

This handbook tells you about the services available to you, and offers advice about what to do if you have difficulties with your studies.



The Open  
University

# Research Degrees Student handbook



2011–2012



This handbook has been prepared by the Student Services Communications Team of The Open University.

While we have done everything possible to ensure accuracy, the information in this handbook may change during the life of this edition due to changes in regulations or policy or because of financial or other constraints. When regulations and policies are updated, the most current edition will apply to all students irrespective of when you registered, unless special provision is made for particular groups or cohorts of students.

We may record our phone calls with you to make sure that we have carried out your instructions correctly and to help us improve our services through staff training.

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Sections printed in turquoise are exclusively for students studying for the **Doctorate in Education (EdD)**.

Sections printed in purple are exclusively for the full-time **Master of Research (MRes)** programme.



# Introduction

The Open University welcomes you into a vibrant and expanding research community. We aim to provide excellence in research through our support structures, intellectual endeavour and research facilities thus furthering the advancement of the University, staff and research students.

This handbook is your introduction to the University's academic and administrative arrangements for research degree study. It tells you about the services available and offers advice about what to do if you have difficulties with your studies.

We suggest that you look quickly through the handbook before you start your studies, to familiarise yourself with its contents. You'll need to refer to it throughout your studies, whenever you need information about the research degree programme. The handbook will be revised regularly, usually annually.

Addresses of all the central offices and departments mentioned are in Section 12 of this handbook.

The handbook is available on the web for viewing on-screen or for downloading. You can reach it through the Research School home page at:

[www.open.ac.uk/research](http://www.open.ac.uk/research)

It is divided into four parts:

## Part 1 Research at The Open University

Part 1 provides an overview of important information about the University of particular interest to research students. It tells you about our support structures and describes our academic arrangements and some of the processes we use to help us administer your research studies.

## Part 2 University regulations for research qualifications

Each qualification is governed by a set of regulations which forms part of the contractual agreement between the University and each student registered for that qualification. The **regulations** relating to research qualifications are set out in Part 2 of the handbook. Our Student Regulations which apply to **all** Open University students are not included in this handbook but are published on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies)

## Part 3 Codes of practice, procedures and policies

The **codes of practice** set out a framework for the conduct of research students and their supervisors, and serve as a standard for external audits and research degree appeals. Our **procedures** set out our formal framework for appealing against decisions made by the University and our **policies** set out the University's policy on a range of issues.

## Part 4 Our contact details

Part 4 sets out some useful contact details for you to use should you wish to get in touch with us at any time during your studies.

## EdD students

If you are studying for the Doctorate in Education (EdD), you'll find that some parts of this handbook don't apply to you. Section 8 and Section 10.4 provide information specifically for EdD students.

## MRes students

If you are studying for the Master of Research (MRes), you'll find some parts of this handbook don't apply to you. Section 9 and Section 10.3 provide information for MRes students only.

# Part 1

## Research at The Open University

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### 1 About the University

In this section

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1.1 Our organisation

1.2 You can participate

1.3 The Open University community

1.4 University news

1.5 Advice on career development

1.6 Equality and diversity

1.7 Rights and responsibilities

#### 1.1 Our organisation

The University's central headquarters is at Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, and it has 13 regional and national centres located in other parts of the United Kingdom. Walton Hall accommodates the central academic staff, the educational technologists and the administrative and operational centre of the University.

Registered research students are attached to an academic discipline housed within one or more of the University faculties – also called academic units or CAUs for short.

Also important to research students is the Research School, which is the policy and operational centre supporting research across the whole institution. It consists of five teams.

##### **The Research Grants and Contracts**

**Team** provides expertise and support for the development and submission of research grants and contracts.

**The Innovation and Enterprise Team** supports the OU's growing portfolio of 'third mission' activities and the management of intellectual property growing out of research.

##### **The Policy, Governance and Information**

**Team** has responsibility for managing our liaison and consultation with external policy bodies on matters relating to research and enterprise. It also manages the ethical conduct of research at The Open University.

##### **The Research Career Development Team**

is responsible for providing the framework for researchers at all stages of their career life cycle.

**The Research Degrees Team** is the main point of contact for Research Degree students (see below).

#### Administration of the research degree programme

The research degree programme is administered by the Research Degrees Team in the Research School.

Decisions about the admission, registration and progress of individual students are taken on the basis of recommendations from supervisors. The Associate Dean Research (or equivalent) is accountable for the progress of postgraduate students in their academic unit. Policy for the programme is formulated by the University's Research Degrees Committee, which makes recommendations to the Senate through the Research Committee. The Research Degrees Committee includes representatives of the University's academic units and research degree students, one full-time and one part-time external.

#### 1.2 You can participate

The University has always been keen to give students an opportunity to take part in important matters of policy, and has developed a comprehensive system of consultation and representation.

#### Representation on University bodies

The Open University Students Association (more about that in Section 1.3) appoints student representatives to various University bodies, including:

- ▶ The Council, the University's executive governing body, with ultimate responsibility for the conduct of all University affairs. Membership is drawn from both inside and outside the University.

- ▶ The Senate, the University's academic authority that is responsible (subject to the powers of the Council) for promoting the academic work of the University both in teaching and in research.
- ▶ Several of the committees and groups in the Senate substructure.
- ▶ The committees of the central academic units, i.e. the faculties and The Open University Business School (OUBS).

The University committee year starts in September and we appoint student representatives during the summer for the start of the new year. However, vacancies can occur at any time throughout the year and we are always very happy to receive applications – especially from students who have not been in contact with us before. For more information, or to ask for an application form, please contact the OUSA office by phoning 01908 652026 or look on our website:

[www.ousa.org.uk](http://www.ousa.org.uk).

## 1.3 The Open University community

### The Open University Students Association (OUSA)

The Open University Students Association (OUSA) is recognised by the University as the representative body for students. Its membership includes all currently registered OU students except those who exercise their right to opt out (you can do so by writing to the General Manager at the address in Section 12 of this handbook). There's no subscription. Your participation in OUSA is entirely voluntary, and how far you take part is up to you.

The association represents OU students' views, both within and outside the University, and campaigns for a fair deal for students. It works through a democratic structure of elected officers and representatives who are themselves students. OUSA operates in accordance with Part II of the Education Act 1994. The relevant requirements are published on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

The association is run by a Central Executive Committee headed by the President and various other senior, elected student representatives. A smaller Board of Trustees, also comprised primarily of elected student representatives, carries ultimate responsibility for the association. OUSA has a biennial conference which elects these student leaders. OUSA also operates at the level of nations and regions where it broadly

matches the university structure and facilitates students in setting up informal local groups. In addition, it encourages the formation of societies for special-interest groups and provides social activities for its members and their families. OUSA also runs its own private limited company (OUSA Services Ltd), selling OU-styled products, study aids and past exam papers, and has established a separate charity, OUSET, to help OU students in financial need.

Although not affiliated to the NUS, OUSA has a special relationship with them which includes collaboration on issues of importance to research students.

### OUSA's online services

OUSA has a considerable virtual presence, with a website ([www.ousa.org.uk](http://www.ousa.org.uk)) that provides up-to-date information about activities and contacts. OUSA also organises and is responsible for an extensive student service on the online forum network. There are already around 1,000 online forums on all aspects of students' non-course interests, as well as module study areas set up with the agreement of module teams.

All these services can be reached from StudentHome.

### NUS Extra card

OUSA is able to offer all its student members the opportunity to purchase the NUS Extra card. The card for 2011–2012 is available from August and costs in the region of £11. The card provides access to discounts on goods and services both on the High Street and online which are being added to all the time. The NUS Extra card also provides an instantly recognisable student identity when travelling and will be accepted as valid student identification at OU exams. Full details are available from the OUSA website.

OUSA also offers its own free membership card. Contact the OUSA office for further details or look at our website at:

[www.ousa.org.uk](http://www.ousa.org.uk).

## Postgraduate Students' Society

The Postgraduate Students' Society (PGSS) is affiliated with the Open University Club and the Open University Students' Association (OUSA). Membership is free and all postgraduate students are automatically members.

The PGSS is responsible for organising a wide variety of social events throughout the year, introducing new students to Milton Keynes and generally raising the profile of postgraduate activity on and around the campus. Our events are aimed primarily at the student community based at Walton Hall, but are open to all academics and members of staff on campus.

The PGSS holds a number of places on key committees in the University in order to represent the student body on campus, and is active in the concerns of full-time research degree students. Elections for the PGSS Committee are held every October. Positions are available for President, Secretary, Treasurer and Webmaster.

Please ask a committee member at any of our social events or PGSS meetings for further details. Alternatively, visit our website:

[www.open.ac.uk/pgss](http://www.open.ac.uk/pgss). Facebook users can find our community page at 'PGSS at the OU'. It is important that all students ensure their names are on our PGSS mailing list so we can work to promote and maintain the strong social community at The Open University.

## The OU Alumni Association – your link to the OU

Joining The Open University is the beginning of a lifelong relationship. Even when you're not studying you remain part of the world's most vibrant learning community through The Open University Alumni Association, set up by the University and staffed by a professional team. All our graduates and everyone who has successfully completed an OU qualification have automatic free membership of the association.

You will be sent regular communications which contain the latest OU developments. You also have the benefit of a range of services, special offers, access to specialist groups and societies and events together with opportunities to 'give back' to your university through a volunteer programme or by donating to support the development of the University and widen access to education. If you're online, you'll have regular email newsletters and will have access to the association's website:

[www.open.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.open.ac.uk/alumni).

where you'll be able to access information on new courses, supporting the OU, OpenLearn, the

OU on iTunes U and YouTube, member benefits, careers advice, updating your details and various social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

All you need is your OUCU and password (if you have lost or forgotten these details, please contact the alumni team below). Users will be able to access the site, set up groups, contribute in the forum areas, write blogs or simply look around at what's on offer. To find out more visit the website [www.open.ac.uk/platform](http://www.open.ac.uk/platform).

If you wish to contact us, please send your enquiry with your name, address and OU personal identifier to:

### Alumni Relations Team

The Development Office  
The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 653815

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 638145

**Email** [alumni@open.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@open.ac.uk)

[www.open.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.open.ac.uk/alumni)

## Association of Open University Graduates (AOUG)

The Association of Open University Graduates (AOUG) is the independent, international organisation run by volunteer-elected OU graduates, for OU graduates. There's an annual membership subscription which allows full voting rights and the opportunity to attend the Annual General Meeting. As a member, you receive a copy of the Association's magazine **OMEGA**, currently produced every four months.

The Association's aims are:

- ▶ to promote members' interests and the standing of their degrees
- ▶ to support the continuing development of the University
- ▶ to promote and encourage local groups of members
- ▶ to organise educational and social activities.

The strong regional structure also allows graduates to keep in touch with like-minded individuals who understand what achieving an OU degree means. Members act as the OU's ambassadors at degree ceremonies, civil receptions and course choice events and support the OU by giving awards to both new graduates in each region and nation and OU research students in each of seven faculties.

For more information, contact the clerical officer in the AOUG office at:

### Association of Open University Graduates

The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** 01908 653316

**Email** [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk)

[www.aoug.org.uk](http://www.aoug.org.uk)

## 1.4 University news

### Platform

We encourage you to visit Platform, the social media website for all students of The Open University. Here you can watch videos, listen to podcasts and read articles covering a wide range of topics – from OU academics' views on current issues and debates, to interviews with leading figures in their fields. You can also read blogs from fellow students, academics, alumni and more, and benefit from a range of discounts and competitions exclusive to Platform. You're encouraged to get involved too through our forums where you can chat to other students. Once you register, you can also rate and add comments to any of the items on Platform. If you have any article ideas or want to contribute, do get in touch.

**Email** [platform@open.ac.uk](mailto:platform@open.ac.uk)

[www.open.ac.uk/platform](http://www.open.ac.uk/platform)

## 1.5 Advice on career development

You can get advice on all aspects of career planning and development via the OU Careers Advisory Service website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/careers](http://www.open.ac.uk/careers).

On the site there is also a section specifically for PhD researchers under 'Applying for Jobs' on the 'Features' menu, containing information and advice on:

- ▶ enhancing your employability
- ▶ finding employment after a PhD
- ▶ CVs for PhD researchers
- ▶ applying for jobs in academia
- ▶ academic job interviews
- ▶ resources for PhD researchers.

### The Research Career Development Team

delivers a programme of events aimed at enhancing research capabilities. Within this programme are events focussing on aspects of career management. A growing number of events are being made available via the internet to enhance access by external students.

For more information, visit our research website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/research](http://www.open.ac.uk/research).

## 1.6 Rights and responsibilities

### The University's regulations

The University has formal student and qualification regulations covering all the main areas where you and the University come together. The regulations include a code of practice for dealing with student discipline which tells you what the University classifies as disciplinary offences, what penalties may be imposed, and the arrangements available to you if you're in dispute with the University.

The qualification regulations are included in this handbook (see Section 10).

You can access the Student Regulations and the Code of Practice for Student Discipline on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

### Code of practice for supervisors and research students

The University's code of practice for supervisors and research students sets out guidelines for the conduct of the relationship between supervisors and students, and serves as a standard for external audits and research degree appeals. You will find the code of practice in Section 11.

The Open University Research Degrees Committee reviews the use of the code of practice periodically and would welcome any comments you'd like to make about it. Please send them to the Research School (see Section 12 for address).

### Complaints

If something goes wrong and the department that provided the service can't put it right, you might want to make a formal complaint. The University's complaint procedure for research students, included in Section 11.4 of this handbook tells you how to go about it. We are committed to providing high-quality services and we will resolve any problems in our services as quickly as possible. We also consider complaints to be an important source of information for improving our services for the future.

## Public interest disclosure

The University has a statement setting out its policy on ‘whistleblowing’ (public interest disclosure). It offers guidance for students and staff who want to raise reasonable suspicions they may have about irregularities in the running of the University or about the activities of colleagues within the University. This statement is not intended to replace the University’s other policies and procedures in relation to grievances, harassment, disciplinary matters or students’ complaints.

The policy statement is intended to incorporate the requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act, January 1998, but is broader in two respects – it applies to students as well as to staff, and its scope goes beyond that of protected disclosure as defined in the Act. You can get a copy of the statement from our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

## 1.7 Equality and diversity

### Our vision of a fair and just society

We are creating an inclusive university community and a society where people are treated with dignity and respect, where inequalities are challenged, and where we anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances so that everyone can achieve their potential.

### Our equality and diversity principles

1. We value diversity and we recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture, and that this difference brings great strength.
2. We believe that discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics and experiences, such as age; disability; caring or dependency responsibilities; gender or gender identity; marriage and civil partnership status; political opinion; pregnancy and maternity; race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background; trade union membership status or other distinctions, represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfilment.
3. We recognise that patterns of under-representation and differences in outcomes at The Open University can be challenged through positive action programmes.

4. We respect the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs. We will not allow these differences to be manifested in a way that is hostile or degrading to others.
5. We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, students, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision.

### Student responsibilities

All students have the following responsibilities:

- ▶ to treat all members of the University community with dignity and respect for their rights and beliefs.
- ▶ to challenge or report incidents of discrimination and bullying.
- ▶ to respond positively and inclusively to individual differences

### Our policies, strategies, action plans, and codes

For further details about equality and diversity at The Open University, including our Equality Schemes, please visit our website.

[www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity](http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity)

The University has two policies for dealing with incidences of bullying and harassment, one is for students and the other is for staff:

- ▶ Student Code for Dealing with Bullying and Harassment
- ▶ Bullying and Harassment Policy, Code of Practice on behaviour at work for staff.

You will find the Student Code on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

Contact the Research School for advice if you’re not sure who to contact. Staff there will be pleased to help you, and your enquiry will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

You can also send equality and diversity policy enquiries to the OU Equality and Diversity Office (email: [strategy-equality@open.ac.uk](mailto:strategy-equality@open.ac.uk)). The office offers **general** information and guidance on University equality and diversity policy. However, it cannot normally take an active part in issues of an **individual** nature, concerning cases involving staff or students where these are being handled by existing institutional complaints, appeals or grievance processes.

## 2 Your record

In this section

- 2.1 Personal identifier
- 2.2 Names and addresses
- 2.3 Personal data
- 2.4 Freedom of information



### 2.1 Personal identifier

The 'personal identifier' that the University has given you is our means of finding you in our records, and it will stay with you throughout your studies. Any OU forms you complete will usually ask you for it, and you should quote it whenever you telephone, email or write to the University.

### 2.2 Names and addresses

If you change your name or address you must tell the Research School in writing, even if you've already told your supervisor. If you're changing your name you must provide appropriate documentary evidence such as:

- ▶ a marriage certificate
- ▶ a birth certificate, or
- ▶ a deed poll.

**If you're changing your name or address, write to the Research School.**

### 2.3 Personal data

#### The data we hold

The OU is committed to the principles of data protection and best practice in handling information. All personal information is held in secure computer and manual files and will be processed only for the purposes you were told about when you registered.

Within the University, information is transferred only to those who need it for the purposes of our academic and other services to you.

Some information about you will be sent to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). You'll find more information about this in our Data protection policy published on our website at [www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

#### Access to your data

You can access information about your research degree registration on the 'qualifications' page of your personalised *StudentHome* website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/students](http://www.open.ac.uk/students).

Your username and password will have been sent to you following the acceptance of your registration, and you are strongly advised to make sure that you are able to sign on to view your student record at the start of your studies. Detailed onscreen help is provided.

You should find the following information on the 'qualifications' page:

- ▶ your thesis title
- ▶ your mode of study
- ▶ your registered degree
- ▶ details of your supervisors
- ▶ your registration deadline.

You have the right under the Data Protection Act 1998 to a copy of the personal data the University holds about you, and to information about its processing. You should make your request in writing to the Data Protection Coordinator (contact details are in Section 12).

## Information and advice

Our full *Data protection policy* is published on our website at [www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies) but note that the policy covers our taught students as well as research students so you will find that not all of it is relevant to you.

If you need more information or advice about data-protection matters, please ask the Data Protection Coordinator (contact details are in Section 12).

## 2.4 Freedom of information

We have a publication scheme which gives a general right of public access to many types of information. You can access the scheme at:

[www.open.ac.uk/foi](http://www.open.ac.uk/foi)

You can get information on the Freedom of Information Act 2000 from the Information Commissioner at:

[www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

## 3 Study support

In this section

- 3.1 The Research School
- 3.2 Research facilities
- 3.3 Students with a disability, health problem, mental health or specific learning difficulty
- 3.4 Supervision
- 3.5 Third-party monitoring
- 3.6 Progress monitoring reports
- 3.7 Appeals



### 3.1 The Research School

The Research Degrees Team in the Research School is responsible for the administration of the University's research degrees programme and implements policy developed by the Research Degrees Committee. It is likely to be the main point of contact with the Research School for most postgraduate research students. Each adviser in the team supports one or more faculties for the whole of the student journey from application through to completion. You can contact your faculty adviser through the email address shown in Section 12.

Its main areas of activity can be summarised as the administration underpinning the:

- ▶ recruitment and admission of full-time and part-time research students.
- ▶ appointment of supervisors.
- ▶ arrangements for monitoring research students' progress (the six-monthly progress monitoring reports, and probation assessment reports).
- ▶ payments to students, supervisors and examiners. This includes:
  - a** grants payments for full-time research students whose awards are funded by The Open University or based on Open University terms and conditions
  - b** the fund for full-time students who have financial dependants
  - c** the Access to Learning Fund provided by the HEFCE for 'home' students to alleviate financial hardship
  - d** fee and expense payments for supervisors and examiners.
- ▶ research degree examinations and advice to the Qualifications and Ceremonies Centre that the research degree can be awarded.

The Research School also plays a major role in events, projects and initiatives to improve the quality of the University's research degree provision and the experience of its research students.

Please ask the Research School if you need advice or have any questions about your research degree studies.

The Research School welcomes suggestions and comments about its role and how it can help to improve the quality of OU research degree study.

### 3.2 Research facilities

The University provides research facilities (laboratories, computers and so on) for full-time and part-time internal students.

The University can't usually provide laboratory facilities for part-time external students, and it's assumed that you have, if necessary, made arrangements for those before registration.

#### Library facilities for research students

##### The Open University Library

You will need to make use of library materials as part of your research.

The OU Library's world-class online library service is located at:

[www.open.ac.uk/library](http://www.open.ac.uk/library).

This provides access via the internet to an extensive range of online resources such as full-text journal articles, electronic books, databases of references to books and journals, images, videos and sound recordings. These databases allow you to search resources, perform a structured literature search, keep up to date with

your subject, or read around a particular topic. Support for carrying out these tasks and improving your information-searching skills is available from Library Services' Information Skills for Researchers website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/infoskills-researchers](http://www.open.ac.uk/infoskills-researchers).

