlibrary loan service. Alternatively, you can contact your Liaison Librarian for more detailed help.

Tuition Fees and Bursary Payments

Q.   I have a query about my tuition fees – who should I ask?
A.   Registry (registry@qmu.ac.uk) deal with all the administrative aspects of issuing invoices for University fees relating to your research degree. Please contact them in the first instance if you have a query about your fees or examination charges.

Q.   I have a query about the payment of my bursary money – who should I ask?
A.   The Finance department administer bursary payments to candidates. Please contact them in the first instance if you have a query or issue about your maintenance payments Email Finance@qmu.ac.uk or visit them in person at their Reception Desk near Candidate Services on level 1 in the main academic building.

Miscellaneous

Q.   I have a query about my candidate visa – who should I ask?
A.   The International Office (international@qmu.ac.uk) deal with all the administrative and technical aspects of issuing international candidates with their Tier 4 visas. Please contact them in the first instance if you have a query about your visa status or require help.   They also have drop in sessions on Mondays and Thursdays.

**Q.   I want to book a work room – how do I do that?**
A.   You are entitled to book, on occasion, a staff work room (available with computers in some instances) and these can be booked using QMU's Building Online Bookings (BoB) system - http://intranet.qmu.ac.uk/sites/is2/BookSys/default.aspx

Appendix 3 – Training Needs Analysis Tool

Vitae Researcher Development Framework

The Researcher Development Framework has been created from empirical data collected through interviewing researchers to identify the characteristics demonstrated b y excellent researchers. It is structured in four domains, which encompass what researchers need to know to do research, how to be effective in their approach to research when working with others and in contributing to the wider environment.

Within each of the domains are three sub-domains and associated descriptors categorised in up to five phases. The phases seek to capture the knowledge, behaviours and attitudes of a typically "good" researcher at different stages of development for each descriptor.
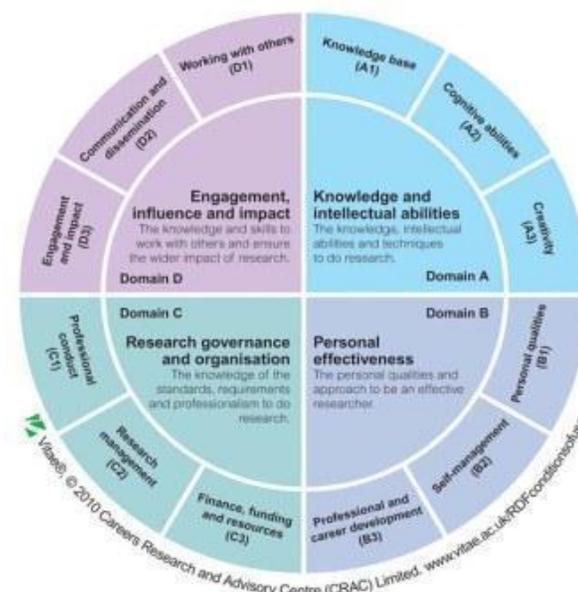
TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS & LEARNING PLAN FOR PGR SKILLS TRAINING

PGR Candidate's name:
Principal Supervisor's name:
Academic School:
Start date:

Skills areas	Vitae characteristic	Proposal(s) for attaining skill or evidence of attaining skill	Confidence 1-4[8]	When
(A) Research Skills and Techniques - to be able to demonstrate:				
1. the ability to recognise and validate problems	A2			
2. original, independent and critical thinking, and the ability to develop theoretical concepts	A2			
3. a knowledge of recent advances within my field and in related areas	A1			

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[8] 1=not at all confident, 4= very confident

4. an understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application within my research field	A1			
5. the ability to critically analyse and evaluate my findings and those of others	A2			
6. an ability to summarise, document, report and reflect on progress	A2			
(B) Research Environment – to be able to:				
1. show a broad understanding of the context, at the national and international level, in which research takes place	A1/C2			
2. demonstrate awareness of issues relating to the rights of other researchers, of research subjects, and of others who may be affected by the research, e.g. confidentiality, ethical issues, attribution, copyright, malpractice, ownership of data and the requirements of the Data Protection Act	A1/C1	.		
3. demonstrate appreciation of standards of good research practice in their institution and/or discipline	C1			
4. understand relevant health and safety issues and demonstrate responsible working practices	C1/C2			
5. understand the processes for funding and evaluation of research	C3			
6. justify the principles and experimental techniques used in my own research	C2			

