

# IBS Research Degrees Guide

Rules, Regulations, Processes and Information

Date: July 2018

## Table of Contents

Preface.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
1.1 Purpose of the Guide.....	4
1.2 Degrees offered at IBS.....	4
1.3 Research Degrees .....	5
2. People and Organisation .....	6
2.1 Research Programmes Council.....	6
2.2 Research Officer .....	6
2.3 Supervisors .....	7
2.4 Personal Tutor .....	8
2.5. Academic Conduct Officer.....	8
2.6. Research Link Tutors .....	8
2.7. Students.....	9
3. Admissions.....	10
3.1 Initial contacts .....	10
3.2 Developing applications .....	10
3.3 Decision on application .....	11
3.4 Administrative Matters .....	12
3.5 Admission Conditions .....	12
4. The Research Process .....	13
4.1 The Supervision .....	13
4.2 The Research Plan .....	14
4.3. Regular meetings.....	14
4.4 Workshops.....	15
4.5 Annual Review – PhD.....	15
4.6 Semester Report – MA and MSc .....	16
4.7 Deadlines and length of studies .....	16
4.8 Examination.....	17
5. The Thesis.....	21
5.1 General Rules.....	21
5.2 Guidelines on the production of a thesis .....	22
6. Appeals and Complaints.....	26
References.....	29

## Preface

Dear Research Students,

The University of Buckingham has been working with International Business School, Budapest (IBS) since 2013 validating Undergraduate and taught Postgraduate programmes. The introduction of research programmes at IBS is a natural step forward in the development of the educational partnership between the University of Buckingham and IBS.

The provision of research programmes at both Masters and Doctorial level provides opportunities for individuals to complete comprehensive and in-depth investigations into areas of personal interest across a wide range of subjects.

Each student will have a first and second supervisor appointed by IBS and approved by Buckingham along with the appointment of a Link Research tutor at Buckingham. The role of the Link Research Tutor includes

- the constant liaising with IBS colleagues
- the confirmation on behalf of The University of Buckingham of each student's admission
- the approval of the Supervisors designated by IBS
- his or her participation in the Annual Review Panel which allows students to upgrade from probationary PhD status to full PhD status

In general, the Link Research Tutor shall ensure that all aspects of the programmes meet the expectations of Buckingham, thereby guaranteeing students registered with IBS the best learning experience possible.

The University of Buckingham is pleased to be able to support International Business School in this new endeavour and wishes all the best to all those who engage on a research project at IBS!

Dr Frances Robinson  
Head of Collaboration  
University of Buckingham

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Guide

The present Guide has been prepared to help each student, faculty member, supervisor and staff member at International Business School to better understand the rules, the processes and the roles of every person involved in the various research-based degrees offered.

These degrees are awarded by the University of Buckingham (“the University”), and therefore the University’s rules apply. This guide is a customised and abridged version of the original Research Degrees Handbook issued by the University (hereafter “Buckingham Research Degrees Handbook” or “BRH”, <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/handbooks/research-degrees-handbook/> ).

This Guide aims to describe how the general rules and procedures set in the BRH apply at IBS. In case of conflict between the two sets of rules or when a specific issue is not covered *expressis verbis* by the existing rules as described in this or other relevant documents, a decision will be reached founded on the interpretation of the intent of the existing rules based on common sense. The same common sense should be used when on certain occasions, two roles are filled by the same person (for instance Research Officer and Supervisor, etc). In cases where the two sets of rules cannot be reconciled at all, the University of Buckingham’s rules, as described in the BRH, take precedence.

## 1.2 Degrees offered at IBS

The present Guide covers a range of programmes that share the following characteristics:

- they lead to a degree awarded by the University of Buckingham;
- students conduct research under the supervision of IBS faculty;
- a significant final thesis must be submitted.

As of February 2017, the following topics / areas are offered:

MSc in Economic Development by Research

MA in International Affairs and Diplomacy by Research

MA in Arts History by Research

MSc in Brand Management by Research

MSc in Financial Consulting by Research

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In the UK the shortened version of the title can be either DPhil or PhD depending on the university. At its founding, the University of Buckingham chose to officially use the term PhD.