Library Services also offers a programme of online training sessions, including an introduction to the library services. Details of the full programme and dates and times for the sessions can be found at

[http://www.open.ac.uk/library/help/online\\_ts/](http://www.open.ac.uk/library/help/online_ts/).

Both full-time and part-time research students can take advantage of the document delivery service which provides access to items that are not available through the Library Services' wide range of electronic resources. Library Services also supports the process of reference management and citation through bibliographic software packages such as EndNote and Refworks.

The OU's open-access database of peer-reviewed research (Open Research Online) shows the range and depth of recently published OU research. This can be browsed at:

[oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk).

Once you have started your studies you may wish to view examples of other theses including those from The Open University. EThOS, a service from the British Library, provides free online access to a selection of UK PhD theses from participating universities.

[ethos.bl.uk](http://ethos.bl.uk)

These will give you an insight into the structure of theses, different approaches to research, and how to set things out. Library Services also holds a selection of print theses which can be borrowed if you are able to visit the OU Library in Milton Keynes in person. You can use the Voyager Library Catalogue ([voyager.open.ac.uk](http://voyager.open.ac.uk)) to search for these. There is also a growing number of electronic OU PhD theses available through Open Research Online.

### Using the Library at Walton Hall

The OU Library combines the best traditional library facilities and services with the latest technologies and learning opportunities to provide a modern, spacious environment for study, research and collaboration as well as access to books, journals, multimedia and the internet. The Library has a dedicated study room for researchers to use, incorporating a collection of research-methodology books. In addition, the Research School has a seminar room in the library for the use of researchers.

### Access to other libraries

If you would like to use other libraries, you can find out about suitable libraries near you by checking the access arrangements at:

[www.open.ac.uk/library/help/otherlibs](http://www.open.ac.uk/library/help/otherlibs).

Library Services is a member of a scheme called SCONUL Access which enables you to borrow from over 160 university libraries throughout the UK and Ireland. It includes access for:

- ▶ postgraduate students on taught courses (non-research)
- ▶ postgraduate research students registered for a PhD, MPhil or similar qualification.

You can find further information about the SCONUL Access scheme and how to join, on the Library website.

### National libraries

All OU research students are entitled to apply for a free pass to use the British Library's St Pancras, London reading rooms. You'll need to present documentary proof of the course you're taking and some form of personal identification. The National Libraries of Scotland and Wales also welcome OU students.

### Getting advice and guidance

On the website you'll find our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and a series of 'How do I...' guides.

The Library Helpdesk Team, which includes specialist information advice, is also available to support you with all your library needs seven days a week and can be contacted at:

**Email** [lib-help@open.ac.uk](mailto:lib-help@open.ac.uk)

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 659001

Or through the live online 'webchat' facility available via the library website.

### Computers

You'll find some advice about working with your computer on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

Computing facilities are provided for students based at Walton Hall, and there may also be some IT support from your academic unit. The terms and conditions relating to computing are set out in Section 4.5. You must comply with the University's Computing code of conduct, which is published on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

## OU Computing Helpdesk

The University's helpdesk for computing enquiries is open from 09:00 to 21:30 Monday to Friday, and 09:00 to 17:00 on Saturdays and Sundays. Please also note that the helpdesk is closed between 15:00 and 16:00 every Wednesday afternoon for staff training. Most Bank Holidays are covered from 10:00 to 16:00 but note that the Helpdesk is closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and Easter Sunday.

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 653972

[www.open.ac.uk/students/helpdesk](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/helpdesk)

## Research skills development

The training pack U501 Doing research, sent to all new research students apart from those in science disciplines and those registered for an EdD, has been produced to help you to complete your studies. You can use the pack independently and in individual training sessions with your supervisors. It's sent to all OU supervisors, and you should take it with you when you meet your supervisors at the beginning of your studies to discuss your training needs. Students registered in the Faculty of Science are registered on the postgraduate module STM895 Postgraduate research skills in science, technology, mathematics and computing. This is an online module that allows students to identify and tailor their training requirements through a skills audit carried out at the beginning of their degree. The module material covers a variety of generic research skills and allows students to maintain an online portfolio of evidence of these generic skills acquired during the course of their research.

You can find the above resources and more on the following website:

<http://rdskills.open.ac.uk/>.

## Statistics Advisory Service

Advice about statistical aspects of research is available to all registered OU research students from the Statistics Advisory Service. A major aim of the service is to encourage students to learn to deal with the statistical aspects of their research effectively and efficiently, by providing statistical advice both at the planning and at the data analysis stages of research. At the planning stage, statistical advice can help to:

- ▶ ensure that the research study is designed to address the research objectives as efficiently as possible
- ▶ identify best practices for data management prior to the start of data collection.

At the data analysis stage, the service can help to:

- ▶ identify suitable statistical methods to properly address the research objectives
- ▶ understand outputs from statistical computing software
- ▶ ensure that evidence-based conclusions can be drawn from the analysis.

Seek statistical advice as early as possible, preferably while planning your study and before collecting the data. Please visit the Statistics Advisory Service website for details:

[http://statistics.open.ac.uk/advisory\\_service](http://statistics.open.ac.uk/advisory_service).

or send a message to:

**Email** [stats-advisory@open.ac.uk](mailto:stats-advisory@open.ac.uk)

## Safety in laboratories

The University wants to ensure the health and safety of all persons on site and, in order to do this and to comply with legislative requirements, the work you will be undertaking in laboratories must be risk assessed.

The risk assessment must be completed by your supervisor **prior** to any work commencing.

You must be informed of any significant risks which have been identified, what controls have been put in place and any specific instructions/procedures you must follow whilst working in the laboratory to prevent causing harm to yourself or others.

If you have any questions concerning safety whilst you are working, please speak to your supervisor immediately.

If you're based outside the UK, you must make sure that you're aware of, and adhere to, the health and safety legislation in force in that country.

## Ethics approval for research with human participants

Any research involving the collection of data or tissue material from individual humans requires ethics approval, with the exception of research where 'any reasonable judgement would suggest that no harm could arise to any person, living or dead'.

Gaining ethics approval is important as a means of protecting participants, researchers, supervisors, the institution and any funding bodies and minimising the likelihood of legal action being taken against any parties involved.

Directly registered research degree students (i.e. all students apart from those registered through an affiliated research centre) need to have their

applications for ethics approval endorsed by their primary supervisor. If you plan to gather data or tissue material from human participants as part of your research, you should discuss the ethics aspects with your supervisor at an early stage and ensure that well-prepared applications are made to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at appropriate stages.

Any research involving NHS premises, staff or patients will also require Local or Multi-Centre Research Ethics Committee NHS approval as well as agreement from the NHS locale(s) in which the research is to be conducted. Please note that this is often a lengthy process so you should allow sufficient time in the project plan to complete this stage. The OU is recognised as a sponsor for this type of research and approval from the HREC can help us provide support for applications.

You'll find a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and links to further sources of information and guidance on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/human.shtml](http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/human.shtml).

### Indemnity insurance

The University has indemnity insurance for full-time and part-time directly registered students carrying out research related to their studies. (Note that this insurance is subject to the normal terms and conditions that apply to the University's other insurances.) If you are not a directly registered research student and you require indemnity cover – for example, to fulfil the conditions of an ethics committee – you will need to arrange this yourself. An appropriate risk assessment should be carried out for all off-site filed work.

## 3.3 Students with a disability, health condition, mental health disability or a specific learning difficulty

The University has a strong commitment to equal opportunities and welcomes people with disabilities or additional requirements as research degree students.

We can provide a range of support services for individual needs and aim to make any reasonable adjustments that may be required. Please contact the Research Degrees Team for further information about the services that may be available to you,

or if you have any concerns about how your disability or additional requirements may affect your ability to study.

You may be in a position to benefit from a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) to help with extra study-related costs that arise as a direct result of your disability (see Section 5.2 for further details). If you are eligible for one of these allowances, the University will only provide study support that cannot be provided by the DSA.

We encourage you, no matter what your circumstances, to tell us as early as possible if you think you will need support as some services may take several months to arrange. The information you give us will be used only to help the University to assist you in your studies.

## 3.4 Supervision

EdD students should also refer to Section 8.

MRes students should also refer to Section 9.

Each research student has internal supervisors, who are members of the University's academic staff (at Walton Hall or in the regions). Some students also have an external supervisor appointed from an institution of higher education or a research institute in their home area or near their place of work.

Supervisors report regularly on their students' work. It is on the basis of these reports that the University continues your registration. If you have not made satisfactory progress your registration may be terminated.

The number of meetings you have with your supervisors will depend on the nature of your project and whether you're studying full time or part time. The nature of the work your supervisors require of you will also depend on your research project. Regular written reports and draft thesis chapters may be specified, or you may spend a considerable period at the beginning of your project on a preliminary reading programme and literature survey before you produce a significant piece of written work.

Supervisors and students discuss the direction of the research project and the nature and amount of communication (meetings, correspondence, phone) at their first meeting. If you're a part-time external student you should contact your supervisors to arrange this after you've returned your acceptance form.

Most academic areas hold seminars for students and supervisors.

Further information about supervisory good practice can be found in Section 11.

### 3.5 Third-party monitoring

You should have an opportunity, at least once a year, to discuss your studies with a third party – someone other than your supervisors or head of discipline. The arrangements for this will be made by your academic unit or discipline, and you should be told about your third-party monitor during the first month of your registration.

Your first third-party monitoring session should take place by your fifth month of registration. Third-party monitoring should then take place at least annually in the first quarter of each calendar year.

You should feel free to discuss with your third-party monitor, in confidence, any matters that might affect your studies. Any records kept should be agreed by both parties.

Please contact the Research Degrees Team in the Research School for advice if you have any queries about third-party monitoring and don't know who to contact in your academic unit or discipline.

### 3.6 Progress monitoring reports

EdD students should refer to [Section 8](#).

MRes students should refer to [Section 9](#).

Regular progress monitoring reports are required every six months for all research students. When a probation assessment report is due it replaces the progress report. You should have a meeting with your full supervision team to discuss the progress of your research during the period immediately before the report is prepared.

Registration is subject to confirmation of satisfactory academic progress as demonstrated through the progress and probation reports.

Further information about probation, progress reporting, and the requirements for continuing registration can be found in [Section 4](#).

### 3.7 Appeals

You can appeal against academic decisions of the University, in particular against:

- ▶ termination of registration
- ▶ registration for a particular research degree
- ▶ refusal of permission to submit a thesis
- ▶ the result of examination of a thesis.

You'll find the research degree appeal procedures in [Section 11](#).



## 4 Registration

In this section

- 4.1 Residence requirements
- 4.2 Assignment of intellectual property rights
- 4.3 Degree registration
- 4.4 Language
- 4.5 Non-book components to thesis
- 4.6 Conditions for use of computers and systems
- 4.7 Conditions for use of Library facilities
- 4.8 Probationary period
- 4.9 Period of study
- 4.10 Further conditions of part-time registration
- 4.11 Further conditions of full-time registration
- 4.12 Points-based immigration system

### 4.1 Residence requirements

EdD students should refer to Section 8.

MRes students should refer to Section 9.

Students must normally be resident in the United Kingdom throughout their studies (EdD students excepted). In exceptional circumstances the University may waive this regulation to allow someone who is resident outside the UK to register as an external part-time research student, if it can be shown that adequate supervision can be arranged. The University expects students for whom the residence requirement is waived to make regular visits to the UK at their own expense for supervision sessions with their internal supervisors. Usually, this is practical only if they have work or family commitments here. All research degree examinations are held in the UK and students are required to attend at their own expense.

The University is also willing to waive the residence requirement to enable UK students to undertake periods of fieldwork overseas if that's essential to the research and if it can be shown that regular and adequate supervision can be maintained.

### 4.2 Assignment of intellectual property rights

#### What is intellectual property?

The generic term 'intellectual property' (often abbreviated to "IP") can allow you to own things you create in a similar way to owning physical property. You can control the use of your IP, and use it for commercial purposes. It can arise from many different activities within the University,

including unfunded and publicly funded research activities. Furthermore it can be divided into 'that which existed prior to entering into a contract' ('Background IP') and 'that which arises as a result of a defined project after entering into a contract' ("Foreground IP").

The four main types of IP are:

- ▶ **Copyright:** protects material, such as literature, art, music, sound recordings, films and broadcasts.
- ▶ **Designs:** protect the visual appearance or eye appeal of products.
- ▶ **Patents:** protect the technical and functional aspects of products and processes.
- ▶ **Trade marks:** protect signs that can distinguish the goods and services of one trader from those of another.

However, IP also covers trade secrets, plant varieties, geographical indications, performers' rights and so on. Often, more than one type of IP may apply to the same creation.

(Information extracted from the UK Intellectual Property Office)

#### Innovation and Enterprise Team

The Innovation and Enterprise Team in the Research School provides a range of services to Open University researchers relating to the evaluation and management of intellectual property and knowledge transfer. A short summary is included below, but you are advised to contact the Innovation and Enterprise team for more detailed information:

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 659783

**Email** [innovation-enterprise@open.ac.uk](mailto:innovation-enterprise@open.ac.uk)

## Postgraduate research student policy on intellectual property (IP)

So that postgraduate research students can work under the same conditions of service as staff regarding intellectual property rights and benefit from this policy, all postgraduate research students are required to assign (transfer) their rights to intellectual property (IP) arising from their research to the University. Postgraduate research students hold the copyright to the text in their thesis. Where appropriate, students are required to notify the University of the existence of any intellectual property, through the Innovation and Enterprise Team (Research School), and are required to complete an *Intellectual property disclosure form*.

If students are having discussions with external organisations, these should be held under terms of confidentiality. The Innovation and Enterprise Team (Research School) can draft these agreements for you.

Before students publish, they should consult with their supervisor or appropriate faculty member for approval to ensure that there are no intellectual property issues.

If research is sponsored by a third party other than a Research Council e.g. company, charity or other independent organisation, there will be a research contract between the University and that organisation which will define the ownership of the resulting intellectual property. If a postgraduate student is working at an Affiliated Research Centre (ARC), there may be a separate agreement which defines ownership of IP resulting from their research.

However, the University makes no claim on inventions, or other forms of intellectual property, developed by a student, which have no connection with their University work.

The Open University recognises that intellectual property resulting from research carried out at The Open University may contain background intellectual property from other organisations due to newly appointed staff and/or postgraduate students continuing their research. In these circumstances the University aims to treat intellectual property rights issues fairly to reflect the origin of the IP.

## 4.3 Degree registration

EdD students should refer to Section 8.

Mres students should refer to Section 9.

### Other study

Unless you're undertaking a programme of related study, you may not study for any other degree or qualification at The Open University or any other institution at the same time as your research degree study. You should outline the programme of related study in your application to register as a research degree student. If it becomes clear once you've started your research that further courses are necessary, you should ask the Research School for a waiver of this regulation.

### Part-time students

Most part-time students start in October. In some circumstances there may be some flexibility about this. On admission to the research degree programme as a part-time student, you will be registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil). Before the end of your probationary registration you will be assessed and a recommendation about your continuing registration and degree registration will be made to the University's Research Degrees Committee.

If your probationary registration is confirmed, your registration will continue until your submission deadline, as long as reports of satisfactory progress are received.

To maintain your registration you must make progress to the satisfaction of your supervisors, your academic unit and the University's Research Degrees Committee, and comply with any non-academic requirements, including payment of fees.

As a part-time student, you have a maximum registration period of six years.

### Full-time students

Most full-time students start in October. In some circumstances there may be some flexibility about this. On admission to the research degree programme, full-time research students are registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil). Before the end of your probationary registration you will be assessed and a recommendation about your continuing registration and degree registration will be made to the University's Research Degrees Committee. For grant-holders the usual funding period is three years, although this may vary according to the funding arrangements.

As a full-time student, you have a maximum registration period of four years, whatever your funding period. After four years the Research Degrees Committee may exceptionally approve a case from your discipline for extended registration.

## 4.4 Language

If you want to submit your thesis in Welsh or Gaelic you must ask permission to do so when you apply for admission to the University. Approval will depend on the University being able to appoint both internal and external supervisors and examiners with the relevant expertise in the area of research who are fluent in Welsh or Gaelic.

## 4.5 Non-book components to thesis

If you are intending to develop and submit a thesis with a non-book component in line with the relevant qualification regulations (RD 6.2.2, RD 6.2.9, RD 6.2.14), you should prepare for this eventuality from the beginning of your registration. Make sure you adhere to the requirements in the relevant guidelines which can be accessed through the Research Degrees website:

[www.open.ac.uk/research](http://www.open.ac.uk/research).

## 4.6 Conditions for use of computers and systems

Once you have accepted our offer of registration, we will give you an OU computer username (OUCU), and a preset password that allows you to access some of our systems. When you first sign on to our systems, we will ask you to change your preset password. It is your responsibility to keep your password secure and confidential. In particular you must:

- ▶ never tell anyone else your password, even University staff
- ▶ never write your password down in such a way that it can be easily identified
- ▶ use your password in line with the best practice advice given at:

[www.open.ac.uk/students](http://www.open.ac.uk/students).

If you think that someone else knows your password, tell the OU Computing Helpdesk by phoning 01908 653972.

You are expected to comply with the University's *Computing code of conduct*, which is published on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

## 4.7 Conditions for use of Library facilities

If you access the University's Library Services (described in Section 3.2) you will be bound by a copyright declaration. The declaration can be found at:

[www.open.ac.uk/library/about/policies/copyprint/](http://www.open.ac.uk/library/about/policies/copyprint/).

A copy can also be obtained direct from:

### Library Services

The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 659001

**Email** [lib-help@open.ac.uk](mailto:lib-help@open.ac.uk)

## 4.8 Probationary period

### Part-time students

For part-time students the first two years of registration is the probationary period. The Research Degrees Committee requires a detailed report that reviews your project and plans, assesses your skills development and makes a recommendation about your continuing registration and degree registration. You are also required to undertake a 'mini viva' as part of the probationary assessment. The deadline for probation assessment reports to reach the Research Degrees Team is 23 months from the date on which your registration commenced. It is important that you prepare the probation assessment in plenty of time.

### Full-time students

For full-time students the first year of registration is the probationary period. The Research Degrees Committee requires a detailed report that reviews your project and plans, assesses your skills development and makes a recommendation about your continuing registration and the degree for which you are registered. You are also required to undertake a 'mini viva' as part of the probationary assessment. The deadline for probation assessment reports to reach the Research Degrees Team is 11 months from the date on which your registration commenced. It is important that you prepare the probation assessment in plenty of time.

## 4.9 Period of study

The tables in this section show the required periods of study for full-time and part-time students. Appropriate adjustments will be made if you change from part-time to full-time study or vice versa.

### Full-time students

Degree	Minimum	Maximum before submission
MPhil	1 yr 3 m	4 yrs
PhD	2 yrs	4 yrs

### Part-time students

Degree	Minimum	Maximum before submission
MPhil	2 yrs	6 yrs
PhD	3 yrs	6 yrs

There are no exemptions from the minimum periods of study, and registration can't be backdated to take account of research you've already done.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and the Higher Education Funding Council in Wales under the auspices of the Research Councils sets the benchmarks for good practice in timescales for completion of research degrees. It recommends that research degrees should be structured with the expectation of completion in the stated study period. You should therefore aim to complete your research degree within your funded period if full time and within six years if part-time.

You should note that if the completion of your probation report is delayed beyond the one year allowed for full-time students and the two years allowed for part-time students, you will be using up precious study time from your second/third year of study. The registration clock does not stop apart from the specific circumstances described below.

## 4.10 Further conditions of part-time registration

### Extensions to maximum study periods

Exceptionally, the Research Degrees Committee may consider requests for extensions to the maximum periods of study for part-time students if they are supported by your supervisors and

head of discipline. Requests must be made in writing to the Research School and should include the length of extension required and a timetable for completion. The length of time you ask for should be realistic (to allow time for completion and submission), as further extensions are unlikely to be granted. The maximum extension permitted is two years.

### Suspending registration

In certain circumstances, on the recommendation of supervisors, the University will consider requests from part-time students to suspend their studies. You can ask for a suspension of one or more months. Periods of suspension, which you should, wherever possible, ask for in advance, don't count towards the maximum permitted periods of study. You should normally discuss suspension of your studies with your supervisors in the first instance, but you may, if necessary, write direct to the Research School. The maximum suspension permitted for part-time students is two years in total. Whatever the circumstances, part-time students who are unable to study for more than 24 months in total are required to relinquish their registration.

During periods of suspension, registration is put on hold and the thesis submission date extended by a corresponding period. Students are still liable for fees while registration is suspended (see Section 5.1)

If you want to suspend your studies contact the Research School, or ask your supervisors to do so, as soon as possible. Suspensions can't normally be approved retrospectively.