7. understand the process of academic or commercial exploitation of research results	C3			
(C) Research Management – to be able to:				
1. apply effective project management through the setting of research goals, intermediate milestones and prioritisation of activities	B2/C2			
2. design and execute systems for the acquisition and collation of information through the effective use of appropriate resources and equipment	A3/C3	.		
3. identify and access appropriate bibliographical resources, archives, and other sources of relevant information	C3			
4. use information technology appropriately for database management, recording and presenting information	C2/A3			
(D) Personal Effectiveness – to be able to:				
1. demonstrate a willingness and ability to learn and acquire knowledge	B1			
2. be creative, innovative and original in my approach to research	A3			
3. demonstrate flexibility and open-mindedness	B1			
4. demonstrate self-awareness and the ability to identify own training needs	B2			
5. demonstrate self-discipline, motivation, and thoroughness	B2			

6. recognise boundaries and draw upon/use sources of support as appropriate	B2			
7. show initiative, work independently and be self-reliant	B2			
(E) Communication Skills – to be able to:				
1. write clearly and in a style appropriate to purpose, e.g. progress reports, published documents, thesis	D2			
2. construct coherent arguments and articulate ideas clearly to a range of audiences, formally and informally through a variety of techniques	D2			
3. constructively defend research outcomes at seminars and viva examination	D2			
4. contribute to promoting the public understanding of my research field	D3			
5. effectively support the learning of others when involved in teaching, mentoring or demonstrating activities	D1			
(F) Networking and Team working - to be able to:				
1. develop and maintain co-operative networks and working relationships with supervisors, colleagues and peers, within the institution and the wider research community	B3/D1			
2. understand my behaviours and impact on others when working in and contributing to the success of formal and informal teams	D1			

3. listen, give and receive feedback and respond perceptively to others	D1/C1			
(G) Career Management - to be able to:				
1. appreciate the need for and show commitment to continued professional development	B3			
2. take ownership for and manage my career progression, set realistic and achievable career goals, and identify and develop ways to improve employability	B3			
3. demonstrate an insight into the transferable nature of research skills to other work environments and the range of career opportunities within and outside academia	B3/D3			
4. present my skills, personal attributes and experiences through effective CVs, applications and interviews	C1/B2			

Planning document for meeting Candidate's Needs
Some examples might be CAP workshop, webinar, watching relevant DVD, extended reading programme.

Course/seminar/module/activity to be completed/attended	Description of course/seminar/module/activity to be completed/attended	Date

Appendix 4 - Doctorate Supervision Record Template

1. Name of student:	
2. Date / time of meeting:	
3. Issues discussed:	
4. Experience of process • Access to resources • Networking • Time management • Writing • Other	
4. Review of work submitted	
5. Progress towards meeting annual learning plan objectives	
6. Any other issues	
7. Work to be completed before the next meeting:	
8. Preliminary agenda for next meeting:	-
9. Date and time of next meeting:	
10. Date of submission of this report:	

We are agreed that this represents an accurate account of our meeting.

Signature (student)   **Signature (supervisor)**

Name: **Name:**

Date: **Date:**

Relevant PhD Regulations on Supervisory meetings

7.4.1 The frequency of supervisory meetings between the two (or more) main Supervisors and a full <u>time student should normally be monthly throughout the prescribed period of study</u>; <u>and bi-monthly for part-time students</u>. In the early months, the frequency of meetings should be greater. For continuing students (i.e. those who have not submitted their thesis within the prescribed period of study), it is expected that supervisory meetings will be require less frequently. Where students are based at a distance or conducting fieldwork abroad, equivalent discussions must be held by telephone, email, or equivalent.

7.4.2 <u>Records must be kept of all meetings</u>. The student is responsible for preparing these. All members of the Supervisory Team must agree to the content of these records and especially any action points.

Advice and guidance

The student is responsible for scheduling the monthly (or bi-monthly for part time students) formal supervision meeting with their supervisors. All supervisors should attend formal meetings as much as possible.

It is recommended that these formal meetings are scheduled in to all supervisor's diaries well in advance.

This form should be completed by the student within one day of each meeting with their supervisor(s). The student will then email the form to all their supervisors – this helps keep supervisors up to date with progress if they were unable to attend.

The supervisor(s) will print the form for discussion and signature at the beginning of the next meeting.

The signed forms will be held as a formal record by the Supervisory Chair.