### 1.3 Research Degrees

Before describing these programmes in detail, one should note that the fact that there are no formal lectures or written examination does not mean that they would be in any way 'easier' than a degree with a more traditional structure. Quite the contrary, students will be required to engage into an intellectual challenge, which although well supported by their IBS supervisors, will often seem a lonely and extremely difficult endeavour. As it is pointed out in the BRH:

*"Research can be a lonely occupation and requires a great deal of self-discipline, even for the most dedicated scholar. Do take advantage of the help offered by your supervisor, your department, and other departments and agencies both within and outside the University.*

*Your relationship with your supervisor is vital to the success of your studies. If you encounter any difficulties with your studies or with any other aspect of University life, try initially to resolve them with your supervisor. If this is not possible, then refer the matter to your Research Officer.*

[...]

*In order to ensure that you are making satisfactory progress and to give you an opportunity to express any concerns about your studies, you will be subject to periodical reviews held at least once each year. These reviews will also give you an opportunity to prepare for your final viva voce examination (if applicable).*

*Make sure you are familiar with the process of annual review and the requirements for submission of your thesis (see the procedures in this handbook), and discuss with your supervisor the arrangements for the viva voce so that you can be properly prepared." (University of Buckingham, 2016, p.3)*

An MSc by Research is identical in many aspects to any Masters' degree, which is a second-cycle qualification in the Bologna system (QAA, 2011), except that it replaces taught classes with an individual research effort. It requires students to produce a high-quality paper of up to 40,000 words, written in excellent academic style. It has to contain a thorough literature review, well-established critical evaluation of the applied research methods and serious research (empirical or other) with well-founded and justified conclusions. As the length (more than twice the number of words expected from a more traditional masters' degree project) suggests, this dissertation must be of a real high quality, satisfying the most stringent British criteria for academic research. Students choose a research-based MSc when they already know that they wish to continue their studies at the doctoral level, when they already have formulated a concrete research idea, and/or when they have access to specific primary data that will enable them to complete their proposed study.

A Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil/PhD) is the U.K. title denoting a doctoral (i.e., third-cycle) qualification in the Bologna system. The doctoral degree is the highest qualification one may obtain, and the effort necessary to obtain the qualification is commensurable. In order to qualify, students need to submit a thesis of up to 100,000 words, which contains not only a critical review of the existing literature but also an original contribution to the body of science, in the form of a research study that brings new knowledge or presents and analyses previously known facts using a novel approach.

## 2. People and Organisation

The following section introduces the main participants of the research degree processes and lists their main tasks and responsibilities. A more detailed understanding on how to come up to these responsibilities can be gained by reading the next chapters of this Guide.

### 2.1 Research Programmes Council

At IBS the research degrees are overseen by a committee, called the Research Programmes Council (hereafter referred to as 'Programme Council' or simply 'Council'). The composition of the Programme Council is the following:

- Rector of IBS or their appointee (Chair);
- Research Officer;
- at least one First Supervisor from each relevant academic area;
- invited guests, as decided by the chair (e.g. Academic Conduct Officer, Personal Tutor, other staff members).

Members of the Council are invited by the Chair, following consultations with relevant staff members.

The Programme Council is the decision-making body at IBS, which

- confirms the admission of students;
- allocates and approves First and Second Supervisors;
- reviews and approves regular student progress reports;
- approves or rejects student requests (regarding change of topic, extensions, re-submissions, etc.);
- discusses the conclusions of the Final Supervisory Report and decides whether any changes to rules, procedures, etc. should be initiated;
- discusses all significant matters pertaining to the delivery of the Research Programmes and takes actions as appropriate

### 2.2 Research Officer

The central person for all research degree activities at IBS is the Research Officer. His role can be described along the following lines:

- maintaining contact with and informing prospective students, liaising with potential supervisors as well as with the Centre for Marketing and Admissions;
- conducting interviews with applicants with a view to assessing their readiness to pursue a degree by research
- for PhD students: organising and attending their Annual Review, and preparing a brief report on it;
- for MSc / MA students: requesting and collating the supervisors' reports every semester;
- collating the various student progress reports described above and presenting them to the Programme Council;
- solving (or preparing a solution to be approved by the Programme Council) any unexpected issues pertaining to the safe delivery of the programme (change of supervisors, student complaints, etc);

- appointing an appropriate Personal Tutor to all new students;
- liaising with the designated Research Officers at the University of Buckingham (“Link Research tutors”) and presenting them with timely reports, as required;
- approving the materials published by the Centre for Marketing and Admissions regarding the research-based programmes;
- updating the present guide as required, in particular to reflect any changes in regulations in the University’s *Research Degrees Handbook*;
- inducting new supervisors;
- making sure that all information is made constantly available to all stakeholders, supervisors, students, prospective students, partners, etc.