### Withdrawal

If you decide to withdraw from the programme, you must tell the Research School in writing or by email. This is the only way to withdraw. Telling your supervisors or annotating a document sent to another office is not acceptable. All withdrawals are acknowledged. You should keep proof of posting in case your notification doesn't reach the University.

If you decide to withdraw, write to or email the Research School.

New part-time students who accept a place in the programme but withdraw before the beginning of the first academic year will receive a full refund of their fees.

## 4.11 Further conditions of full-time registration

### Conditions of grant payment

Full-time research students are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the terms and conditions of registration. To be sure that you meet the conditions of your grant payments, please read this section carefully and make sure that you understand what you need to do in the circumstances outlined below.

If you have any questions or you need further clarification you should consult the Research Degrees Team in the Research School, who will offer advice and help you to resolve any difficulties that arise during your studies. You'll find contact details for the Research School in Section 12.

In your funded period as a full-time research student you are required to spend a **minimum** of 35 hours a week on your studies.

### Residential address

The University's auditors will not allow grant payments to be made unless the Research School has your current residential address and phone numbers (mobile and landline).

- ▶ Please be sure to notify the Research Degrees Team if your residential address and phone numbers change at any time during your studies.
- ▶ This includes temporary residence elsewhere in the UK or overseas for the purpose of field trips.
- ▶ Failure to provide your current address and phone numbers is a breach of the terms and conditions of your registration.

### Absences and other disruptions

You must inform the Research Degrees Team if you are absent or your studies are disrupted for any reason. All information disclosed will be treated confidentially and sensitively.

- ▶ Please report all absences of a week or more that are due to illness or injury.
- ▶ Copies of medical certificates issued during periods of ill health or injury must be sent to the Research Degrees Team at the time of issue. The receipt of medical certification is always acknowledged. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please check that it has been sent. This is particularly important if you sent the certification to your supervisors or discipline and asked for it to be copied to the Research Degrees Team.

- ▶ You are also required to inform the Research Degrees Team if you experience problems and difficulties that mean you are unable to undertake your studies full time for a week or more.
- ▶ Supervisors and heads of discipline are required to notify the Research Degrees Team immediately of any unauthorised absences, or if they have concerns about the progress of a full-time research student.

### Ill health

If your studentship is based on OU terms and conditions rather than an externally funded studentship with its own set of terms and conditions:

- ▶ You are entitled to retain registration and your full grant payments for the first two months of certified ill health within any 12-month period.
- ▶ Your studentship grant payments and registration will be suspended if you are unable to study for more than two months because of ill health within any 12-month period.
- ▶ You must be certified by your general practitioner as fit to resume your studies, full time, before your studentship and registration will be reinstated.
- ▶ Your final submission date will be deferred by a period equivalent to the suspension.

The Research Councils allow full grant payment for the first month of ill health and half payment for the second month within any 12-month period. After that, the studentship is put into abeyance. This means that no grant payments are made and registration is suspended. When you are certified as fit to resume study, your studentship is reinstated and:

- ▶ grant payments resume until you have received three years' funding in total
- ▶ your final submission date is deferred by a period equivalent to the abeyance.

Whatever the circumstances, the maximum period of suspension allowed for any full-time student is 12 months, in total.

### Withdrawal or registration termination

If you are considering withdrawing from your registration for any reason, please ask the Research Degrees Team for advice without delay.

Students who withdraw or have their registration terminated will be required to repay any advance payments made to them.

## Paid employment

You may undertake a **maximum of six hours** per week paid employment with the agreement of your supervisors and head of discipline.

## Maternity leave

Full-time research students are entitled to a maximum of six months' paid maternity leave. All requests for paid maternity leave must be made in advance to the Research Degrees Team.

## Holidays

Full-time research students are not subject to terms or semesters in the conventional sense, nor do they have fixed hours of study. The academic year begins on 1 October and ends on 30 September.

Full-time research students are entitled, with the prior agreement of their supervisors, to take up to eight weeks' holiday each year including public holidays and University closure periods.

## Residence requirements

Students must normally be resident in the UK throughout their period of study.

Full-time students are required to live within 15 miles of Walton Hall. If in exceptional circumstances you need to live further away (because of domestic or child-care commitments, for example), you must obtain approval from the Research Degrees Committee in advance.

## 4.12 Points-based immigration system

The UK Border Agency (UKBA) introduced new immigration regulations for non-EEA full-time students studying in the UK on 31 March 2009. These regulations and subsequent amendments to the regulations cover all new students enrolling from October 2009 onwards and all existing students seeking to extend their current student visa. The full details of the immigration regulations for students can be found on the UKBA website at

[www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)

If you are a full-time student and you need to extend your student visa, you should read the guidance notes and application form on the UKBA website very carefully. You should contact the Research Degrees Team at the earliest opportunity.

**Email** [research-degrees-visa-queries@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-degrees-visa-queries@open.ac.uk)



# 5 Fees and financial support

In this section

- 5.1 Fees
- 5.2 Financial support
- 5.3 Debts
- 5.4 Points-based immigration system

EdD students should also refer to Section 8.  
 MRes students should also refer to Section 9.

## 5.1 Fees

### Full-time fee-paying students

A single composite annual fee is payable on 1 October each year. Students registered at other times of the year will be charged proportionally.

**There are different fees for non-EEA students, and fees are likely to increase each year.**

### Part-time students (whose studies started before October 2005)

If you started your studies before October 2005, you incur liability for the registration fee at quarterly intervals during each year of study until the submission of your thesis.

	Payment request sent	Payment due by
<b>First quarter</b> 1 Oct–31 Dec	August	28 September
<b>Second quarter</b> 1 Jan–31 Mar	November	28 December
<b>Third quarter</b> 1 Apr–30 June	February	28 March
<b>Fourth quarter</b> 1 July–30 Sept	May	28 June

### Part-time students (whose studies started on or after 1 October 2005)

For part-time students who commenced study on or after 1 October 2005, there is a single annual composite fee for which payment is due before study begins. The fee covers the period of the academic year, 1 October to 30 September. You must make the first fee payment when you accept your offer of part-time research degree registration. Thereafter, fees will be payable by 28 September for the next academic year.

### OUSBA

OUSBA is a convenient way to pay your fees. The Open University Student Budget Accounts Limited (OUSBA) allows you to spread the cost of your studies by paying your annual fee in instalments. Detailed information about OUSBA is provided at [www.open.ac.uk/ousba](http://www.open.ac.uk/ousba). Alternatively you can phone OUSBA, +44(0)1908 655777 (08:30–17:30 Monday to Thursday, and 08:30–17:00 Friday).

You can apply to open an OUSBA account and charge all or part of your annual fee to that account. OUSBA will make your fee payment direct to The Open University (OU). You then have a choice, you can either:

- ▶ repay OUSBA at any time that suits you before your study year begins without incurring any interest charges; or
- ▶ repay the amount in monthly instalments spread over the duration of the study year – at a very reasonable rate of interest.

If you decide to pay by instalments, OUSBA will pay the OU when you accept your research degree registration offer and you won't have to start paying your loan until about one month after you start your studies. The payments to cover your fee will be due on or shortly after the fifth of each month and are spread over eleven monthly instalments. If you want to charge all or part of

your fee to OUSBA, you will need to complete the relevant part of the acceptance form and return this to the Research Degrees Team. We will then arrange for a personalised agreement to be sent to you, which you will need to sign and return before your account can be opened.

**Please note that, even if you have had an OUSBA account before, a new agreement will need to be completed for each year of study.**

If you submit your thesis or withdraw from your studies during an academic year, you may be entitled to have part of your fees refunded.

Submission or withdrawal by	Fee refund
31 March	50%

If your registration is suspended, your fee liability will be £600 per annum, pro-rata for the period of suspension. Suspensions will be granted in periods of one or more months. If the suspension is approved after the payment due date, your reduced fee liability will be in the form of a fee credit to your fee account for the following year.

You must pay your fees by the due date.

Part-time students who are salaried OU staff or OU associate lecturers can apply to have their fees waived while they're employed by the University, subject to current policy. Details and application forms are available from the Research Degrees Team.

## Sponsorship

If your employer or another third party is willing to be invoiced by the University for all or part of your fee, please contact the Research School, +44 (0)1908 653806, or email:

[research-degrees-team@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-degrees-team@open.ac.uk)

## Resubmission fee

If you're registered to resubmit a thesis you'll be required to pay part-time fees at the appropriate rate. This charge is made because students who resubmit may make substantial calls on supervisors' services for up to two years after their examinations, and the costs of re-examination itself are also incurred. Any students who are examined and required to resubmit their theses for re-examination will automatically be charged further fees, after notification of the result until they resubmit.

Date of resubmission registration	Fee liability
1 Oct–31 Dec	100%
1 Jan–31 Mar	75%
1 Apr–30 June	50%
1 July–30 Sept	25%

If you're awarded a degree subject to corrections and modifications or substantial amendments but are not required to resubmit for re-examination, you won't be liable for further fees.

Students who register on or after 1 October 2010 will be charged a continuation fee from Year 4 for full-time students and Year 7 for part-time students. Students who are in the 'writing-up' phase as agreed with their supervisors (ie not undertaking any more substantive data collection or research) will be charged a writing-up fee which will be 50% of the continuation fee. The resubmission fee will be subsumed into the continuation/writing-up fee.

## 5.2 Financial support

The fees of full-time students who hold research studentships are paid by their funding bodies which may be The Open University, a Research Council or other type of organisation such as a company or charity. Most of these full-time students receive a maintenance grant as well as a fee waiver. Self-financed full-time students pay the composite annual fee.

Part-time external students must meet the cost of fees and research facilities from their own resources, but may be able to get help as outlined below.

## Research Student Financial Assistance Fund

This fund provides support for research students who are experiencing financial hardship. The money is provided from voluntary donations by the trustees of the Open University Development Fund.

Full-time students can apply for financial support towards living expenses and unfunded study costs. Part-time external students can apply for assistance with study costs. There's no citizenship restriction – both UK and non-UK citizens can apply if they're resident in the UK. You can't apply for financial support to reimburse expenditure already incurred.

The amount of support depends on individual applications and on demand. Awards of less than £25 or over £200 aren't normally made, and no awards can be given once the fund has been exhausted.

You can apply at any time – ask the Research Degrees Team for an application form.

## Crowther Fund (OU graduates only)

The Crowther Fund was set up as a tribute to the late Lord Crowther, our first Chancellor. It's intended to help OU graduates build upon their OU degrees, either by formal study or research or by generally broadening their experience through a period of voluntary work. The fund doesn't take account of financial circumstances. The application closing date is 28 February each year.

You can download a PDF version of the Crowther Fund guidelines, which include further details on eligibility criteria, and a copy of the application form from the financial support website [www.open.ac.uk/financialsupport](http://www.open.ac.uk/financialsupport).

Alternatively, please email [ou-crowther-fund@open.ac.uk](mailto:ou-crowther-fund@open.ac.uk) for an application pack.

## Disabled students' allowances

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) are government grants for students in higher education who are obliged to incur additional study-related costs because of a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty.

The Disabled Students' Allowance Office (DSA) acts as a local authority for students studying with the OU and as such is separate to the University itself.

DSAs are not means tested and are not dependent upon your income or any savings you may have. If you are eligible for a DSA, it will not affect any state benefits you may be receiving. You may still be eligible for a DSA if you are studying part time.

If you are unsure if you are eligible, contact the DSA Office for the latest information.

### The DSA Office

The Open University  
Hammerwood Gate  
Kents Hill  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6BR

**Voice phone** 01908 654136

**Email** [DSA-queries@open.ac.uk](mailto:DSA-queries@open.ac.uk)

or look at our website guide to services for disabled students:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/disability/applying-for-a-dsa.php>.

## Students in Scotland

To find out if you are eligible and to apply for a DSA you should either:

▶ email [Scotland@open.ac.uk](mailto:Scotland@open.ac.uk)

or

▶ phone our Disability and Additional Requirements Team on 0131 226 3851.

## 5.3 Debts

Failure to pay fees as and when required is a breach of the regulations. If you repeatedly fail to pay your fees on time, your research degree registration will be terminated without further warning.

If you are unable to pay your fees, please contact the Research Degrees Team to find out if arrangements can be made to help safeguard your registration.

The University reserves the right to refer recovery of a debt to a debt-collecting agency.

The University further reserves the right to withhold degree awards, to refuse further registration and to cancel registration if you haven't paid all the appropriate fees by the dates specified for payment.

## 5.4 Points-based immigration system

All students who have applied for a student visa under the new immigration regulations or who are seeking to extend their student visa under the new immigration regulations will be required to demonstrate that they can meet strict financial requirements. Students applying for a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK must have the required competence in the English language as specified by the UK Border Agency.

Full details of the financial requirements and the evidence that you must provide along with the requirements for competence in English can be found on the UKBA website at

[www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Please contact the Research Degrees Team at the earliest opportunity if you have any queries about the financial requirements of the new immigration regulations.

**Email** [research-degrees-visa-queries@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-degrees-visa-queries@open.ac.uk)



# 6 Examinations and theses

In this section

- 6.1 Eligibility
- 6.2 Examinations
- 6.3 Theses
- 6.4 Intellectual property rights

EdD students should also refer to Section 8.  
MRes students should also refer to Section 9.

## 6.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to submit a thesis for a research degree you must:

- ▶ be registered for the research degree you intend to submit for
- ▶ have satisfactorily completed the minimum period of study specified for the degree
- ▶ have satisfied your supervisors that your thesis is of an adequate standard for submission to examiners
- ▶ have paid all fees due.

## 6.2 Examinations

Candidates for research degrees are examined on the basis of their theses. The examination process is initiated by you giving (at least) three months' notice in writing to the Research School of the intended date for submission of your thesis, together with confirmation of the title. Theses can be submitted at any time during the year, although those submitted during the summer may be subject to some delay if examiners aren't available for oral examinations.

When your notice is received, arrangements will be made for your head of discipline, in consultation with the internal supervisors, to nominate an examination panel. A minimum of one internal and one external examiner is required. In some circumstances, a second external examiner may be appointed. The examination arrangements will be made by the Independent Chair, who will also be present during the examination to ensure the appropriate procedures are followed.

The Research Degrees Committee will expect one of your supervisors to be present as an observer at the oral examination.

Guidelines to the examination process are available from the Research Degrees Team, and will be sent to you when you give notice of submitting your thesis. Oral examinations should, if possible, be held within six weeks of submission (as long as the correct period of notice has been given), though this can't be guaranteed since examiners may not be available. It will almost certainly be longer during the summer.

Please ask the Research Degrees Team if you need advice or have any queries about research degree examinations.

## 6.3 Theses

### Originality and joint work

Material included in a thesis you submit for a research degree must be your own original work. If you've been working with others on a research project, the thesis must indicate which parts are your independent contribution.

### Publication of papers

Before you're awarded a degree you may publish papers arising from your research – part-time students, particularly those working in similar fields to full-time researchers, may want to publish in order to establish their results as their own original work. You must make a note in your thesis of any material that's been published. You may submit a reprint with the thesis if you wish.

## Length

Theses should not exceed:

- ▶ **60,000 words for an MPhil**
- ▶ **100,000 words for a PhD.**

These are the maximum lengths and include all written material you submit (all footnotes, bibliographies and appendices). External examiners will expect considerably less in most subject areas. You may submit a longer thesis only if approval has been given in advance by the Research Degrees Committee.

## Format of theses

There are no set specifications for the internal structure of theses, but it should be appropriate to the subject area. You should discuss this with your supervisors. Examiners will of course require your thesis to be neat and well presented, and the system of indexing and referencing to be consistent within the work. For some disciplines, non-book content is allowed (read clauses RD 6.2.2, RD 6.2.9, RD 6.2.14 in Section 10 of this handbook). Make sure you refer to the relevant guidelines if you will be submitting a thesis with a non-book component.

There's no regulation for the position of footnotes. They should normally be at the foot of pages, the ends of chapters or the end of the thesis.

## For examination

The format of theses is set out in Qualification Regulation RD6, which you'll find in Section 10.2 in this Handbook. You submit three copies for examination. Full binding isn't required at this stage (to allow for corrections), but you should read clause RD 6.2.10 of the regulations carefully and note in particular the methods of presentation that aren't acceptable. The various methods of presentation of theses for examination don't need to be carried out by professional binders. You should consult your supervisors about suitable binding.

## For deposition in the University Library

Two copies of the thesis are required for deposition in the University Library. One copy should be fully bound to the specification in regulation RD 6.2.11, the other to the less rigorous specification in RD 6.2.12. You can do the less rigorous binding for the second Library copy yourself, leaving only one copy requiring professional binding. A third copy of the thesis is held by your academic unit and should be securely bound to the lesser specification.

## Language

A thesis may be written in the Welsh or Gaelic language only if permission was given when you were offered registration with the University – see Section 4.3.

## Access to theses

Access to a thesis for which a research degree has been awarded can't be restricted, unless permission for a limited period of restriction is given in your initial offer of registration. For this reason you're strongly advised to take advice before including any material that you're not entitled to make public.

## 6.4 Intellectual property rights

You hold the copyright to the text of your own thesis.

You'll find information about the University's policy concerning the management and exploitation of intellectual property in Section 4.2 of this handbook.



# 7 Qualifications

In this section

- 7.1 Research degrees
- 7.2 Results
- 7.3 Award of degrees
- 7.4 Degree ceremonies

## 7.1 Research degrees

The University awards four higher degrees by research:

- ▶ **Master of Research (MRes)**
- ▶ **Master of Philosophy (MPhil)**
- ▶ **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**
- ▶ **Doctorate in Education (EdD).**

### MRes

MRes students should also refer to Section 9.

### MPhil

For the Master of Philosophy you undertake a research programme leading to the submission of a thesis that must include a critical review of the literature and give evidence of research ability. It must be a distinct contribution to scholarship in your field.

### PhD

A thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy must be a significant contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication and giving evidence of your ability to undertake further research without supervision.

### EdD

EdD students should also refer to Section 8.

### PhD by published work

You may apply to submit published work for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy if you are:

- ▶ a member of the University's staff of at least three years' standing
- ▶ an OU associate lecturer of at least three years' standing

- ▶ a member of staff of at least three years' standing in an OU accredited institution.
- ▶ Details are available from the Research School.

## Higher doctorates

The University awards two higher doctorates on the basis of published work:

- ▶ **Doctor of Letters (DLitt)**
- ▶ **Doctor of Science (DSc)**

You must show that you've made an original and substantial contribution to a significant field of study over a considerable period of time. The published work you submit must demonstrate that you are a leading authority in your field and have taken part in important innovations and developments in it.

Candidature for these degrees is limited to:

- ▶ Open University staff, associate lecturers and graduates
- ▶ graduates of the Council for National Academic Awards who aren't otherwise eligible to register with a degree-awarding institution
- ▶ members of staff in OU accredited institutions.

Details are available from the Research School.

## Second degrees

If you're awarded one research degree and want to take another, you must apply again for admission to the University.

Your second research programme may build on the work for your first thesis, but your submission for the qualification must contain entirely new material. Clearly indicated references to the contents of the first thesis are permitted.

## 7.2 Results

Examination reports must be ratified by the Research Degrees Examination Results Ratification Committee. You'll be given a decision:

- ▶ pass
- ▶ pass subject to corrections and modifications to your thesis
- ▶ pass subject to substantial amendments to your thesis (but without re-examination)
- ▶ resubmission for re-examination after major revision of your thesis
- ▶ fail.

In exceptional cases a PhD candidate may be awarded an MPhil.

### Resubmission

Only one resubmission is permitted (see Qualification Regulation RD 7.4). If you're required to resubmit, you'll be charged further registration fees, as explained in Section 5.1.

## 7.3 Award of degrees

The degree is awarded with effect from the date of the University's decision to approve the examiners' recommendations, or from the date of receipt of confirmation that the required corrections or amendments have been completed.

When the Research Degrees Committee confirms that your thesis meets the requirements for the award of a degree, you must submit bound library copies (see Section 6.3) before the degree can be conferred. The degree and title of Master of Research or Doctor or Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Education are conferred *in absentia* by Congregation.

## 7.4 Degree ceremonies

The University holds an annual series of degree ceremonies for the presentation of graduates. Most of these are held in April – June and in September – October in towns and cities across the UK. Graduates are presented to the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors or the Director, Students. You may, if you wish, be presented at one of these degree ceremonies. They are always memorable and inspiring occasions. Details will be sent to you when you become eligible.

You can find out more about degree ceremonies by visiting the ceremonies website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/ceremonies](http://www.open.ac.uk/ceremonies).

or by telephoning the Credit, Qualifications and Ceremonies Centre (CQCC). Contact details are in Section 12.

Information about hiring academic dress at your ceremony is also available on the ceremonies website or by telephoning the Qualifications and Ceremonies Centre.

### Directory of graduates

Names (but not addresses) of graduates are printed in an official *Directory of Graduates*, with the degree awarded. The directory is produced each autumn, and includes all graduates whose qualifications have been conferred in the preceding twelve months. Abridged lists are produced for the presentation of graduates at each degree ceremony. The directory itself and the lists are all public documents. The University may also release names (but not addresses) of graduates, to be printed in national or regional newspapers and other publications.

If you do not want your name to appear in any of these publications, you must tell us by writing to the Manager (Ceremonies) in the Credit, Qualifications and Ceremonies Centre. If you do not do so, the University will consider that it has your consent to include your name.



# 8 Doctorate in Education

In this section

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Structure of the EdD
- 8.3 EdD registration
- 8.4 Fees
- 8.5 Dealing with difficulties
- 8.6 Progress monitoring and examination

This section is exclusively for those studying for the Doctorate in Education. You should refer to it in conjunction with Sections 1–7 of this handbook.

## 8.1 Introduction

The Doctorate in Education (EdD) is an innovative programme designed for professionals in education and related areas who want to extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of contemporary educational issues. It is characterised by a professional orientation and a supportive structure. It aims to develop skills in educational research and enquiry and to use these in order to carry out research that will contribute to professional knowledge and practice. A growing number of professionals regard this style of doctoral programme as being a more appropriate vehicle for their further development than the traditional PhD.

The qualification regulations for the Doctorate in Education are included in Section 10.

The EdD Team and the Research Degrees Team in the Research School will provide support for you throughout your EdD studies (see Section 8.2). The EdD Team consists of the Director for Postgraduate Studies, the EdD Programme Leader, the Programme Assistant and the Research Degrees Secretary.

The programme has very specific entry criteria that include appropriate study at masters-level that links to an EdD academic area of study and training in research skills and methods. The entry criteria are designed to provide the knowledge base, the inspiration and the research skills required to develop a research proposal.

The EdD is a three-year programme of study. The first year centres around a literature review and initial research study. This is followed by a two-year programme of supported and supervised research that culminates in a 50,000 word thesis.

## 8.2 Structure of the EdD

### Year 1: Literature review and initial research

The first year provides a bridge between study at masters level and the independent research required for a thesis. You receive a generic study guide that provides advice on bibliographic sources and methods of research and a book that expands on the themes in the study guide. You follow a structured programme of study and research leading to the submission of a substantial written report on the initial research and literature review (15,000 words), which forms the basis for the development of the thesis over the next two years. Year 1 begins in May and ends in June the following year. This is followed by a period of independent study before Year 2 begins in September.

### Years 2 and 3: Thesis – 2 years

If you make satisfactory progress in Year 1 you will be allowed to progress into Year 2. During this time you follow a more independent and individual programme of work with the continuing support of your supervisors. Progress is monitored through regular written reports.

The general criteria for assessment are:

- ▶ demonstration of reflection on the relationship between theory and practice in education
- ▶ a significant contribution to the theory and practice of education
- ▶ a high level of critical analysis

- ▶ an ability to select and apply appropriate research methods.

Successful candidates are awarded the degree of Doctor of Education and are entitled to use the title 'Dr'.

## Computer networking

An essential feature of the EdD programme is the extensive use of a virtual learning environment that will provide:

- ▶ electronic communication with supervisors, other students, and members of the EdD Team
- ▶ online seminars through a discussion forum
- ▶ online access to the OU Library bibliographic databases, ebooks and electronic journals (see Section 3.2).

You will need to purchase, or have regular access to, a suitable computer and you must be familiar with the computer before you start. For more information about computing, visit our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/pc4study](http://www.open.ac.uk/pc4study)

You will also need to register with an internet service provider (ISP) to gain access to the internet and to the University's virtual learning environment.

## OU Computing Helpdesk

The University's helpdesk for computing enquiries is open from 09:00 to 21:30 Monday to Friday, and 09:00 to 17:00 on Saturdays and Sundays. Please also notice that the helpdesk is closed between 15:00 and 16:00 every Wednesday afternoon for staff training. Most Bank Holidays are covered from 10:00 to 16:00 but note that the Helpdesk is closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and Easter Sunday.

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 653972

[www.open.ac.uk/students/helpdesk](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/helpdesk)

## Library facilities

If you access the University's Library services (described in Section 3.2) you will be bound by a copyright declaration. The declaration can be found at:

[www.open.ac.uk/library/about/policies/copyprint](http://www.open.ac.uk/library/about/policies/copyprint)

A copy can also be obtained direct from:

### Library Services

The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 659001

**Email** [lib-help@open.ac.uk](mailto:lib-help@open.ac.uk)

## Health and safety

You'll find some advice about working with your computer on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies)

and more detailed information at the website:

[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf)

## Supervision

Online communication largely replaces face-to-face supervision and electronic progress reports are submitted throughout the EdD.

## Residential weekends

Students are provided with residential study weekends which take place in Year 1, usually the last weekend in June or the first weekend in July, and in Year 3 in February. In Year 2 there is a day school in October.

## 8.3 EdD registration

### Residence

You can register for the EdD if you live in the UK or the EU. You will be required to come to the UK to attend the residential weekends and the day school as well as your examination at the end of your studies.

### Progression

Your progress throughout the programme is assessed and monitored through a series of 12 progress reports submitted to your supervisors as well as your final thesis. Progress reports are scheduled, monitored nationally, and must meet defined content requirements common to the programme. In Year 1 you will submit four progress reports and an end-of-year final report. The final report at the end of Year 1 is assessed in order to decide if you are ready to progress into the final two years of the programme.

If your Year 1 final report does not meet all the criteria for progression to Year 2, then you will be asked to revise and resubmit it the following year. During this time you will receive guidance from your supervisors to help you achieve the required standard to progress to Year 2.

Normally, only one resubmission of the Year 1 final report is allowed. The remaining progress reports are spread across Years 2 and 3 and culminate in the submission of your final thesis. The progress reports are a compulsory component of the EdD and failure to submit these reports may result in your registration being cancelled.

If there are particular reasons why you are not able to make progress with your research, such as heavy family commitments or illness, then it may be possible to suspend your registration as explained in Section 8.5 below.

Your supervisors are there to support you throughout your research studies in the EdD programme. If you have any queries about your supervision, you should contact the EdD Programme Leader.

## 8.4 Fees

There is a single annual composite fee for which payment is due before study starts. Students who withdraw from their studies may be entitled to have part of their fees refunded.

### OUSBA

OUSBA is a convenient way to pay your EdD fees. The Open University Student Budget Accounts Limited (OUSBA) allows you to spread the cost of your studies by paying your annual EdD registration fee in instalments. Detailed information about OUSBA is provided at [www.open.ac.uk/ousba](http://www.open.ac.uk/ousba). Alternatively you can phone OUSBA, +44 (0)1908 655777 (08:30–17:30 Monday to Thursday, and 08:30–17:00 Friday).

You can apply to open an OUSBA account and charge all or part of your annual fee to that account. OUSBA will make your fee payment direct to The Open University (OU). You then have a choice, you can either:

- ▶ repay OUSBA at any time that suits you before your study year begins without incurring any interest charges; or
- ▶ repay the amount in monthly instalments spread over the duration of the study year – at a very reasonable rate of interest.

If you decide to pay by instalments, OUSBA will pay the OU when you accept your research degree registration offer and you won't have to

start paying your loan until about one month after you start your studies. The payments to cover your EdD fee will be due on or shortly after the fifth of each month and are spread over eleven monthly instalments.

If you want to charge all or part of your EdD fee to OUSBA, you will need to complete the relevant part of the acceptance form and return this to the Research Degrees Team. We will then arrange for a personalised agreement to be sent to you, which you will need to sign and return before your account can be opened.

**Please note that, even if you have had an OUSBA account before, a new agreement will need to be completed for each year of study.**

### Resubmission fee

If you are required to resubmit your initial research and literature review report or your thesis, you will be required to pay a resubmission fee. The fee level for students who are required to resubmit is not more than 25% of the annual fee.

## 8.5 Dealing with difficulties

Most students find their studies an enjoyable though challenging experience, but difficulties such as illness or bereavement do sometimes occur. If they happen to you and you find that you are not going to be able to keep up with your studies, let your supervisors, the EdD Programme Leader and the Research Degrees Team in the Research School know. It is important to do this as soon as possible. The longer you have been having trouble, the less likely it is that the University will be able to make arrangements to help you. Get in touch with your supervisors or the EdD Team and the Research Degrees Team as soon as you can.

In certain circumstances you may be granted permission to suspend your registration and resume your studies the following year.

If you do suspend your study there will be a fee liability of £600 which will be charged at the beginning of the next academic year. On the EdD programme, students who suspend can usually only rejoin the programme at the same point the following year.

## 8.6 Progress monitoring and examination

### Eligibility

To be eligible to submit an EdD thesis you must:

- ▶ be registered for the EdD
- ▶ have satisfactorily completed the study requirements
- ▶ have satisfied your supervisors and the EdD Team that your thesis is of an adequate standard for submission to examiners
- ▶ have paid all fees due.
- ▶ The following apply:
  - ▶ Year 1 – the final report is examined by your main supervisor and one other supervisor attached to the same area of the programme. Feedback on the final report is given to the Research School and a copy is sent to you and your supervisors.
  - ▶ Year 2 – your supervisors complete a report on your progress for the EdD Team and the Research School.
  - ▶ Year 3 – internal and external examiners examine your thesis and provide a report for the Research School on the basis of their assessment of your work and your performance at the viva.

The EdD Programme Leader is responsible for nominating the viva panel. The standard viva examination panel is one internal examiner and one external examiner, neither of whom is one of your supervisors. The examination arrangements will be made by the Independent Chair, who will also be present during the examination to ensure the appropriate procedures are followed. However, one of your supervisors (or both in exceptional cases) is entitled to be present at the viva as an observer. You are required to submit your thesis by 30 September in your final year of the programme.

Guidelines to the examination process are set out in the *Programme Guide* to which you are given online access at the beginning of the programme. Examinations are usually held between November and January the following year.

### Theses

The material you include in your thesis must be your own original work. Before you are awarded your degree, you may publish papers arising from your research. You must make a note in your thesis of any material that is published and you may submit a reprint with the thesis if you wish.

### Length

Your EdD thesis should not exceed 50,000 words. This is a maximum word length and includes all footnotes, bibliographies and references. However, this does **not** include appendices.



# 9 Full-time Master of Research

In this section

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Your study programme
- 9.3 Registration
- 9.4 Assessment
- 9.5 The viva
- 9.6 Degree result
- 9.7 Award of the degree

This section is exclusively for full-time Master of Research (MRes) students.

You should refer to it in conjunction with Sections 1–7 of this handbook.

## 9.1 Introduction

This section of the handbook applies to you only if you're studying for the full-time MRes degree, which comprises four discipline designations:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Educational Technology
- ▶ Human Geography
- ▶ Management and Business Studies

The MRes research degree qualification regulations are included in Section 10.

## 9.2 Your study programme

Your discipline coordinator will provide you with full details of the study programme for your MRes degree. There are two types of module:

- ▶ **Taught research methods modules** which will enable you to develop theoretical understanding and practical skills in a range of contemporary research approaches. The tuition for these courses is mainly through specialist course materials written by Open University academics. You will work through these following a guided study programme with additional support from your module tutor.
- ▶ **The dissertation module** in which you will develop an original research project in your chosen specialism and area of substantive interest, with support from your dissertation supervisor(s). You are likely to draw on the taught modules for your work on your

dissertation. Note that you can only move on to the dissertation module once you have passed the assessment on the taught modules.

In addition, you will attend a general seminar programme on skills and topics relevant to postgraduate study and career development.

Most of your personal contact with the University will be with your discipline coordinator, the module tutors and your dissertation supervisor(s), the MRes Office, and the Research Degrees Team in the Research School. These members of staff are responsible for arranging your tutorial programme and viva, and for providing advice and guidance. You'll have an opportunity to meet most of them at the MRes induction event.

Your tutors are the academics who will assist you in your study and support you throughout your MRes degree. The tutor for each module will conduct tutorial sessions, probably with a small group of students, in which you will be able to discuss the module material. An important element of your tuition will be the assignments you write and the detailed feedback on these which your tutor will provide. Your tutors will let you know the times when they're available to discuss matters to do with the module, and you'll probably receive information on this at the first tutorial meeting. Your dissertation supervisor(s) will be your main contact within your own academic unit.

Support includes:

- ▶ development of learning skills, including preparatory work, essay writing, and organising time for study
- ▶ information and advice about regulations and administration (such as submission of assignments and the viva arrangements)

- ▶ helping you to adjust your study arrangements to meet your personal circumstances (illness or disability, work or family crises, for example)
- ▶ guidance on personal and career development; recognition of OU qualifications by employers and other institutions.

Your tutors will be able to provide advice and guidance to do with your taught modules, while your dissertation supervisors' advice and support will focus on the dissertation module. The Research Degrees Team in the Research School and your discipline coordinator can help with broader study matters and with your wider relationship with the University.

## Module materials

### Learning materials

For each module you're taking you'll receive specially designed learning materials. They'll include printed texts and assignment questions, and there may also be audio and video cassettes and CD-ROMs.

You'll also get a Study Calendar, which will help you to pace your studies by suggesting the dates by which you should have worked through the various parts of your module materials. The Study Calendar tells you how many assignments each module has and the dates by which you must send them to the appropriate tutor.

### If you don't get your materials

If you haven't received any of your printed materials before your module begins, please tell the MRes Office.

### Recommended reading

This varies from module to module. It may be optional background reading, or it may include books that are important if you're to get full benefit from a particular part of the module. Recommended books may be available from the University library, or you might want to buy some of them.

### Computers

Your academic unit will usually provide you with any computing equipment that you need for your studies.

There are courses available on campus in various aspects of computer use and software packages, and you'll attend them as part of your training. If you have needs to do with computer use that aren't being met, you should discuss them with your MRes discipline coordinator.

## 9.3 Registration

### Dealing with difficulties

Most students find their studies an enjoyable though challenging experience, but difficulties such as illness or bereavement do sometimes occur. If they happen to you and you find that you're not going to be able to keep up with your studies, tell your tutors, your supervisors or the Research Degrees Team in the Research School. It's important to do this as soon as possible. The longer you've been having trouble the less likely it is that the University will be able to make arrangements to help you. Get in touch with your tutors, your supervisors or staff in the Research School as soon as you can.

The possibilities that may be open to you are:

- ▶ changing to a later presentation of the MRes
- ▶ withdrawing from the study
- ▶ late submission of assignments
- ▶ having your special circumstances taken into account.

### Withdrawing

If you decide to withdraw from the MRes, you must tell the Research Degrees Team as well as your tutors and supervisors. You can do so in person, or by letter, fax, email or phone. No one can do this for you, and this is the only way to withdraw.

If you decide to withdraw, tell the Research Degrees Team.

If you send your notice of withdrawal by external mail you should obtain proof of posting.

Your withdrawal will be acknowledged and you should keep the acknowledgement. If you haven't received it within 14 days, you should contact the Research Degrees Team again.

## 9.4 Assessment

The MRes has two assessment components – continuous assessment, discussed in this section, and your dissertation which is examined at the viva, explained in Section 9.5.

Your continuous assessment consists of assignments. They're mainly essay or short-answer questions, although some modules may include extended essays. You must submit your assignments by the cut-off dates given in the Study Calendar.

### Assignment assessment scores

You will receive a numerical grade for each module assignment (except for the dissertation module assignments which are ungraded formative assignments). The pass grade is 40. In order to pass the generic modules, i.e. modules A, B and C which do not have an end-of-year assessment or exam, you will need an average of at least 40 percent. Some subject-specific modules may have an exam or end-of-year assessment and further information about this can be obtained from your MRes discipline coordinator.

The assessment strategy for each module, which will include all the information of this kind, is explained in module materials and the dates when assignments are due are given in the Study Calendar.

### Keeping your assignments

You should keep a copy of each assignment you submit (and your proof of posting, if you send them by external mail), as things occasionally go astray. We can't accept any responsibility for assignments that don't reach your tutor.

Most students keep their marked assignments until the end of their studies, largely because they're an invaluable aid to revision. **You are strongly advised to keep your marked assignments until you have your MRes result.**

### Preparing assignments

Your assignments serve two main purposes. They help you to learn and they enable the University to judge the standard you've achieved. The preparatory work that you do for an assignment and the process of writing it should help you to concentrate on particular aspects of the module and to consolidate what you've learnt so far.

The nature of assignments will obviously vary from module to module. Advice and suggestions are provided in the assignment notes about the scope of the question and what's expected of you.

The main source for your assignments on the taught modules will be the designated module materials. Your tutor will advise you on further reading from other sources. Your dissertation will require you to read much more widely and explore relevant work within your chosen academic field.

### Should you discuss your assignments with other students?

Although some students find that they work best on their own, many learn a great deal from discussing aspects of the module with others. The opinions and insights that you form while discussing a question are no less valuable than those you form while reading books or listening to lectures. We assure you that there's nothing wrong in discussing assignment questions with fellow-students, or other people, **before** you begin your work. But when you sit down to write your assignment you are expected to work alone and not to use other people's work, in its entirety or in part, as though it was yours.

Posting your own assignments and/or tutor comments on an OU conference or on any other website is not allowed (unless you are required to do so as part of your assignment). Advertising assignments for sale is also not allowed.

### What constitutes plagiarism or cheating?

You'll find some advice about this on our websites at:

<http://mres.open.ac.uk>

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

Please note that the University is currently using plagiarism-detection software.

### Confidentiality of assignments

All information you give in assignments is regarded as confidential to you, your tutor and the University, and won't be divulged to anyone outside the University.

In your assignments and elsewhere in your studies you may be encouraged to apply the content to your previous experience. This sometimes means giving information about and occasionally passing judgement on a company or organisation you've worked for.

The University treats such information with complete confidentiality. Tutors may use it only for purposes directly connected with the teaching of the module, and may not divulge it for any other purpose during or after their service with the University.

## Processing personal data as part of your studies

Our data protection policy tells you what to do if you need to process other people's personal data for the purposes of your study.

## Submitting assignments

You should send your taught module assignment, along with the assignment feedback form, direct to your tutor (or lead MRes supervisor for the dissertation module). You should send it in both electronic and hard copy format unless your tutor specifically tells you they do not want a hard copy. You will normally receive your mark (for assignments that are graded) and feedback within two weeks.

The cut-off date given in your Study Calendar is the last date by which the assignment should arrive. It's to your advantage and ours that you submit assignments by the cut-off date. It will help you to keep up to date with the module, and it's also important that you don't get an unfair advantage by taking more time over your work, or from seeing other people's marked assignments.

Make sure that your assignments reach your tutor by the cut-off date, and keep a copy of each assignment you submit.

## Partly completed assignments

Unless you're told otherwise, you must send in all parts of an assignment together. A part-assignment sent as a second instalment will not be marked. Your tutor will return it to you with a note to say that it can't be accepted. If you have difficulty in completing all the parts of an assignment on time you should ask your tutor, before the cut-off date, for permission to submit the whole assignment late.

## Late submission of assignments

Illness or some other good reason may leave you unable to submit an assignment by the cut-off date. Please remember that late submission is not a right – you must obtain permission in advance.

If there are good reasons why you can't meet an assignment cut-off date, take the appropriate action as explained below.

- ▶ If you decide not to submit the assignment at all, warn your tutor, **before the cut-off date**, not to expect it from you.
- ▶ If you want permission to submit the assignment late, explain your reasons to your tutor **before** the cut-off date. Late submission will be allowed only if your tutor agrees that you have a genuine reason, that it's in your interest to submit late rather than get on with current work, and that it's still acceptable to record a score for your work. An extension of more than seven days will be authorised only in exceptional circumstances, and your tutor will not agree to an extension of more than 21 days.

## Marking assignments

Your tutor will write comments on your script and on the accompanying form. Your score is recorded, and your script and one copy of the form are returned to you. This can take up to three weeks from the time you submit your assignment.

When you get your work back you should read your tutor's comments carefully, taking note (for future assignments) of what seem to be your strengths and weaknesses. There may be comments that you don't understand, or don't agree with. Your tutor will be ready to discuss these with you.

## Monitoring

Assignments marked by tutors are monitored to ensure a reasonable uniformity of marking standards and an adequate level of teaching comments. Throughout the year some of the assignments marked by each tutor are photocopied and may be checked by the MRes Award Board. These photocopies are treated as confidential and are destroyed at the end of each year. Sometimes we ask students and tutors for permission to anonymise these and retain them for use as examples to show future tutors or students – but we won't retain photocopies of your assignments for this or any other purpose without your permission.

## Late return of marked assignments

If you don't get your assignment back within two weeks, ask your tutor about it. If your tutor/supervisor hasn't replied within the next ten days, tell your MRes discipline coordinator.