### 2.3 Supervisors

There are normally two supervisors assigned per student, the First and Second Supervisor. Their role is to lead the student through a successful apprenticeship in research in their area of expertise and to provide guidance on the student’s project, towards the successful completion of the degree for which the student is enrolled. (For a detailed discussion of the division of labour between the two supervisors, please refer to section 4.1 below.)

The responsibilities and duties of the supervisors shall include:

- Discussing initially the research idea suggested by the student and ensuring that the proposal fits their area of expertise and field of research;
- Assisting the student with the preparation of the research proposal/plan and ensuring that it is completed within the time-frame specified;
- Providing the student with guidance on the following:
  - o the ‘Postgraduate Feedback Questionnaire’, as a means of considering responsibilities and entitlements, and the process of the degree;
  - o sections of this Guide as well as the University’s *Research Degrees Handbook*, highlighting at the appropriate time the parts relevant to the progression of the student’s studies;
  - o the nature of research and the standards expected;
  - o requisite techniques;
  - o the literature and resources available. This should include directing the student to the IBS Head Librarian for induction.
- Providing guidance to the student on the wide range of ethical issues that may potentially arise in the course of research;
- Providing guidance to the student on the issue of plagiarism, raising student awareness and informing the student of IBS’ antiplagiarism code, including the seriousness of plagiarism as viewed by the wider academic and professional community. Guiding the student on copyright and the need to obtain permission from third parties;
- Maintaining contact through regular meetings in accordance with the rules set in this Guide to ensure that the student’s progress remains focused and progress is maintained within the student’s overall plan;
- Being accessible to the student at other appropriate times when the student may need advice;
- Advising on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the work may be submitted within the scheduled time;

- Requesting written work as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism within a reasonable time;
- Ensuring that the student is made aware of inadequacy of progress or of standards of work below that generally expected;
- Providing a brief report on the student, in the prescribed format, to the Research Officer and, in addition, for a PhD student, a brief annual report as part of the Annual Review, for consideration by the Programme Council;
- Reading the thesis in its near-final or final form and approving for submission for examination, or recording any reservations, via completion of the 'Notice of Intention to Submit a Thesis for a Higher Degree'.

## 2.4 Personal Tutor

It is the role of the Personal Tutor to provide pastoral care to students. The Personal Tutor will:

- introduce themselves to the students at the beginning of their studies and explain them their role and how they may be contacted;
- attend the Programme Council, if invited, to discuss the case of particular students;
- lend an attentive ear to any student complaint, unresolved issue, especially the ones that pertain to disputes between students and supervisors and which may hinder the successful completion of a degree;
- notifying the Research Officer of any issues that may adversely affect student performance so that corrective action may be taken.

## 2.5. Academic Conduct Officer

The Academic Conduct Officer ensures that all submitted chapters and drafts of the thesis and, ultimately, the final thesis fully adhere to applicable academic standards. They will in particular:

- be available for consultation to First Supervisors in helping to interpret the Turnitin reports to ensure that the submission does not contain copying from external sources;
- check the work submitted for the annual report and the draft thesis for evidence of plagiarism using Turnitin and discussing with the Supervisor and with the student any issues that may arise;
- make a recommendation for any action to the Programme Council.

## 2.6. Research Link Tutors

The University of Buckingham nominates special tutors whose role is to liaise through the Research Officer with the IBS Programme Council, and ensure that the quality of the learning experience and of the research work produced meets the appropriate UK standards. In particular, the Research Link Tutors' role include

- the constant liaising with IBS colleagues
- the confirmation on behalf of The University of Buckingham of each student's admission
- the approval of the Supervisors designated by IBS
- his or her participation in the Annual Review Panel which allows students to upgrade from probationary PhD status to full PhD status

## 2.7. Students

Postgraduate research students should work diligently in their research, gradually taking ownership of their project, while being guided by their supervisor(s) towards the project's completion.