## Queries and appeals against assignment scores

If you want to query the score awarded for an assignment you must return the assignment to your tutor, stating the grounds on which you're querying the score, within 28 days. If you don't do this, the assignment can't afterwards be sent on appeal for re-marking. The query should always be sent to the tutor who marked the assignment and copied to the MRes office.

To query your assignment score, return your marked assignment to your tutor, with your reasons, within 28 days.

If you're not satisfied with your tutor's response you then have the right to appeal. You should forward the assignment, together with the related correspondence from your tutor, the grounds for your appeal and any other relevant information to the MRes office, to arrive within 28 days of the date of notification of your tutor's decision. The Chair of the MRes will acknowledge receipt of your documents within three days of their arrival, and will tell you when you can expect an outcome.

Don't assume that a query or the subsequent appeal will result in an increase to your original score. Scores often remain unchanged, and they can be reduced. You may not resubmit an assignment to try to improve the score.

## Special circumstances

If any special circumstance has **seriously** affected your performance in continuous assessment, you can ask for the MRes Award Board to be told about it.

This arrangement is intended to make the MRes Award Board aware of matters of a **serious** nature that interfered with your ability to study over a total period of **four weeks or more**. The three main categories of special circumstance information are:

- ▶ serious disruption of studies caused by the University (such as delay in receiving module materials, exceptionally late return of marked assignments)
- ▶ serious and prolonged illness (yourself or a member of your immediate family)
- ▶ serious disruption of personal life (such as bereavement).

The MRes Award Board will use the information only to your benefit, usually if your result is on a borderline. Only limited weight can be given to it. The MRes Award Board will not take account of such circumstances as moving house or normal pregnancies. So before you decide to go ahead please consider carefully how far your special circumstances really have affected your performance in continuous assessment.

## To report special circumstances

Ask the Research Degrees Team for a Special Circumstances form. It's **your** responsibility to complete the form, and you must submit it yourself. Forms sent in by tutors won't be accepted.

Complete the form and return it to the Research Degrees Team by the deadline specified so that it can be presented to the MRes Award Board.

The information you put on the special circumstances form must be both **brief** and **explicit**. You should state clearly:

- ▶ the special circumstances you want to report
- ▶ when the circumstances occurred
- ▶ for how long your studies were affected.

You should provide supporting documentary evidence (such as a medical certificate) and, if you use the external mail, you must obtain proof of posting.

To inform the MRes Award Board of matters that have affected your studies, complete the Special Circumstances form and send it to the Research Degrees Team by the deadline specified.

## 9.5 The viva

You will be asked to attend a viva after your dissertation has been submitted. The examination panel will comprise the two markers for your dissertation, one of whom will be appointed as chair of the examination panel. In addition your lead dissertation supervisor will be in attendance as an observer. The examination arrangements will be made by the Independent Chair, who will also be present during the examination to ensure the appropriate procedures are followed.

The viva will focus mainly on the dissertation. The examination panel will recommend the dissertation result to the MRes Award Board.

## 9.6 Degree result

### Getting your result

Students are normally told the examination panel's recommendation on the day of the viva but note that this is subject to confirmation by the MRes Award Board. Result letters are usually sent out in November.

### Queries

Since the MRes Award Board is responsible, on behalf of the University Senate, for determining students' results, its decisions are final. There's no right of appeal to any other University body against the academic judgement of the MRes Award Board. Careful checks are made at every stage of the award process to make sure that the MRes Award Board's decisions rest on full and accurate information.

If you have evidence that an error has been made in determining your result, you can query it by writing to the MRes office. Set out the grounds for your query in a **concise** letter, and send it to arrive **within four weeks of the date of your result letter**. Result queries can't be dealt with by phone.

It is **not** possible:

- ▶ to have your assignment scripts marked again
- ▶ to have previously undisclosed special circumstances taken into consideration
- ▶ to obtain detailed information about your viva performance.

To query your degree result, write to the MRes office within four weeks of the date of your result letter.

## 9.7 Award of the degree

When you've completed the academic and non-academic requirements for your degree, the Credit, Qualifications and Ceremonies Centre will tell you that you're eligible to receive the qualification.

Section 7.4 tells you about the University's degree ceremonies.

# Part 2

## University regulations for research qualifications

### 10 University regulations

In this section

**10.1 Student regulations**

**10.2 Research degree qualification regulations**

**10.3 Master of Research qualification regulations**

**10.4 Doctorate in Education qualification regulations**

#### 10.1 Student Regulations

Our Student Regulations, which include the Code of Practice for Student Discipline, apply to all our registered students, and are published on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies)

As these regulations form part of your contract with the University, it is important that you read them.

As research students, you are also bound by the Qualification regulations which are set out below.

#### 10.2 Research degree qualification regulations

Master of Philosophy / Doctor of Philosophy

##### RD 1 Degree name

**RD 1.1** The following research degrees by thesis are conferred by the University: Master of Philosophy, referred to as MPhil; Doctor of Philosophy, referred to as PhD. The awards will be made on the successful completion of programmes of advanced study and research. Holders of these qualifications are permitted to use the letters MPhil (Open) or PhD (Open) as appropriate after their names.

##### RD 2 Registration

**RD 2.1** To be registered as a research student of the University you must comply with regulations RD 2.1.1 to RD 2.1.6.

**RD 2.1.1** You must satisfy regulation OU 8 (see our *Student Regulations* at [www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies)).

**RD 2.1.2** You must show evidence of suitable preparation for postgraduate study. The normal entrance requirement is a good honours degree or a higher degree of a UK university or other recognised degree-awarding body.

**RD 2.1.3** If you do not satisfy regulation RD 2.1.2 but can show that your qualifications, professional experience or previous research are an appropriate preparation for postgraduate work within the proposed field of study, your application will, in certain circumstances, be considered.

**RD 2.1.4** Unless you are registered through an affiliated research centre you must be resident in the UK. In exceptional circumstances your application will be considered if you are a UK citizen whose topic of study necessitates residence overseas. If you are a part-time student and have already commenced your studies and are making satisfactory progress, you may apply to continue your studies overseas.

**RD 2.1.5** You must be accepted as a student for a course of advanced study or research in a field approved by the University and for which arrangements have been made or approved by the University in respect of supervision and research facilities.

**RD 2.1.6** You must assign your intellectual property rights to The Open University unless you are bound by an intellectual property agreement with a third party.

**RD 2.2** You may be registered as a full-time student or a part-time student. How the type of registration affects your work is set out in regulations RD 2.2.1 to RD 2.2.4.

**RD 2.2.1** If you are registered as a full-time internal student, you will work on a research project directed by member(s) of Open University academic staff at the Open University headquarters.

**RD 2.2.2** If you are registered as a part-time external student, you will work part-time in your home area using research and study facilities there.

**RD 2.2.3** If you are a member of the University full-time staff reading for a research degree, you will be registered as a part-time internal student.

**RD 2.2.4** If you are registered as a student in an affiliated research centre, you will work on a research project through an affiliated research centre which will provide suitable facilities.

**RD 2.3** While registered as a research student of this University, you may not study for any other degree or qualification at this University or at any other institution, unless granted permission to do so as part of your research degree training.

**RD 2.4** On admission to the research degree programme you will be registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil). Your registration is governed by either regulation RD 2.4.1 or regulation RD 2.4.2 and regulation RD 2.4.3.

**RD 2.4.1** If you are a part-time student, your first two-year period of registration will be probationary.

**RD 2.4.2** If you are a full-time student there will be a major review of your academic progress before the first anniversary of your registration.

**RD 2.4.3** Before the end of your probationary registration your progress will be assessed against established benchmarks and a recommendation will be made to the Research Degrees Committee about whether:

a your probation and registration for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) should be confirmed

or

b your probation should be confirmed and you should be registered for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

or

c your probationary registration should be terminated for failure to make satisfactory academic progress.

### RD 3 Fees

**RD 3.1** If you are a full-time internal student, a single composite fee is payable annually throughout the period of your registration.

**RD 3.2** If you are a part-time external student, your liability for the registration fee is incurred annually until you submit your thesis or formal notice of withdrawal from your registration.

**RD 3.3** If you are a part-time internal student, there are separate arrangements for your fees.

**RD 3.4** If you are a student registered through an affiliated research centre, a single composite fee is payable annually throughout the period of your registration. The affiliated research centre is responsible for collection and payment of the fees, however you remain liable for payment.

**RD 3.5** If you are awarded the result of permission to resubmit a thesis, your fee liability will be resumed as from the date of this result, up to and including the quarter in which you notify the University of withdrawal or resubmit your thesis for examination.

### RD 4 Credit

**RD 4.1** Credit regulations do not apply to these unitary qualifications.

### RD 5 Progress towards the degree

**RD 5.1** The University provides research facilities for internal students only.

**RD 5.2** You must be allocated to supervisors appointed by the Senate.

**RD 5.3** You are required to attend regularly for supervision.

**RD 5.4** You must spend a minimum period of study before submission of your thesis. The following table sets out the required period of study for full-time and part-time students.

	Qualification	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Full-time students</b>	MPhil	1 yr 3 m	4 yrs
	PhD	2 yrs	4 yrs
<b>Part-time students*</b>	MPhil	2 yrs	6 yrs
	PhD	3 yrs	6 yrs

(\* Registration extensions will only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances.)

**RD 5.5** Research or other work undertaken before registration as a research student cannot count as part of the minimum period of study required before the submission of a thesis for the award of a research degree.

**RD 5.6** If you fail to make satisfactory progress you will cease to be a registered student of the University.

**RD 5.7** If you are a full-time student your research degree registration may be suspended, usually only on grounds of certified serious ill-health, for a maximum of 12 months in total. Periods of suspension do not count towards the maximum four-year registration period.

**RD 5.8** If you are a part-time student your research degree registration may be suspended for a maximum of 24 months in total. You may request a suspension of your registration on grounds of serious ill-health or because of personal, family or work-related difficulties. Suspensions will normally only be approved by the Research Degrees Committee in periods of one or more months. Periods of suspension do not count towards the maximum six-year registration period.

**RD 5.9** You must give three months' notice, in writing, of your intention to submit a thesis for the award of a research degree.

**RD 5.10** If your supervisors report that you have completed the normal minimum period of study required for the degree, but have not developed the topic of your thesis to a level which justifies its submission to examiners, the Senate may require you to undertake further research.

## RD 6 Thesis

**RD 6.1** You will be required to submit, within the appropriate maximum period of study, three copies of a thesis on the research or study completed. Your thesis must conform to regulation RD 6.2 and must also conform to regulation RD 6.1.1 or RD 6.1.2 as appropriate.

**RD 6.1.1 MPhil** Your thesis must show evidence of:

- a your proficiency in the methods and techniques of research
- b good style and presentation
- c an adequate knowledge and/or understanding and critical evaluation and discussion of a field of study in an appropriate context
- d initiative and independence of thought.

Your thesis must also be a distinct contribution to scholarship. You will be required to attend a viva voce (oral) examination on your thesis.

**RD 6.1.2 PhD** Your thesis must:

- a be of good presentation and style
- b be a significant contribution to knowledge and/or to understanding
- c demonstrate your capacity to pursue further research without supervision
- d contain a significant amount of material worthy of publication or public presentation.

You will be required to attend a viva voce (oral) examination on your thesis.

**RD 6.2** Regulations RD 6.2.1 to RD 6.2.14 apply to any thesis submitted for a research degree.

**RD 6.2.1** The work must be written in English unless:

- a you have been given permission, under the terms of your letter of registration as a student of the University, to submit the work in Welsh
- or**
- b you have been given permission, under the terms of your letter of registration as a student of the University, to submit the work in Gaelic.

Brief quotations in foreign languages are permitted.

**RD 6.2.2** The length of your thesis must be appropriate to the subject area covered and must not exceed 60,000 words (including footnotes) for the Master of Philosophy or 100,000 words for the Doctor of Philosophy. If you want to submit a thesis of greater length, you must apply for approval to the Research Degrees Committee well in advance of the notification of submission of your thesis.

Non-book media (i.e. material in non-book form such as digital media, film, software, audio-tape, etc.) containing original work which exemplifies and locates the ideas developed in the thesis may be submitted for examination in conjunction with the written part of the thesis. If you wish to submit a doctoral thesis in this mode, you should (i) refer to the institutional guidelines for advice on word length; and (ii) submit your proposal for the substitution of non-book media in your thesis along with your original research proposal.

**RD 6.2.3** You must submit for examination:

- a three copies of your thesis, including supporting material (e.g. diagrams and non-book media)
- b four copies of an abstract of the thesis, not exceeding 300 words, in a form suitable for publication; one copy must be placed at the front of each copy of the thesis and bound with the text (if you are awarded the degree, the University may publish this abstract in any manner approved by the Senate)
- c a statement as to what part, if any, of the material offered has previously been submitted by you for a degree or other qualification to this or any other university or institution, and, if joint work is submitted, what part of it is your independent contribution.

**RD 6.2.4** You must indicate, in the thesis and in the accompanying statement, any material which has been published.

**RD 6.2.5** You may not submit for a research degree material that has been incorporated in a previous submission for a degree of this or any

other awarding body. However, reference may be made to such material provided that this is clearly acknowledged within the thesis and in the accompanying statement.

**RD 6.2.6** You are required to submit your work in a condition suitable for preservation in the University Library.

**RD 6.2.7** If you are successful, two copies of your thesis and any supporting material (e.g. diagrams and non-book media) will be deposited in the University Library. The third copy will be held by your academic unit. However, if you are registered through an affiliated research centre, you will, instead, be required to deposit the third copy in the library of that establishment, and, if you have a collaborating establishment or establishments, you may also be required to deposit a copy in the library of each of those establishments.

**RD 6.2.8** There must be no restriction of access to a thesis for which a research degree has been awarded. You must submit, together with your thesis, a statement in which you agree that the work, if approved for the degree in question, be deposited in the University Library and:

- a may be made available at the discretion of the Director of Library Services
- b may be photocopied at the discretion of the Director of Library Services.

Under exceptional circumstances, and subject to the approval of the Senate, you may restrict access to your thesis for a maximum period of two years from the date of the award of the degree. Approval for restriction must be obtained before you register for a research degree.

**RD 6.2.9** The text of the work must be typed on international A4 (297 mm x 210 mm) paper of good quality; it may be typewritten or printed on both sides of the paper. The typescript must have double spacing. The minimum widths of margins must be as follows:

- ▶ inside margin 40 mm
- ▶ top and outside margins 15 mm
- ▶ bottom margin 20 mm

The pages must be numbered consecutively. A contents list and a table of illustrations (if any) must be provided. Any supporting digital media must accompany the thesis in a suitable form and a list of all separate items appended must be provided. The work must carry on its title page:

- ▶ your full name and degrees
- ▶ the title
- ▶ the degree for which it is offered

- ▶ the discipline or disciplines to which it pertains
- ▶ the date of submission
- ▶ the name of the sponsoring and collaborating establishments, if registration has been on this basis.

An abstract of the thesis, as specified in regulation RD 6.2.3b, must be placed at the front of each copy and bound with the text.

**RD 6.2.10** The examination copies need not be fully bound until after the examination; this will enable you to complete any corrections required by examination panels without having to unbind and rebind the thesis. For the examination, all copies should have the leaves securely fixed within a folder or binder or by a spine (i.e. fixed so that the pages remain secure in the cover when the volume is opened fully). Folders which release the pages when opened are not acceptable, nor are loose pages submitted in a wallet folder. Care should be taken if ring binding is used that the holes punched in the pages do not make binding after the examination impossible. Three copies of the thesis must be submitted for examination. If you are successful, two copies will be deposited in the University Library, one fully bound (as specified in regulation RD 6.2.11) and one bound to a less rigorous specification (as specified in regulation RD 6.2.12).

**RD 6.2.11** One of the two copies to be deposited with the University must be sewn with thread and bound in a fixed binding of black boards with cloth or in full cloth in the manner of a book. The volumes should bear on the spine, in lettering running from the top to the bottom:

- ▶ the full or abbreviated title
- ▶ your name
- ▶ the name of the degree
- ▶ the year of submission.

The leaves of the typescript should be clean and not mutilated by dog-ear folding, manuscript comments, underlining, etc.

**RD 6.2.12** The second copy for deposit in the University Library need not conform to the full binding specifications given in regulation RD 6.2.11. Its leaves must be secured in order, by some means which ensures that they remain firmly in place when the volume is in use. Stapling is an adequate means of securing leaves up to a thickness of 1.5 inch (40 mm). If the leaves are more than 40 mm thick, the thesis should be divided into more than one volume. Each volume should be marked to show its position in the set (e.g. if there are three volumes, they should be marked Volume 1 of 3, Volume

2 of 3 and Volume 3 of 3 respectively). The stapled volumes should be cased in stout card covers to protect them adequately when in use. Comb bindings and the use of spring binders or plastic slide clips to grip unstapled sheets are not satisfactory as they fail to hold the sheets together during use. The leaves of the typescript should be clean and not mutilated by dog-ear folding, manuscript comments, underlining, etc.

**RD 6.2.13** The third copy (to be held by your academic unit or affiliated research centre) should also be securely bound to the lesser specification given in regulation RD 6.2.12.

**RD 6.2.14** Work submitted in other forms (e.g. non-book media such as film, slide, audio tape, etc.) should be recorded by a suitable process on good quality stock. The system used should produce a durable item suited to preservation over a long period without excessive deterioration of the message. The item should be suited to digital media, such as images, audio files, drawings, software, etc. and be provided in a suitable format for viewing or playback on technology in use at the University. The item should be provided with an appropriate container approved by the Director of Library Services and bear on its exterior the particulars listed in regulation RD 6.2.11. (You should consult the Director of Library Services about the specifications for any such items that you intend to submit as part of your thesis.)

## RD 7 Examination

**RD 7.1** A thesis submitted for the award of a research degree will be submitted to internal and external examiners appointed by the Senate. The examiners may find the thesis to be:

- a acceptable
- b acceptable after corrections and modifications which you must implement satisfactorily before the degree may be awarded
- c acceptable after substantial amendment which you must implement satisfactorily before the degree may be awarded
- d acceptable after major revision and resubmission
- e unacceptable.

**RD 7.2** Where corrections and/or modifications to a thesis are required after the examination, these must be completed within two months of the date of the examination result letter; where major revisions are required, the revised thesis must be submitted within six months of the date of the examination result letter.

**RD 7.3** Where major revision and resubmission of a thesis for re-examination is required after the examination, this must be completed within 12 months of the date of the examination result letter.

**RD 7.4** You are permitted only one resubmission of your thesis where an examination panel is re-examining your thesis after major revision and resubmission (see regulation RD 7.1d). This result recommendation may not be made again.

## RD 8 Appeals

**RD 8.1** You may appeal against the following academic decisions of the University:

- a termination of registration to read for a higher degree
- b registration for a particular higher degree
- c refusal of permission to submit a thesis
- d the result of the examination of a thesis.

**RD 8.2** The procedure relating to appeals must be published in the *Research Degrees Student Handbook*.

## 10.3 Master of Research qualification regulations

This is a research degree.

### MRes 1 Degree name

**MRes 1.1** The Open University offers the degree of Master of Research, referred to as the MRes. Holders of the qualification are permitted to use the letters MRes (Open) after their names.

**MRes 1.2** The following discipline designations are available:

- ▶ Master of Research (Education).
- ▶ Master of Research (Educational Technology).
- ▶ Master of Research (Human Geography).
- ▶ Master of Research (Management and Business).
- ▶ Master of Research (Social Sciences).
- ▶ Master of Research (Technology Strategy).

### MRes 2 Registration

**MRes 2.1** In order to be registered for the degree, you must satisfy Regulation OU 8 (see our *Student Regulations* on [www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies)) and show evidence of suitable preparation for postgraduate study. The minimum entrance requirement for the MRes is a good honours degree or a higher degree from a UK university or other recognised degree-awarding body.

**MRes 2.2** If you do not satisfy regulation MRes 2.1 but can show that your qualifications or other evidence of competence are an adequate preparation for the programme of study, your application may, in certain circumstances, be considered.

**MRes 2.3** You must be resident in the United Kingdom for the duration of your studies.

**MRes 2.4** You must be accepted as a student for research in an area approved by the University and for which arrangements have been made by the University in respect of supervision and research support.

**MRes 2.5** You must assign your intellectual property rights to The Open University unless you are bound by an intellectual property agreement with a third party.

**MRes 2.6** You will be registered as a full-time research student and your work will be directed by members of the Open University academic staff at the Open University headquarters.

**MRes 2.7** While registered as a research student of this University, you may not study for any other degree or qualification at this University or at any other institution, unless granted permission to do so as part of your research training.

### MRes 3 Fees

**MRes 3.1** A single composite fee is payable for your MRes studies.

**MRes 3.2** You will be required to pay a resubmission fee if you are required to undertake major revisions to your dissertation for resubmission and re-examination.