The responsibilities of the student shall include the following:

- The preparation of a fully-fledged research proposal/plan, with the support and guidance of the supervisor
- Discussing with the supervisor the type of guidance and comment he or she finds most helpful, and agreeing a schedule of meetings.
- Taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties at meetings, however elementary they may seem.
- Maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the schedule agreed with the supervisor, including in particular the presentation of written material as required.
- Considering carefully the importance of avoiding plagiarism, taking heed of the IBS antiplagiarism code, including the seriousness of plagiarism as viewed by the wider academic and professional community.
- Checking the work submitted for the annual report and the draft thesis for evidence of plagiarism by using Turnitin. Checking copyright issues and the need to obtain permission from third parties.
- Considering carefully the importance of ethical questions in research
- Providing a brief annual (for PhD students) or semester (for MA/MSc students) report on the progress of their research to the Research Officer (for PhD students) or their Supervisor (for MA/MSc students). It will also be usual for the student to submit chapters already written. PhD students should in addition prepare a brief presentation of their work and deliver this at their Annual Review.
- Deciding when they wish to submit, having taken the advice of their supervisor.
- Contacting their Personal Tutor for pastoral support when concerns or problems arise.

### 3. Admissions

The following chapter describes the admission process for research degree students.

#### 3.1 Initial contacts

As is the rule at IBS, all initial contacts with prospective students are to be handled by a designated member of the Centre for Marketing and Admissions (CMA). The Research Officer shall liaise with the CMA on a regular basis to ensure that prospective students get up-to-date and reliable information on the conditions of research-based degrees. The Research Officer will need to approve any written material, on-line information, etc. that is used by the CMA.

Staff at the CMA shall answer all first queries regarding the research degrees, which typically involve clarification on the

- nature of the degree awarded;
- length and cost of studies;
- type and level of efforts typically necessary;
- areas in which IBS is willing to welcome research students;
- admission criteria (first degree, language proficiency, etc);
- background information on the degree, IBS, the University of Buckingham, etc.

In case of a serious candidate expressing his or her interest in one of the Research Degrees offered, the CMA will verify his/her credentials and language skills through a thorough checking of all available written information (copies of certificates, exams, etc.) and if necessary, through the administration of IBS' own English test, SETI.

As part of their application, students submit the document "Application for Admission as a Postgraduate Student" and attach references from two academic referees. (Online electronic application form: <http://www.ibs-b.hu/programmes/doctorate-programmes> ) Furthermore, students submit a short, one-paragraph (approx. 150-word) abstract that provides a brief outline of their research idea. The purpose of this abstract is to help steer the oral interview (see below) and help identify the member of faculty to involve therein. The abstract, emphatically, serves as a springboard for discussion, and no decision regarding accepting or refusing the application will be made solely on the basis of the abstract submitted at this preliminary stage of the process.

Due to the special character of these degrees, no pertinent information can be given to a prospective student without entering with him/her into a more direct and to-the-point discussion. CMA staff will pass on all prospective students to the Research Officer, but beforehand they must make sure that the prospective student has been duly informed and that he fully understood all the main points listed above, as evidenced by a completed application form.

#### 3.2 Developing applications

Once a serious candidate has been passed on by the CMA staff to the Research Officer, s/he will evaluate the information available on the prospective student's background and on the intended research. He will do so by reviewing the file transmitted by the CMA and by conducting an interview preferably through Skype or phone.

The purpose of the interview is to verify that

- the prospective student has indeed understood the principles of this particular type of degree;
- the prospective student is ready to take on the tasks assigned;
- the prospective student has a clear intended research topic;

- the prospective student seems capable of conducting the intended research.

Based on the evidence collected, the Research Officer either refuses the candidate and gives the file back to the CMA or reports back to the Programme Council that the candidate merits serious consideration. The Council designates a supervisor to initiate talks with the prospective student. It should be made clear to the applicant that at this stage s/he is not accepted yet, but that his/her proposal is being discussed more in depth to be able to make a final decision on his application.