### MRes 4 Credit

**MRes 4.1** Credit regulations do not apply to this unitary qualification.

### MRes 5 Progress towards the degree

**MRes 5.1** The University provides research facilities for full-time students.

**MRes 5.2** You must be allocated to a supervision team appointed by the Senate.

**MRes 5.3** You are required to have regular contact with your supervision team.

**MRes 5.4** The normal period of study before submission of your MRes dissertation is one year. The maximum period of registration is two years.

**MRes 5.5** Research or other work undertaken before registration as a research student cannot count as part of the minimum period of study required before the submission of your MRes dissertation.

**MRes 5.6** If you fail to make satisfactory progress you will cease to be a registered student of the University.

**MRes 5.7** As a full-time student your research degree registration may be suspended for a maximum of 12 months in total. You may request a suspension of your registration usually only on grounds of certified serious ill-health. Periods of suspension do not count towards the maximum registration period.

**MRes 5.8** To qualify for the MRes, you must successfully complete the modules specified in the degree profile for your discipline.

**MRes 5.9** You must submit your MRes dissertation by the published deadline as notified to you on registration.

## MRes 6 Dissertation

**MRes 6.1** Your MRes dissertation must show evidence of:

- a good style and presentation
- b proficiency in the methods and techniques of research
- c an adequate knowledge and/or understanding and critical evaluation of a field of study in an appropriate context.

You will be required to attend a viva voce (oral) examination to assess your dissertation.

**MRes 6.2** The work must be submitted in English. Any text in foreign languages must be accompanied by text translated into English.

**MRes 6.3** The length of your MRes dissertation must not exceed 17,000 words (including footnotes and references). Appendices are not included in the maximum word length.

**MRes 6.4** You must submit for examination:

- a three copies of your MRes dissertation, including supporting material (e.g. diagrams and non-book media)
- b four copies of an abstract of the dissertation, not exceeding 300 words, one copy must be placed at the front of each copy of the dissertation and bound with the text
- c a statement as to what part, if any, of the material offered has previously been submitted by you for a degree or other qualification to this or any other university or institution, and, if joint work is submitted, what part of it is your independent contribution.

**MRes 6.5** You must indicate, in the dissertation and in the accompanying statement, any material which has been published.

**MRes 6.6** You may not submit for a research degree material that has been incorporated in a previous submission for a degree of this or any other awarding body. However, reference may be made to such material provided that this is clearly acknowledged within the dissertation and in the accompanying statement.

**MRes 6.7** You are required to submit your work in a condition suitable for preservation in the University Library.

**MRes 6.8** If you are successful, two copies of your MRes dissertation and any supporting material (e.g. diagrams and non-book media) will be deposited in the University Library. The third copy will be held by your academic unit.

**MRes 6.9** There must be no restriction of access to a dissertation for which a research degree has been awarded. You must submit, together

with your dissertation, a statement in which you agree that the work, if approved for the degree in question, be deposited in the University Library and:

- a may be made available at the discretion of the Director of Library Services
- b may be photocopied at the discretion of the Director of Library Services.

**MRes 6.10** The text of the dissertation must be typed on international A4 (297 mm x 210 mm) paper of good quality. 12 point print in conventional font must be used. The typescript must have double spacing. The minimum widths of margins must be as follows:

- ▶ inside margin 40 mm
- ▶ top and outside margins 15 mm
- ▶ bottom margin 20 mm.

The text spacing of the dissertation should be 1.5, and where possible this should include material in any appendices.

The pages must be numbered consecutively and table of contents must be provided. This applies to both the main body of the text and the appendices. Lists of illustrations, diagrams, figures, and other supporting material (if any) should be provided separately at the front of the dissertation and after the title and contents pages. The dissertation must carry on its title page and on the spine:

- ▶ Your full name and degrees.
- ▶ The title of the dissertation.
- ▶ The degree for which it is offered: Master of Research (MRes).
- ▶ The date of submission.
- ▶ An abstract of the dissertation, as specified in regulation MRes 6.4 b, must be placed at the front of each copy and bound with the text.

**MRes 6.11** The examination copies need not be fully bound until after the examination; this will enable you to complete any corrections required by the examination panel without having to unbind and rebind the dissertation. For the examination, all copies should have the leaves securely fixed within a folder or binder or by a spine (i.e. fixed so that the pages remain secure in the cover when the volume is opened fully). Folders which release the pages when opened are not acceptable, nor are loose pages submitted in a wallet folder. Care should be taken if ring binding is used that the holes punched in the pages do not make binding after the examination impossible. Three copies of the dissertation must be submitted for examination. If you are successful, two copies will be deposited

in the University Library, one fully bound (as specified in regulation MRes 6.12 and one bound to a less rigorous specification (as specified in regulation MRes 6.13).

**MRes 6.12** One of the two copies to be deposited with the University must be sewn with thread and bound in a fixed binding of black boards with cloth or in full cloth in the manner of a book. The leaves of the typescript should be clean and not mutilated by dog-ear folding, manuscript comments, underlining, etc.

**MRes 6.13** The second copy for deposit in the University Library need not conform to the full binding specifications given in regulation MRes 6.12. Its leaves must be secured in order, by some means which ensures that they remain firmly in place when the dissertation is in use. Stapling is an adequate means of securing leaves. The stapled dissertation should be cased in stout card covers to protect it adequately when in use. Comb bindings and the use of spring binders or plastic slide clips to grip unstapled sheets are not satisfactory as they fail to hold the sheets together during use. The leaves of the typescript should be clean and not mutilated by dog-ear folding, manuscript comments, underlining, etc.

**MRes 6.14** The third copy (to be held by your academic unit) should also be securely bound to the lesser specification given in regulation MRes 6.13.

**MRes 6.15** Work submitted in other forms (e.g. non-book media such as compact disk, film, slide, audio tape, etc.) should be recorded by a suitable process on good quality stock. The system used should produce a durable item suited to preservation over a long period without excessive deterioration of the message. The item should be suited to viewing or playback on equipment in use at the University. The item should be provided with an appropriate container approved by the Director of Library Services and bear on its exterior the particulars listed in regulation MRes 6.10. (You should consult the Director of Library Services about the specifications for all such items that you intend to submit as part of your dissertation.)

## MRes 7 Examination

**MRes 7.1** A dissertation submitted for the award of a research degree will be examined by examiners appointed by the Senate. The examiners may find the dissertation to be:

- a acceptable for the award of the degree
- b acceptable after corrections and modifications which you must implement satisfactorily before the degree may be awarded

- c in need of major revision and resubmission for re-examination
- d unacceptable.

**MRes 7.2** Where corrections and modifications to a dissertation are required after the examination, these must be completed within two months of the date of the examination result letter.

**MRes 7.3** Where major revision and resubmission of a dissertation for re-examination is required after the examination, this must be completed by August 31st in the following presentation or by the MRes dissertation submission date following the date of the examination result letter.

**MRes 7.4** You are permitted only one resubmission of your dissertation. Where examiners are re-examining a dissertation after major revision and resubmission (see regulation MRes 7.1 c), this result recommendation may not be made again.

## MRes 8 Appeals

**MRes 8.1** You may appeal against the following academic decisions of the University:

- a termination of registration for failure to make progress
- b refusal of permission to submit a dissertation
- c the result of the examination of a dissertation.

**MRes 8.2** The procedure relating to appeals must be published in the *Research Degrees Student Handbook*.

## 10.4 Doctorate in Education qualification regulations

### EdD 1 Degree name

**EdD 1.1** From May 2004, the University offers the degree of Doctorate in Education, referred to as the EdD, as a research degree. Holders of the qualification are permitted to use the letters EdD (Open) after their names.

### EdD 2 Registration

**EdD 2.1** In order to be registered for the degree, you must satisfy Regulation OU 8 (see our *Student Regulations* on [www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies)) and show evidence of suitable preparation for postgraduate study. The minimum entrance requirement for the EdD is a masters degree in education from a UK university or other recognised degree-awarding body. Your masters degree must include:

- a the specified compulsory 60 credit research methods module (or equivalent)
- b a 60 credit module in education relevant to the subject of your research proposal.

**EdD 2.2** If you do not satisfy regulation EdD 2.1 but can show that your qualifications or other evidence of competence are an adequate preparation for the programme of study, your application may, in certain circumstances, be considered.

**EdD 2.3** You must be resident in the European Union for the duration of your studies.

**EdD 2.4** You must be accepted as a student for research in an area approved by the University and for which arrangements have been made by the University in respect of supervision and research support.

**EdD 2.5** You must assign your intellectual property rights to The Open University unless you are bound by an intellectual property agreement with a third party.

**EdD 2.6** If you are a part-time external EdD student, you will work part time in your home area using research and study facilities there.

**EdD 2.7** If you are a member of the University's staff you will be registered as a part-time internal EdD student.

**EdD 2.8** While registered as a research student of this University, you may not study for any other degree or qualification at this University or at any other institution, unless granted permission to do so as part of your research training.

### EdD 3 Fees

**EdD 3.1** If you are a part-time external EdD student, your liability for registration fees is incurred annually until you submit your thesis or formal notice of withdrawal from your registration.

**EdD 3.2** If you are a part-time internal EdD student, there are separate arrangements for your fees.

**EdD 3.3** If you are required to resubmit your Year 1 final report or are awarded the result of permission to resubmit the thesis, you will be required to pay a resubmission fee.

### EdD 4 Credit

**EdD 4.1** Credit regulations do not apply to this unitary qualification.

### EdD 5 Progress towards the degree

**EdD 5.1** The University provides research facilities for internal students only.

**EdD 5.2** You must be allocated to an EdD supervisor appointed by the Senate.

**EdD 5.3** You are required to have regular contact with your supervisor.

**EdD 5.4** The minimum period of study before submission of your thesis is three years. The maximum period of registration is six years.

**EdD 5.5** Research or other work undertaken before registration as a research student cannot count as part of the minimum period of study required before the submission of an EdD thesis.

**EdD 5.6** If you fail to make satisfactory progress you will cease to be a registered student of the University.

**EdD 5.7** As a part-time student your research degree registration may be suspended for a maximum of 24 months in total. You may request a suspension of your registration on grounds of serious ill-health or because of personal, family or work-related difficulties. Periods of suspension do not count towards the maximum six-year registration period.

**EdD 5.8** You must satisfy the specified requirements for Year 1 before you will be offered registration for Year 2 of the EdD. Similarly, the specified requirements of Year 2 must be satisfied before you will be offered registration for Year 3.

**EdD 5.9** You must give three months' notice, in writing, of your intention to submit your thesis for examination. You should do this when you send your final progress report to your supervisor in July of Year 3.

## EdD 6 Thesis

**EdD 6.1** Your EdD thesis must:

- a show evidence of good style and presentation
- b demonstrate reflection on the relationship between theory and practice in education
- c make a significant contribution to the theory and practice of education
- d show an ability to select and apply appropriate research methods
- e exhibit a high level of critical analysis.

You will be required to attend a viva voce (oral) examination on your thesis.

**EdD 6.2** The work must be submitted in English. Any text in foreign languages must be accompanied by text translated into English.

**EdD 6.3** The length of your thesis must not exceed 50,000 words (including footnotes and references). Appendices are not included in the maximum word length.

**EdD 6.4** You must submit for examination:

- a three copies of your thesis, including supporting material (e.g. diagrams and non-book media)
- b four copies of an abstract of the thesis, not exceeding 300 words, in a form suitable for publication; one copy must be placed at the front of each copy of the thesis and bound with the text (if you are awarded the degree, the University may publish this abstract in any manner approved by the Senate)
- c a statement as to what part, if any, of the material offered has previously been submitted by you for a degree or other qualification to this or any other university or institution, and, if joint work is submitted, what part of it is your independent contribution.

**EdD 6.5** You must indicate, in the thesis and in the accompanying statement, any material which has been published.

**EdD 6.6** You may not submit for a research degree material that has been incorporated in a previous submission for a degree of this or any other awarding body. However, reference may be made to such material provided that this is clearly acknowledged within the thesis and in the accompanying statement.

**EdD 6.7** You are required to submit your work in a condition suitable for preservation in the University Library.

**EdD 6.8** If you are successful, two copies of your thesis and any supporting material (e.g. diagrams and non-book media) will be deposited in the University Library. The third copy will be held by your academic unit.

**EdD 6.9** There must be no restriction of access to a thesis for which a research degree has been awarded. You must submit, together with your thesis, a statement in which you agree that the work, if approved for the degree in question, be deposited in the University Library and:

- a may be made available at the discretion of the Director of Library Services
- b may be photocopied at the discretion of the Director of Library Services.

**EdD 6.10** The text of the thesis must be typed on international A4 (297 mm x 210 mm) paper of good quality. 12 point print in conventional font must be used. The typescript must have double spacing. The minimum widths of margins must be as follows:

- ▶ inside margin 40 mm
- ▶ top and outside margins 15 mm
- ▶ bottom margin 20 mm.

The text spacing of the thesis should be 1.5, and where possible this should include material in any appendices.

The pages must be numbered consecutively and table of contents must be provided. This applies to both the main body of the text and the appendices. Lists of illustrations, diagrams, figures, appendices and other supporting material (if any) should be provided separately at the front of the thesis and after the title and contents pages. The thesis must carry on its title page and on the spine:

- ▶ your full name and degrees
- ▶ the title of the thesis
- ▶ the degree for which it is offered: Doctorate of Education (EdD)
- ▶ the date of submission.

An abstract of the thesis, as specified in regulation EdD 6.4 b, must be placed at the front of each copy and bound with the text.

**EdD 6.11** The examination copies need not be fully bound until after the examination; this will enable you to complete any corrections required by examination panels without having to unbind and rebind the thesis. For the examination, all copies should have the leaves securely fixed within a folder or binder or by a spine (i.e. fixed so that the pages remain secure in the cover when

the volume is opened fully). Folders which release the pages when opened are not acceptable, nor are loose pages submitted in a wallet folder. Care should be taken if ring binding is used that the holes punched in the pages do not make binding after the examination impossible. Three copies of the thesis must be submitted for examination. If you are successful, two copies will be deposited in the University Library, one fully bound (as specified in regulation EdD 6.12 and one bound to a less rigorous specification (as specified in regulation EdD 6.13).

**EdD 6.12** One of the two copies to be deposited with the University must be sewn with thread and bound in a fixed binding of black boards with cloth or in full cloth in the manner of a book. The leaves of the typescript should be clean and not mutilated by dog-ear folding, manuscript comments, underlining, etc.

**EdD 6.13** The second copy for deposit in the University Library need not conform to the full binding specifications given in regulation EdD 6.12. Its leaves must be secured in order, by some means which ensures that they remain firmly in place when the thesis is in use. Stapling is an adequate means of securing leaves up to a thickness of 1.5 inch (40 mm). The stapled thesis should be cased in stout card covers to protect it adequately when in use. Comb bindings and the use of spring binders or plastic slide clips to grip unstapled sheets are not satisfactory as they fail to hold the sheets together during use. The leaves of the typescript should be clean and not mutilated by dog-ear folding, manuscript comments, underlining, etc.

**EdD 6.14** The third copy (to be held by your academic unit) should also be securely bound to the lesser specification given in regulation EdD 6.13.

**EdD 6.15** Work submitted in other forms (e.g. non-book media such as film, slide, audio tape, etc.) should be recorded by a suitable process on good quality stock. The system used should produce a durable item suited to preservation over a long period without excessive deterioration of the message. The item should be suited to viewing or playback on equipment in use at the University. The item should be provided with an appropriate container approved by the Director of Library Services and bear on its exterior the particulars listed in regulation EdD 6.10. (You should consult the Director of Library Services about the specifications for all such items that you intend to submit as part of your thesis.)

## Edd 7 Examination

**Edd 7.1** A thesis submitted for the award of a research degree will be submitted to internal and external examiners appointed by the Senate. The examiners may find the thesis to be:

- a acceptable for the award of the degree
- b acceptable after corrections and modifications which you must implement satisfactorily before the degree may be awarded
- c acceptable after substantial amendment which you must implement satisfactorily before the degree may be awarded
- d in need of major revision and resubmission for re-examination
- e unacceptable.

**Edd 7.2** Where corrections and modifications to a thesis are required after the examination, these must be completed within two months of the date of the examination result letter. Where substantial amendments are required, these must be completed within six months of the date of the examination result letter.

**Edd 7.3** Where major revision and resubmission of a thesis for re-examination is required after the examination, this must be completed within 12 months of the date of the examination result letter.

**Edd 7.4** You are permitted only one resubmission of your thesis. Where an examination panel is re-examining a thesis after major revision and resubmission (see regulation EdD 7.1 d), this result recommendation may not be made again.

## Edd 8 Appeals

**Edd 8.1** You may appeal against the following academic decisions of the University:

- a termination of registration for failure to make progress
- b refusal of permission to submit a thesis
- c the result of the examination of a thesis.

**Edd 8.2** The procedure relating to appeals must be published in the *Research Degrees Student Handbook*.

# Part 3

## Codes of practice, procedures and policies

### 11 Quality Assurance Agency code of practice

In this section

11.1 Quality Assurance Agency code of practice

11.2 OU code of practice for supervisors and research students

11.3 Research degree appeals procedure

11.4 Complaints procedure

11.5 Other policies and statements

#### 11.1 Quality Assurance Agency code of practice

The QAA code of practice for postgraduate research programmes applies to all UK higher education institutions. It is one of a suite of inter-related documents which forms an overall *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code*) for the guidance of higher education institutions subscribing to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (the Agency).

The *Code* is a statement of good practice that has been endorsed by the higher education community. As such it is used as the relevant bench mark in the Agency's audit and review processes that consider the extent to which an institution, in developing and implementing its own policies, has taken account of the *Code* and its precepts.

It is intended to give institutions clear guidance in respect of the management, quality and academic standards of research programmes.

The precepts and explanations below are intended to cover the many different types of students undertaking research programmes in the UK, including full and part-time, students of all ages and with different needs, UK and international, and from all backgrounds. From the OU perspective, they apply equally to directly registered students and those registered through the ARCs.

The website below provides further explanation about the code and the specific precepts:

[www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeofpractice](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeofpractice).

#### The Precepts

##### Institutional arrangements

- 1 Institutions will put in place effective arrangements to maintain appropriate academic standards and enhance the quality of postgraduate research programmes.
- 2 Institutional regulations for postgraduate research degree programmes will be clear and readily available to students and staff. Where appropriate, regulations will be supplemented by similarly accessible, subject-specific guidance at the level of the faculty, school or department.
- 3 Institutions will develop, implement and keep under review a code or codes of practice applicable across the institution, which include(s) the areas covered by this document. The code(s) should be readily available to all students and staff involved in postgraduate research programmes.
- 4 Institutions will monitor the success of their postgraduate research programmes against appropriate internal and/or external indicators and targets.

##### The research environment

- 5 Institutions will only accept research students into an environment that provides support for doing and learning about research and where high quality research is occurring.

##### Selection, admission and induction of students

- 6 Admissions procedures will be clear, consistently applied and will demonstrate equality of opportunity.
- 7 Only appropriately qualified and prepared students will be admitted to research programmes.

- 8 Admissions decisions will involve at least two members of the institution's staff who will have received instruction, advice and guidance in respect of selection and admissions procedures. The decision-making process will enable the institution to assure itself that balanced and independent admissions decisions have been made, that support its admissions policy.
- 9 The entitlements and responsibilities of a research student undertaking a postgraduate research programme will be defined and communicated clearly.
- 10 Institutions will provide research students with sufficient information to enable them to begin their studies with an understanding of the academic and social environment in which they will be working.

### Supervision

- 11 Institutions will appoint supervisors who have the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support, encourage and monitor research students effectively.
- 12 Each research student will have a minimum of one main supervisor. He or she will normally be part of a supervisory team. There must always be one clearly identified point of contact for the student.
- 13 Institutions will ensure that the responsibilities of all research student supervisors are clearly communicated to supervisors and students through written guidance.
- 14 Institutions will ensure that the quality of supervision is not put at risk as a result of an excessive volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual supervisors.

### Progress and review arrangements

- 15 Institutions will put in place and bring to the attention of students and relevant staff clearly defined mechanisms for monitoring and supporting student progress.
- 16 Institutions will put in place and bring to the attention of students and relevant staff clearly defined mechanisms for formal reviews of student progress, including explicit review stages.
- 17 Institutions will provide guidance to students, supervisors and others involved in progress monitoring and review processes about the importance of keeping appropriate records of the outcomes of meetings and related activities.

### Development of research and other skills

- 18 Institutions will provide research students with appropriate opportunities for personal and professional development.
- 19 Each student's development needs will be identified and agreed jointly by the student and appropriate academic staff, initially during the student's induction period; they will be regularly reviewed during the research programme and amended as appropriate.
- 20 Institutions will provide opportunities for research students to maintain a record of personal progress, which includes reference to the development of research and other skills.