The designated supervisor shall conduct a longer interview with the applicant in order to clarify

- the prospective student's existing skills and knowledge in the given area;
- the proposed research topic;
- the research methods, the ethical considerations, the possible problematic issues that the proposed research could create;
- the fit between her or his own research interests and the area of the proposed research.

The interviews for MSc/MA students can be conducted either personally, through Skype or other VoIP services, or exceptionally through phone. Interviews for PhD candidates, however, should be conducted personally, with the designated supervisor either conducting the interview in Budapest or in a location abroad which may be more easily accessible for the prospective student.

The supervisor may request, if he or she deems it appropriate, a further written clarification from the prospective student following their interview.

### 3.3 Decision on application

Based on the elements gained in the discussion, the supervisor shall make a short written report to the Programme Council, giving a specific answer to the following questions:

- Is the proposed topic an acceptable topic for the given degree? Is the research feasible given the timeframe and the resources available?
- Is this specific candidate capable of conducting the proposed research? Does the candidate need special trainings in Research Methodology and/or Academic Writing?
- Is the designated supervisor capable (based on his skills/knowledge and available time/energy) and willing (based on his personal drive, interest and connection with the prospective student) to act as a supervisor for this research?

The Research Officer shall collate the different information on the prospective student, making further contact and discussion with CMA staff, other supervisors and members of the Programme Council, as he sees it appropriate. Based on these information, the Programme Council evaluates the candidate and takes the decision on her or his admission. If an applicant is rejected, the CMA shall be informed accordingly, giving the exact reasons for the refusal. If the applicant is admitted, the Council shall at the same time confirm the appointment of a First Supervisor.

As soon as the Programme Council reached a decision on the acceptance of a student, the Research Officer shall immediately notify the relevant Research Link Tutor. The admission becomes final once the Link Tutor is satisfied that all admission criteria are fulfilled.

### 3.4 Administrative Matters

Once the student's approval is confirmed, the Research Officer informs the CMA that the student has been accepted. The CMA then officially notifies the student on his preliminary acceptance and deals with all subsequent administrative matters (visa, payment of fees, etc) and transmits the complete file back to the Research Officer once that all legal conditions have been fulfilled. The Research Officer will then contact the student for registration.

### 3.5 Admission Conditions

Applicants are normally expected to have a first or second class, upper division degree or significant experience.

The language proficiency should be in the range of IELTS 6.0-6.5 or SETI equivalent.

Students wishing to apply for a PhD shall normally be first registered with probationary PhD status and will only be allowed to upgrade to full PhD status following the successful first Annual Review of their progress.

## 4. The Research Process

The following chapter details the way the research process should be conducted for all research-based degrees at IBS. The special rules governing the format and content of the thesis are outlined in the next chapter.

### 4.1 The Supervision

The supervisor(s)-student relationship lies at the heart of successful research practice, the one leading the other in what is essentially an apprenticeship in research/scholarship. The following regulations are to help ensure the integrity and quality of that relationship.

A supervisor is appointed to their role by the Programme Council. A supervisor should normally fulfil the following criteria in order to be eligible:

- have a doctoral degree (exceptionally Second Supervisors for MA/MSc by research can be experienced faculty members who do not yet possess a PhD);
- be research-active and publishing in one or more specialist fields;
- not carry an undergraduate teaching-load or administrative-load that is incompatible with having appropriate time for supervision.

Before a student is registered on a programme of study it is crucial to ensure that there is an appropriate match between the potential student's research interests or agenda and those of a supervisor, depending on the supervisor's experience and range of interests.

Where it is possible, students will have joint supervision, i.e., two named and equally-acting supervisors. Normally one of the Supervisors should be an employee of IBS. Where that is not possible, a second named supervisor who takes a subsidiary role should be designated. The first supervisor must be identified prior to entry and named at entry; the second (joint) or (subsidiary) supervisor may be appropriately appointed later, but within the first year, as the precise direction of the research becomes clear. The first supervisor shall normally have had successful experience of supervising to the level of the degree proposed, either solely or as co-supervisor. Where a proposed supervisor is wholly new to the role, they will usually be appointed to act in the first instance as second supervisor with an experienced supervisor who, in the initial stages, is first supervisor. All supervisor nominations are to be confirmed by the Programme Council.