### Feedback mechanisms

- 21 Institutions will put in place mechanisms to collect, review and, where appropriate, respond to feedback from all concerned with postgraduate research programmes. They will make arrangements for feedback to be considered openly and constructively and for the results to be communicated appropriately.

### Assessment

- 22 Institutions will use criteria for assessing research degrees that enable them to define the academic standards of different research programmes and the achievements of their graduates. The criteria used to assess research degrees must be clear and readily available to students, staff and external examiners.
- 23 Research degree assessment procedures must be clear; they must be operated rigorously, fairly, and consistently; include input from an external examiner; and carried out to a reasonable timescale.
- 24 Institutions will communicate their assessment procedures clearly to all the parties involved, ie the students, the supervisor(s) and the examiners.

### Student representations

- 25 Institutions will put in place and publicise procedures for dealing with student representations that are fair, clear to all concerned, robust and applied consistently. Such procedures will allow all students access to relevant information and an opportunity to present their case.

## Complaints

- 26** Independent and formal procedures will exist to resolve effectively complaints from research students about the quality of the institution's learning and support provision.

## Appeals

- 27** Institutions will put in place formal procedures to deal with any appeals made by research students. The acceptable grounds for appeals will be clearly defined.

## 11.2 OU code of practice for supervisors and research students

EdD students should also refer to Section 8.

MRes students should also refer to Section 9.

The Research Degrees Committee, which includes representatives from the University's academic units, the Affiliated Research Centre Programme, and full-time and part-time research students, is responsible for the formulation of the University's research degree policy. The Committee takes decisions about the admission, registration and progress of individual students on the basis of recommendations from supervisors and heads of discipline, who have a general responsibility for the progress of research students in their areas.

The Research Degrees Team in the Research School is responsible for the implementation of research degrees policy and for the administration of the research degrees programme. It welcomes enquiries from students and supervisors who want advice about aspects of research degree policy or information about the services and support available. Please ask:

### Research School

The Open University  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** 01908 653808

**Email** research-degrees-team@open.ac.uk

This code of practice is sent to new students and supervisors with their registration offers or appointment letters. Copies are available from the Research Degrees Team.

The Research Degrees Committee welcomes comments on the code of practice from students, supervisors, academic units and disciplines. They should be sent to the Research School.

The publications that contain information about supervision arrangements for research students are:

*Research Degrees Student Handbook*, which includes the University's student regulations and the research degree qualification regulations, and is sent to all registered students and to supervisors.

The relevant *Research Degree Supervisor Guidelines* are sent to all supervisors when they are appointed. The guidelines include information about the formal contractual relationship between the supervisor and the University.

## The Code of Practice

This code of practice sets out guidelines for the conduct of the relationship between research students and supervisors. It defines the responsibilities of students and supervisors, suggesting what each can reasonably expect of the other, and gives examples of good supervisory practice. If the code of practice is to be effective, there must be a continual process of negotiation between students and their supervisors. The code is intended to provide a framework for research in an atmosphere of scholarship and collegiality.

The code is designed to enable students to complete their degrees successfully within the time limits. Full-time PhD students should aim to complete their degrees within three years, which is the period of most studentship awards, and certainly within four. The maximum period of registration for part-time students is six years.

These maximum periods should not be regarded as the norm. Students should work towards completion times within these periods.

## Responsibilities of the supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for the academic progress and pastoral or personal support of their students, and for dealing with administrative matters. They should provide the guidance and support necessary for successful completion of the research project.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- ▶ Establishing, at the beginning of the student's research, a framework for supervision, including arrangements for regular supervisory meetings. The stages that the student will be expected to complete by certain points in the research should also be agreed.
- ▶ Defining the role of each supervisor.

- ▶ Meeting the student regularly and frequently, at the intervals agreed at the beginning of the research project.
- ▶ Giving assistance in defining the topic of research. It is important that this is agreed between the student and supervisors at an early stage.
- ▶ Making sure that the project:
  - falls within the supervisors' expertise
  - can be completed with the resources available
  - can be completed within the prescribed period of study
  - is suitable for the degree that the student intends to take
  - for full-time students, can be completed within the period of the studentship (usually three years).
- ▶ Making sure that students know about research training provided by the University and by the discipline, and are aware of attendance requirements.
- ▶ Seeing that the safety policies of the University and of the discipline are brought to students' attention and explained.
- ▶ Discussing any hazards associated with the research work and how they can be dealt with, and ensuring that safety procedures are followed.
- ▶ Ensuring that adequate cover is arranged if the supervisors are going to be absent for a significant period.
- ▶ Responding promptly and constructively to written work, within the schedule agreed at the beginning of the project.
- ▶ Keeping to the monitoring and reporting timetable agreed at the beginning of the project. This will include the regular progress monitoring reports that are required every six months by the Research Degrees Committee.
- ▶ Ensuring that examiners are nominated in good time, so that the examination can go ahead as soon as possible after submission of the thesis.
- ▶ Ensuring that at the beginning of their studies students understand the requirements for submitting non-book content as part of their thesis and guiding them through the process in line with relevant guidelines.

Students can also reasonably expect their supervisors to:

- ▶ Treat them professionally, and see that they get proper credit for their work.
- ▶ Give advice about the proposed research project and the standard expected for the degree the student intends to take.
- ▶ Arrange a supervision meeting as soon as possible after registration. This would usually be within the first week for full-time students, but may take longer to arrange for part-time students.
- ▶ Make sure that the first meeting covers the areas set out in *Good supervisory arrangements and practice* below or, if that is not possible, that those areas are covered in another way.
- ▶ Suggest some directed reading before registration. This might be general background reading so that the student can discuss the topic with the supervisors soon after registration, or it might be the beginning of a literature review.
- ▶ Offer advice about literature sources and other research resources.
- ▶ Deal promptly with any research problems.
- ▶ Take an active role in introducing the student to meetings of learned societies, seminars and so on, and to other researchers in the field.
- ▶ Offer advice about the publication of research work, and make sure that attribution is discussed before publication.
- ▶ Put the student in touch with specialists inside or outside the University if part of the research falls outside the supervisors' expertise. If appropriate, the supervisors should recommend the appointment of specialists as internal or external supervisors.
- ▶ Provide support by encouragement and constructive advice, as well as criticism and adverse comment.

### Responsibilities of the student

Students are expected to:

- ▶ Work conscientiously and independently within the guidance offered. While it is important to keep supervisors informed and to show work to them, students should be self-directed.
- ▶ Participate in research training provided by the University and the discipline as required.

- ▶ Come to supervisory meetings well prepared and with a clear agenda.
- ▶ Before the end of the first year (the first 24 months for part-time students), have the area of research defined, be acquainted with the necessary background knowledge, complete the literature review and have a provisional framework for the progress of the research, with a timetable for the rest of the research period.
- ▶ Maintain progress according to the timetable agreed with the supervisors at the outset.
- ▶ Present written material in time for comment and discussion before going on to the next stage. As groundwork for the thesis, students should write rough drafts of potential chapters as soon as possible. Those in the sciences should keep a systematic record of all experimental work attempted and accomplished.
- ▶ Ensure that their English is good enough for the presentation of a thesis. Those whose first language is not English should seek advice. (This does not apply to students who have permission to submit their theses in Welsh or Gaelic.)
- ▶ Write regular reports, as agreed at the outset, on the progress of the project.

Supervisors can also reasonably expect students to:

- ▶ Produce a substantial amount of written work, even if only in draft form, before the end of the first year (24 months for part-time students). The interpretation of 'substantial' should be agreed between supervisors and students at the outset.
- ▶ Tell their supervisors about other people with whom they discuss their work.
- ▶ Discuss with their supervisors the form of guidance and kind of comment they find most helpful.
- ▶ Take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary or trivial they seem. Students as well as supervisors have a responsibility to initiate contact and raise questions.
- ▶ Recognise that supervisors may have many other demands on their time. Students should hand in work in good time and give adequate notice if they ask supervisors for unscheduled meetings or to provide references.

## Good supervisory arrangements and practice

The following points are recommended to students, supervisors and disciplines as good supervisory arrangements and practice.

### Supervision

At their initial meeting the supervisors and the student should draw up a written agreement on the role of each supervisor and arrangements for supervisory support. (*The Research Degrees Student Handbook* and *Research Degree Supervisor Guidelines* give information about the role of supervisors.)

### Supervision meetings

Students and supervisors should have regular meetings at which academic advice is given and through which progress is monitored. This is particularly important at the beginning of the research, so that the project makes a good start.

**It cannot be too strongly stressed that the success of research projects depends largely on the help and guidance offered by supervisors, especially in the early stages of the work. Close contact at that time is essential if later difficulties are to be avoided.**

### Frequency of meetings

This will depend on the student's circumstances (full-time or part-time) and the nature and stage of the research project. Meetings should be more frequent for full-time students and in the early stages of the research.

In the first term full-time students should normally meet their supervisors at least once a week. After that, monthly meetings could suffice. Part-time students should ideally meet their supervisors at least six times a year. At important stages in the project, particularly in the first year, meetings may be more frequent and should be supplemented by regular phone calls, email or written correspondence. The student should normally meet all the supervisors together.

Arrangements for supervisory support, including the frequency of meetings, must be agreed at the first meeting, and the schedule must be adhered to by students and supervisors.

### The first meeting

The first meeting between student and supervisors is particularly important in establishing a provisional framework for future support and getting the student's academic work off to a good start. The following areas should be covered in the first meeting:

#### Supervision

- ▶ Role of each supervisor.
- ▶ Frequency of future meetings.
- ▶ Timetable for early meetings.
- ▶ Arrangements for seeing and commenting on written work.
- ▶ Monitoring arrangements and timetable.
- ▶ Safety.

#### Academic support

- ▶ Research facilities available.
- ▶ University and discipline training programmes and attendance requirements.
- ▶ General framework for the whole research project.
- ▶ Detailed plan for the early stages of the research project.

### Subsequent meetings

Regular meetings, in accordance with the agreed schedule, are essential to monitor progress and agree timetables for the future. The research timetable should be committed to paper so that supervisors can see whether deadlines have been met. Examples of supervisory schedules are given below.

The length of meetings will vary. For full-time students meetings of an hour or so are usual. For part-time students, whose meetings are less frequent, they will be longer.

### Monitoring progress

Supervisors use different methods to monitor their students' progress, and they should agree with the student at the initial meeting how it is to be done. Supervisors are required by the Research Degrees Committee to submit a regular report every six months to the Associate Dean Research (or equivalent) on the progress of their students, and this should be taken into account when working out a monitoring schedule. Examples are given below.

The Research Degrees Committee requires a substantial review of progress for full-time students shortly before the end of the first year,

for part-time students before the end of the two-year probationary period. A meeting between the head of discipline (or nominee) and the student is required during the first year of registration for full-time students, during the probationary period for part-time students. The timetables agreed at supervision meetings should be used to see whether deadlines are being met and progress is being made.

Students should prepare progress reports for their supervisors at regular agreed intervals.

Associate Deans Research (or equivalent) are accountable for research student progress. They are required to ensure that students in their academic unit make adequate academic progress, and to take any action required to enable students to meet their submission dates. They are also responsible for making sure that students receive copies of their progress monitoring reports when they have been endorsed.

### Examples of supervision and monitoring schedules

#### For a full-time student

	Supervision schedule	Monitoring schedule
<b>Year 1</b>		
<b>First term</b>	Weekly meetings with supervisors	Report on progress at end of first term.
<b>Second term</b>	Monthly meetings with supervisors	Supervisors report on progress at end of second term.
<b>Third term</b>	Monthly meetings with supervisors	Probation assessment report prepared. This will include an oral presentation and assessment by members of academic staff other than the supervisors. Agreement to proceed or withdraw.
<b>Years 2 and 3</b>	Monthly meetings with supervisors	Regular progress monitoring reports every six months.

*The completed and signed probation report must be submitted to the Research Degrees Team by the 11th month. This is to ensure progress to the 2nd year of study is approved prior to the start of the next year.*

## For a part-time student

	Supervision schedule	Monitoring schedule
Year 1	Early meeting with supervisors.	At least six meetings with supervisors, and regular phone calls, email or correspondence. End-of-year meeting with supervisors. Regular progress monitoring reports every six months.
Year 2	At least six meetings with supervisors, and regular phone calls, email or correspondence.	Regular progress monitoring reports every six months. Probation assessment report prepared and submitted to Associate Dean Research (or equivalent), with recommendation of degree for which student should be registered.
Year 3 onwards	At least six meetings with supervisors, and regular phone calls, email or correspondence.	Regular progress monitoring reports every six months.

*The completed and signed probation report must be submitted to the Research Degrees Team by the 23rd month. This is to ensure progress to the 3rd year of study is approved prior to the start of the next year.*

## Changes in supervision

Students have the right to discuss and criticise the supervision they are receiving. Initially, any concerns should be raised with supervisors at the regular supervision meetings. If they cannot be resolved, the student should discuss the difficulties with the head of discipline or the Head of Research Degrees.

If the problem cannot be resolved new supervisors can be appointed, but there may be difficulties in finding replacement supervisors who have experience of the thesis subject area.

## Appeal procedures

Students have the right to appeal against decisions of the Research Degrees Committee, such as an examination result or a decision not to continue registration. Appeals have to be lodged within one month of the decision, or two months for appeals against an examination result.

The appeal procedure is available from the Research School, and is included below.

## 11.3 Research degree appeals procedure

EdD students should also refer to Section 8.

MRes students should also refer to Section 9.

### 1 Scope of appeals

1.1 Registered research degree students may appeal against the following academic decisions of the University:

- a termination of registration to read for a research degree for failure to make satisfactory academic progress
- b registration for a particular research degree\*
- c refusal of permission to submit a thesis for examination
- d the result of the examination of a thesis.

1.2 For authoritative guidance on the applicability and operation of the research degree appeal procedures, write to the Head of Research Degrees, c/o Research School, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, or send an email for the attention of the Head of Research Degrees to:

[Research-School@open.ac.uk](mailto:Research-School@open.ac.uk).

\*Does not apply to EdD students\*

## 2 Termination of registration

**2.1** Appeals against the termination of registration are permitted only on the following grounds:

- a** that there were circumstances affecting your academic progress of which the supervisors and head of discipline were unaware
- b** that there is evidence of procedural irregularity (including administrative error) in the monitoring and assessment of your progress, such as to suggest that, in the absence of such irregularity, the decision to terminate registration would not have been made
- c** that there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment of your academic progress.

You may not on any other grounds challenge the academic decision to terminate registration.

**2.2** There are three stages to the appeal procedure if your registration has been terminated for failure to make satisfactory academic progress.

### First stage appeal procedure

**2.3** The first stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.

**2.4** First stage appeals against the termination of registration to read for a research degree must be submitted, in writing, to the University through the Head of Research Degrees. You must state fully the grounds of your appeal and provide evidence of satisfactory academic progress or explain why satisfactory academic progress has not been achieved.

**2.5** You must submit your appeal to the University within one month of being notified of the decision to terminate registration for failure to make satisfactory academic progress.

**2.6** The University will use recorded delivery for all correspondence relating to appeals, and you should do the same.

**2.7** On receipt of your appeal, an independent advisory panel will be convened to make a recommendation to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee as to whether the appeal should be upheld

**2.8** The advisory panel will consult the head of discipline, supervisors and other appropriate people (e.g. the third-party monitor and/or other members of the academic staff who have had a role in your studies). Those consulted will be asked to submit comments in a form that can be made available to you if the appeal goes to the second stage.

**2.9** You have no right of personal hearing at stage one.

**2.10** Following consultation with the advisory panel, the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee will either:

- a** uphold the appeal and reinstate registration for a specified period; or
- b** reject the appeal and confirm the decision to terminate registration. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

If your appeal is upheld, the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee may stipulate appropriate conditions.

**2.11** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the first stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

### Second stage appeal procedure

**2.12** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a first stage appeal to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, you may ask for the appeal to go to stage two. The second stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Head of the Research School.

**2.13** To take your appeal to stage two you must write to the Complaints and Appeals Office, within one month of being notified of the outcome of the first stage appeal, to confirm that you want the appeal to proceed to the second stage.

**2.14** You may, if you wish, be assisted in the second stage appeal process by a nominated friend, whose name you must give to the University in the letter to the Complaints and Appeals Office confirming that you want the appeal to go to the second stage.

**2.15** You have no right of personal hearing at stage two.

**2.16** A delegated member of the Research School may discuss your appeal with you or with your nominated friend.

**2.17** Following a review of earlier correspondence and in the light of the advice provided by the other staff, the Head of the Research School will:

- a** uphold the appeal and reinstate registration for a specified period; or
- b** reject the appeal and confirm the decision to terminate registration. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

If an appeal is upheld, the Head of the Research School may stipulate appropriate conditions.

**2.18** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the second stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

### Third stage appeal procedure

**2.19** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a second stage appeal to the Head of the Research School, you may ask for the appeal to go to stage three. The third stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship).

**2.20** To take your appeal to stage three you must write to the Complaints and Appeals Office, within one month of being notified of the outcome of the second stage appeal, to confirm that you want the appeal to proceed to the third stage.

**2.21** You may, if you wish, be assisted in the third stage appeal process by a nominated friend, whose name you must give to the University in the letter to the Complaints and Appeals Office confirming that you want the appeal to go to the third stage.

**2.22** In a third stage appeal you have the right to be heard in person and to be accompanied by your nominated friend. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will sit with one or more appropriately qualified external assessors.

**2.23** In the light of the advice provided by the external assessor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will:

- a uphold the appeal and reinstate registration for a specified period; or
- b reject the appeal and confirm the decision to terminate registration. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

If an appeal is upheld, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor may stipulate appropriate conditions. The decision of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) is final.

**2.24** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the third stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

## 3 Registration for a particular research degree

**3.1** Appeals against registration for a particular degree are permitted only on the following grounds:

- a that there were circumstances affecting your academic progress of which the supervisors and head of discipline were unaware

- b that there is evidence of procedural irregularity (including administrative error) in the monitoring and assessment of your progress, such as to suggest that, in the absence of such irregularity, the decision about degree registration would have been different
- c that there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment of your work.

You may not on any other grounds challenge the academic decision about your degree registration.

**3.2** There are three stages to the procedure for appeals against registration for a particular research degree.

### First stage appeal procedure

**3.3** The first stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.

**3.4** First stage appeals against registration for a particular research degree must be submitted, in writing, to the University through the Head of Research Degrees. You must state fully the grounds of your appeal.

**3.5** You must submit your appeal to the University within one month of being notified of the decision about registration for a particular research degree.

**3.6** The University will use recorded delivery for all correspondence relating to appeals, and you should do the same.

**3.7** On receipt of your appeal, an independent advisory panel will be convened to make a recommendation to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee as to whether the appeal should be upheld.

**3.8** The advisory panel will consult the head of discipline, supervisors and other appropriate people (e.g. the third-party monitor and/or other members of the academic staff who have had a role in your studies). Those consulted will be asked to submit comments in a form that can be made available to you if the appeal goes to the second stage.

**3.9** You have no right of personal hearing at stage one.

**3.10** Following consultation with the advisory panel, the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee will either:

- a uphold the appeal and change the degree registration; or
- b grant permission for the degree registration to be reconsidered once specified conditions have been fulfilled; or

- c reject the appeal and confirm the degree registration. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

**3.11** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the first stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

### Second stage appeal procedure

**3.12** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a first stage appeal to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, you may ask for the appeal to go to stage two. The second stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Head of the Research School.

**3.13** To take your appeal to stage two you must write to the Complaints and Appeals Office, within one month of being notified of the outcome of the first stage appeal, to confirm that you want the appeal to proceed to the second stage.

**3.14** You may, if you wish, be assisted in the second stage appeal process by a nominated friend, whose name you must give to the University in the letter to the Complaints and Appeals Office confirming that you want the appeal to go to the second stage.

**3.15** You have no right of personal hearing at stage one.

**3.16** A delegated member of the Research School may discuss your appeal with you or with your nominated friend.

**3.17** Following a review of earlier correspondence and in the light of the advice provided by the other staff, the Head of the Research School will:

- a uphold the appeal and change the degree registration; or
- b grant permission for the degree registration to be reconsidered once specified conditions have been fulfilled; or
- c reject the appeal and confirm the degree registration. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

**3.18** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the second stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

### Third stage appeal procedure

**3.19** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a second stage appeal to the Head of the Research School, you may ask for the appeal to go to stage three. The third stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship).

**3.20** To take your appeal to stage three you must write to the Complaints and Appeals Office, within one month of being notified of the outcome of the second stage appeal, to confirm that you want the appeal to proceed to the third stage.

**3.21** You may, if you wish, be assisted in the third stage appeal process by a nominated friend, whose name you must give to the University in the letter to the Complaints and Appeals Office confirming that you want the appeal to go to the third stage.

**3.22** In a third stage appeal you have the right to be heard in person and to be accompanied by your nominated friend. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will sit with one or more appropriately qualified external assessors.

**3.23** In the light of the advice provided by the external assessor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will:

- a uphold the appeal and change the degree registration; or
- b grant permission for the degree registration to be reconsidered once specified conditions have been fulfilled; or
- c reject the appeal and confirm the degree registration. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

The decision of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) is final.

**3.24** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the third stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

### 4 Refusal of permission to submit a thesis

**4.1** Appeals against refusal of permission to submit a thesis are permitted only on the following grounds:

- a that there were circumstances affecting your academic performance of which the supervisors and head of discipline were unaware

- b** that there is evidence of procedural irregularity (including administrative error) in the assessment of your thesis, such as to suggest that, in the absence of such irregularity, the decision to refuse permission would not have been made
- c** that there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment of the thesis.

You may not on any other grounds challenge the decision to refuse permission to submit a thesis for examination.

**4.2** There are three stages to the procedure for appeals against refusal of permission to submit a thesis for examination.

### First stage appeal procedure

**4.3** The first stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.

**4.4** First stage appeals against refusal of permission to submit a thesis for examination must be submitted, in writing, to the University through the Head of Research Degrees. You must state fully the grounds of your appeal and provide evidence of satisfactory academic progress or explain why satisfactory academic progress has not been achieved.

**4.5** You must submit your appeal to the University within one month of being notified of the decision to refuse permission to submit your thesis for examination.

**4.6** The University will use recorded delivery for all correspondence relating to appeals, and you should do the same.

**4.7** On receipt of your appeal, an independent advisory panel will be convened to make a recommendation to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee as to whether the appeal should be upheld.

**4.8** The advisory panel will consult the head of discipline, supervisors and other appropriate people (e.g. the third-party monitor and/or other members of the academic staff who have had a role in your studies). Those consulted will be asked to submit comments in a form that can be made available to you if the appeal goes to the second stage.

**4.9** You have no right of personal hearing at stage one.

**4.10** Following consultation with the advisory panel, the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee will either:

- a** uphold the appeal and grant permission for the thesis to be submitted for examination; or

- b** grant permission for the thesis to be submitted for examination once appropriate revisions have been made; or
- c** if you are registered for the degree of PhD, require the degree registration to be changed to allow the thesis to be submitted and examined for the degree of MPhil; or
- d** reject the appeal and confirm the decision to refuse permission to submit the thesis for examination. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

**4.11** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the first stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

### Second stage appeal procedure

**4.12** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a first stage appeal to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, you may ask for the appeal to go to stage two. The second stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Head of the Research School.

**4.13** To take your appeal to stage two you must write to the Complaints and Appeals Office, within one month of being notified of the outcome of the first stage appeal, to confirm that you want the appeal to proceed to the second stage.

**4.14** You may, if you wish, be assisted in the second stage appeal process by a nominated friend, whose name you must give to the University in the letter to the Complaints and Appeals Office confirming that you want the appeal to go to the second stage.

**4.15** You have no right of personal hearing at stage one.

**4.16** A delegated member of the Research School may discuss your appeal with you or with your nominated friend.

**4.17** Following a review of earlier correspondence and in the light of the advice provided by the other staff, the Head of the Research School will:

- a** uphold the appeal and grant permission for the thesis to be submitted for examination; or
- b** grant permission for the thesis to be submitted for examination once appropriate revisions have been made; or
- c** if you are registered for the degree of PhD, require the degree registration to be changed to allow the thesis to be submitted and examined for the degree of MPhil; or

- d reject the appeal and confirm the decision to refuse permission to submit the thesis for examination. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

**4.18** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the second stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

### Third stage appeal procedure

**4.19** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a second stage appeal to the Head of the Research School, you may ask for the appeal to go to stage three. The third stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship).

**4.20** To take your appeal to stage three you must write to the Complaints and Appeals Office, within one month of being notified of the outcome of the second stage appeal, to confirm that you want the appeal to proceed to the third stage.

**4.21** You may, if you wish, be assisted in the third stage appeal process by a nominated friend, whose name you must give to the University in the letter to the Complaints and Appeals Office confirming that you want the appeal to go to the third stage.

**4.22** In a third stage appeal you have the right to be heard in person and to be accompanied by your nominated friend. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will sit with one or more appropriately qualified external assessors.

**4.23** In the light of the advice provided by the external assessor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will:

- a uphold the appeal and grant permission for the thesis to be submitted for examination; or
- b grant permission for the thesis to be submitted for examination once appropriate revisions have been made; or
- c if you are registered for the degree of PhD, require the degree registration to be changed to allow the thesis to be submitted and examined for the degree of MPhil; or
- d reject the appeal and confirm the decision to refuse permission to submit the thesis for examination. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

The decision of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) is final.

**4.24** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the third stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

## 5 Result of an examination

**5.1** Appeals against the outcome of an examination are permitted only on the following grounds:

- a that there are circumstances affecting your performance of which the examiners were not aware at the oral examination
- b that there is evidence of procedural irregularity (including administrative error) in the conduct of the examination, such as to suggest that, in the absence of such irregularity, the result would have been different
- c that there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners.

You may not on any other grounds challenge the academic judgement of the examiners.

**5.2** There are three stages to the procedure for appeals against the result of an examination.

### First stage appeal procedure

**5.3** The first stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.

**5.4** First stage appeals against the result of an examination must be submitted, in writing, to the University through the Head of Research Degrees. You must state fully the grounds of your appeal.

**5.5** You must submit your appeal to the University within two months of being notified that your examination result has been ratified on behalf of the Research Degrees Committee.

**5.6** You may appeal against the result of an examination but, because there are procedures for complaint and grievance during study, alleged inadequacy of supervision or other arrangements during the period of study does not constitute grounds for an appeal.

**5.7** On receipt of your appeal, an independent advisory panel will be convened to make a recommendation to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee as to whether the appeal should be upheld.

**5.8** The advisory panel will consult the examiners, the head of discipline, supervisors and other appropriate people (e.g. the third-party monitor and/or other members of the academic staff who have had a role in your studies). Those consulted will be asked to submit comments in a form that can be made available to you if the appeal goes to the second stage.

**5.9** You have no right of personal hearing at stage one.

**5.10** Following consultation with the advisory panel, the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee will:

- a** if policy has been breached refer the thesis for re-examination under the procedures set out in paragraphs 5.24–5.29 below; or
- b** with the agreement of the examiners, uphold the appeal and change the result of the examination; or
- c** reject the appeal and confirm the examination result. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

**5.11** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the first stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

### Second stage appeal procedure

**5.12** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a first stage appeal to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, you may ask for the appeal to go to stage two. The second stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Head of the Research School

**5.13** To take your appeal to stage two you must write to the Complaints and Appeals Office, within two months of being notified of the outcome of the first stage appeal, to confirm that you want the appeal to proceed to the second stage.

**5.14** You may, if you wish, be assisted in the second stage appeal process by a nominated friend, whose name you must give to the University in the letter to the Complaints and Appeals Office confirming that you want the appeal to go to the second stage.

**5.15** You have no right of personal hearing at stage two.

**5.16** Following a review of earlier correspondence and in the light of the advice provided by the other staff, the Head of the Research School will:

- a** with the agreement of the examiners, uphold the appeal and change the result of the examination; or
- b** refer the thesis for re-examination under the procedure set out in paragraphs 5.24–5.29 below; or
- c** give you permission to revise your thesis and resubmit it for examination, either for the degree for which it was originally submitted or for another research degree; or

- d** reject the appeal and confirm the result of the examination. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

**5.17** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the second stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

### Third stage appeal procedure

**5.18** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a second stage appeal to the Head of the Research School, you may ask for the appeal to go to stage three. The third stage of the appeal process is conducted by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship).

**5.19** To take your appeal to stage three you must write to the Complaints and Appeals Office, within two months of being notified of the outcome of the second stage appeal, to confirm that you want the appeal to proceed to the third stage.

**5.20** You may, if you wish, be assisted in the third stage appeal process by a nominated friend, whose name you must give to the University in the letter to the Complaints and Appeals Office confirming that you want the appeal to go to the second stage.

**5.21** In a third stage appeal you have the right to be heard in person and to be accompanied by your nominated friend. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will sit with one or more appropriately qualified external assessors.

**5.22** On the basis of the advice provided by the external assessor(s), the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will:

- a** with the agreement of the examiners, uphold the appeal and change the result of the examination; or
- b** refer the thesis for re-examination under the procedure set out in paragraphs 5.24–5.29 below; or
- c** give you permission to revise your thesis and resubmit it for examination, either for the degree for which it was originally submitted or for another research degree; or
- d** reject the appeal and confirm the result of the examination. If so you will be informed, in general terms, of the reason(s) for rejecting the appeal.

The decision of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) is final.

**5.23** The University will write to tell you the outcome of the third stage appeal, not later than five working days after the decision has been reached.

## Re-examination of theses on appeal

**5.24** Theses submitted for re-examination under 5.10a, 5.16b or 5.22b above will be examined by a panel consisting of an internal examiner (or an internal assessor) and two external examiners, none of whom may be members of the original examination panel.

**5.25** You will have a viva voce examination, which your internal supervisor will be required to attend.

**5.26** The examiners will be told that they are re-examining a thesis on appeal but will be given no information about the previous examination.

**5.27** If you are permitted to have your thesis re-examined you are not permitted to make any amendments to it before the second examination. If appropriate, and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort by examiners, an appendix of purely typographical errors may be attached to the thesis and submitted for re-examination.

**5.28** If the result of the re-examination is less favourable to you than that of the first examination against which a successful appeal has been made, then the result of the original examination will stand subject to the original corrections, amendments or revisions.

**5.29** If your thesis is referred for re-examination in accordance with either 5.10a, 5.16b or 5.22b, or if you are granted permission to revise and resubmit your thesis for re-examination in accordance with 5.16c or 5.22c, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) determines the right of appeal against the result of the re-examination.

- ▶ Staff disciplinary code
- ▶ Code on personal relationships between staff and students.

Formal appeals are also excluded from the complaint procedures. We define a formal appeal as 'a request for a review of a decision taken by an individual or academic body charged with making decisions on students' progression, assessment and awards'.

## 2 Time limits

If you experience problems with any aspect of our academic or administrative services, you should contact your supervision team, your third party monitor, your faculty or school or the Research Degrees Team as soon as possible so that we can act quickly to put things right.

It is essential that you act immediately if there is a possibility that your studies will be affected by any problem you have experienced.

In most cases, a letter, phone call or email to the Research Degrees Team will get you the help and advice you need.

We cannot accept responsibility for problems that affect the outcome of your studies if you delay telling us about them until it is too late for us to put things right.

If you have told us about problems and you are not satisfied with our response, you are entitled to make a formal complaint.

You must make your complaint within a reasonable time following the matter that prompted your complaint. This should be no more than three months after completion of or withdrawal from the course of study in which the complaint arose, after which your complaint will be considered to be 'out of time', save in exceptional circumstances that prevented you from submitting it.

Once you have received a formal response to your complaint, if you are still not satisfied, you have 28 days from the date of the response in which to take the complaint to the next stage.

The University is committed to dealing with all complaints as quickly as possible and will normally follow the time limits set out in this procedure. You will be informed of any delay and the reason for it if one should arise.

## 11.4 Complaints procedure for postgraduate research students

### 1 Definition of a complaint

The University defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction concerning the provision of a programme of study or related academic or administrative service, when the complainant has drawn his or her concern to the attention of the University and is not satisfied with the response'. This definition does not include complaints that are covered by the following separate University procedures.

- ▶ Code of practice on student discipline
- ▶ Dealing with bullying and harassment – code of practice for students

### 3 Rights and responsibilities

The University will:

- ▶ deal with all complaints within the time limits set out in this procedure;
- ▶ make sure that we deal with all the points you raise, and that our replies explain the outcomes clearly;
- ▶ handle your complaint confidentially and only give people the information that is needed to carry out a proper investigation and make a full response;
- ▶ keep records of complaints separate from other records;
- ▶ make sure that no complaint you have made in good faith will be used to your disadvantage in the future; and
- ▶ always be polite.

If you want to make a formal complaint against the University you should:

- ▶ give us full details of your complaint;
- ▶ deal sensitively with issues that involve other students or staff, and not name them unless it is necessary; and
- ▶ always be polite.

Please note that the University reluctantly operates a policy for dealing with Habitual and/ or Vexatious Complaints/Appellants. The policy is available on request from the Complaints and Appeals Office. Students with genuine complaints or appeals of substance (whether they are eventually upheld) need not be concerned by this policy.

The University does not accept complaints made by third parties on behalf of a student unless we have written confirmation from the student that they are happy for the third party to make a complaint on their behalf.

### 4 Stage one

Contact the Head of Research Degrees. If you want to complain about more than one area, you should either contact each area separately or write to the Complaints and Appeals Office. If you are not sure which office to contact, the Complaints and Appeals Office will be able to advise you.

The complaint should be submitted in writing by post, fax or email, to ensure that we record your complaint accurately. If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to send a written complaint, please contact the Complaints and Appeals Office to discuss alternatives.

Concise numbered points can be a helpful way to set the situation out clearly and you should provide any supporting evidence available to you.

Your complaint will be considered by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.

You should expect to receive a reply within ten working days of the University receiving your complaint. If we can't give you a full reply within that time, we will tell you when we will be able to do so. We will normally reply using the same method you used when sending your complaint to us i.e. letter, email or fax.

### 5 Stage two

If, when you receive our reply to your complaint, you are not satisfied that we have done everything possible to answer it, you can ask the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) to review your case. You must put your complaint in writing and send it to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) within 28 days of the date of our response to your stage 1 complaint (if you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to send a written complaint, please contact the office to discuss alternatives).

You should include:

- ▶ full details of your complaint and all matters related to it;
- ▶ details of other areas of the University that you have had contact with in relation to your complaint; and
- ▶ copies of any previous correspondence with us related to your complaint, or enough information to help us trace this correspondence quickly.

You should explain why the response you have received at stage one has not answered your complaint. You should also tell us what you think we should do to resolve your complaint.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will send you an acknowledgement of your complaint within three working days of receiving it, and will tell you which senior officer or officers have been asked to reply. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) will send you a full reply within 10 working days of the date of his or her acknowledgement letter or, if that is not possible, contact you again to let you know when you can expect a full reply.

## 6 Stage three

If, when you have a full reply from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) or the senior officer or officers asked to consider your complaint, you are still not satisfied that we have done everything possible to answer your complaint, you can ask the Complaints and Appeals Office to refer it to the Director, Students.

You must clearly set out the reasons for requesting a review and enclose any additional evidence in support of your complaint. You should also explain what you would like to happen to resolve your complaint. This request should be sent within 28 days of the date of our response to your stage two complaint.

The Complaints and Appeals Office will acknowledge your request within three working days. The Director will investigate whether we have handled the matter fairly in line with our

policy and procedures, and whether we should do anything else. The Director will send a reply to your complaint within 10 working days of the date of the Complaints and Appeals Office's acknowledgement letter or, if that is not possible, contact you again to let you know when you can expect a full reply. This stage may take longer because the Director will need to see previous correspondence and may get advice from several departments. The reply from the Director, Students will explain the basis of his or her decision. The Director's decision is the final decision on behalf of the University.

If you remain dissatisfied with this decision, you are then entitled to apply for an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). You'll find contact details for the OIA (including details of their website) in *Sources of Advice* below and we will explain the procedures to you once you have exhausted our internal procedures.

### Complaints procedure

<b>Initial problem</b>	Discuss with the supervision team, the third party monitor, the faculty and/or the Research Degrees Team
<b>Formal complaint</b>	Complaint must be made within three months
<b>Stage 1</b>	Complaint submitted to Head of Research Degrees Complaint considered by Chair of Research Degrees Committee Reply should be received within 10 days of complaint being received
<b>Stage 2</b>	Complaint must be made within 28 days of response to Stage 1 complaint Complaint submitted to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) Complaint considered by Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) or delegate Reply should be received within 10 days of complaint being received
<b>Stage 3</b>	Complaint must be made within 28 days of response to Stage 2 complaint Complaint submitted to the University's Complaints and Appeals Office Complaint considered by Director, Students Reply should be received within 10 days of complaint being received
<b>Final decision</b>	The Director, Students' decision is the final decision on behalf of the University Student can apply for independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

## 7 Sources of advice

If you need help at any point in the complaint procedure, you can contact one of the following offices.

### The Head of Research Degrees

The Research School  
The Open University  
Milton Keynes MK7 6AA  
**Phone** 01908 654882  
**Fax** 01908 653999  
**Email** research-degrees-team@open.ac.uk

### The Complaints and Appeals Office

The Open University  
PO Box 5155  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6YJ  
**Phone** 01908 659535  
**Fax** 01908 659536  
**Email** complaints-appeals@open.ac.uk

**The Open University Students' Association (OUSA) central office at Walton Hall, Milton Keynes**

**Email** [ousa@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:ousa@student.open.ac.uk)

**The Office of the Independent Adjudicator**

Fifth Floor Thames Tower Station Road

Reading

RG1 1LX

[www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

**Helpdesk phone** 0118 959 9813

(Calls to and from this Office may be monitored for quality control and training reasons.)

## 11.5 Other policies and statements

You can access the University's other regulations, policies and statements on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies](http://www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies).

# Part 4

## Our contact details

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### 12 How to contact us

#### The Research School

##### Research School

The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 654411

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 655477

To contact specific areas of the Research School:

##### Research Ethics

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 654858

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 655477

**Email** [research-ethics@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-ethics@open.ac.uk)

##### Research Grants and Contracts

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 652006

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 655477

**Email** [research-grants-contracts@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-grants-contracts@open.ac.uk)

##### Innovation and Enterprise

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 659783

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 655477

**Email** [innovation-enterprise@open.ac.uk](mailto:innovation-enterprise@open.ac.uk)

##### Research Degree

**Part-time study** +44 (0)1908 653806

**Full-time study** +44 (0)1908 654882

**Doctorate in Education (EdD)** +44 (0)1908 659616

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 653999

**Email** [research-degrees-team@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-degrees-team@open.ac.uk)

##### Research Career Development

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 653677

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 655477

**Email** [research-training-development@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-training-development@open.ac.uk)

#### Disciplines

You can find contact details for all our research areas on our website at:

[www.open.ac.uk/research/research-areas](http://www.open.ac.uk/research/research-areas)

#### Other areas of the University

##### Credit, Qualifications and Ceremonies Centre

The Open University  
PO Box 123  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6DQ

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 653003

**Email** [acc-gen@open.ac.uk](mailto:acc-gen@open.ac.uk)

##### Complaints and Appeals Office

The Open University  
PO Box 5155  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6YJ

**Phone** 01908 659535

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 659536

**Email** [complaints-appeals@open.ac.uk](mailto:complaints-appeals@open.ac.uk)

##### Data Protection Coordinator

The Open University  
PO Box 497  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AT

**Email** [data-protection@open.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@open.ac.uk)

##### EdD Team

Centre for Research in Education and Educational Technology (CREET)

The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 653789

**Email** [creet-student-enquiries@open.ac.uk](mailto:creet-student-enquiries@open.ac.uk)

##### The Open University Library

Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 659001

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 653571

**Email** [Lib-help@open.ac.uk](mailto:Lib-help@open.ac.uk)

### Mres Office

Research School  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 653789

**Email** [mres-office@open.ac.uk](mailto:mres-office@open.ac.uk)

<http://mres.open.ac.uk>

### OU Computing Helpdesk

The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 653972

[www.open.ac.uk/students/helpdesk](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/helpdesk)

### Disability Resources Team

The Open University  
Hammerwood Gate  
Kents Hill  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6BR

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 653745

**Textphone** +44 (0)1908 655978

**Fax** +44 (0)1908 655547

**Email** [disabled-student-resources@open.ac.uk](mailto:disabled-student-resources@open.ac.uk)

### Open University Students Association (OUSA)

The Open University  
PO Box 397  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6BE

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 652026

**Email** [ousa@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:ousa@student.open.ac.uk)

### Open University Student Budget Accounts Ltd (OUSBA)

The Open University  
PO Box 508  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6HX

**Phone** +44 (0)1908 655777

Local rate (UK only) 08457 697937

**Email** [OUSBA@open.ac.uk](mailto:OUSBA@open.ac.uk)

### Statistics Advisory Service

Department of Statistics  
The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA

**Email** [Stats-Advisory@open.ac.uk](mailto:Stats-Advisory@open.ac.uk)

[http://statistics.open.ac.uk/advisory\\_service](http://statistics.open.ac.uk/advisory_service)



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