Students are required to maintain personal contact with their supervisors as the latter specify.

The Supervisors are jointly responsible for guiding the student to the completion of their thesis. There might be a wide array of arrangements possible regarding the exact split of responsibilities between the two supervisors, depending on the specifics of each situation (areas of expertise, extent of supervisory experience, student's ability to relate and communicate with one or both supervisors, etc.). Nevertheless, it is the First Supervisor who carries the main responsibility for:

- ensuring that the thesis meets the level of the desired degree;
- enforcing that the thesis meets both the format and content-related expectations;
- navigating the research process in order to be able to deliver a thesis on time;
- guiding the development of the research plan and checking the progress;

The Second Supervisor is often someone who has less experience in supervision but is quite knowledgeable of the field where the thesis is written. Consequently, his or her role will more focus on the following:

- providing guidance on the research topic, research methods, etc.;

- helping in identifying possible sources;
- providing specific methodological support, should the First Supervisor request it.

Once again it must be reinforced that both Supervisors are equally responsible for the success of the student and should both participate in the meetings and give inputs as they feel appropriate at all times.

#### 4.2 The Research Plan

At the commencement of studies for all higher degrees by research the student and supervisor(s) must work together to develop or refine the research proposal/plan. The research proposal should specify

- the field of study;
- the working title;
- an outline of the proposed plan of work;
- the facilities available for the investigation (an outline bibliography, for example), and, where appropriate, the resources identified elsewhere;
- any additional support, including supporting studies, that the student will require.

For a PhD student, the research proposal must be available at the first Annual Review and will form an important part of the discussion at the Review. For Masters level students by research (MA, MSc), the research proposal should normally be fully evolved and a work-in-progress by the end of the first semester of study (second semester for part-time students).

If the research proposal for PhD is not considered satisfactory at the first Annual Review, the Programme Council may grant an extension of time to achieve a satisfactory proposal or may terminate the student's studies. If the research proposal at Masters level is not considered satisfactory after one semester by the supervisor(s) and the Research Officer (after two semesters for part-time students), they may grant an extension of time to achieve a satisfactory proposal or may terminate the student's studies. In both instances the student will be informed by the Research Officer by letter, which will indicate the student's right to appeal. A student who withdraws or whose studies are terminated within the first six months from registration will not count for the purposes of completion statistics.

#### 4.3. Regular meetings

Candidates may be registered on a full-time or part-time basis. The Programme Council, based on the recommendation of the First Supervisor during the admission process, will require the student to spend a stipulated minimum number of days at IBS each year to help ensure the progress of their research, and this minimum number of days must be adhered to. The supervisor and student should maintain such appropriate regular serious intellectual contact as will further the student's project in a timely way. Compliance by both the supervisor and the student is ensured in the following three ways:

- Formal supervisor-led meetings with students should be held a minimum of 12 times per year.
- Both supervisors should maintain a logbook of contact, signed jointly with the student, of formal meetings, and of video conference/telephone/e-mail discussions, so that it is possible to review the contact. Supervisors are encouraged to use the communication through the Moodle platform that has an automated log and archive functionality.

- iii. At the Annual Review the pattern of contact and its effectiveness should be considered, and a formal note made of the plan for meetings and consultations in the next period of study.

In the event that certain candidates, for reasons approved by the Research Officer, are engaged in their research at a distance from IBS, then, where appropriate, alternative supplementary supervisory arrangements may be initiated by the student; however, these must be approved by the Research Officer.

For the meeting with the student, either one or both of the Supervisors can be present. The pattern of discussions should be discussed by the supervisors between themselves before meeting the student, so that the time spent with the student can be used the most efficiently possible.

The meetings form the basis of the guidance received for the thesis and should therefore always go in-depth and be as informative as possible, lasting at least an hour in general.

Students are required to come prepared to the meetings and to submit at least one week before the meeting is scheduled any new chapters or part of chapters, research plan or research plan fragments so that the Supervisors have enough time to read it and comment on it.

#### 4.4 Workshops

Although there is in general no formal teaching involved in these Research degrees, the Programme Council evaluates each candidate's strengths and weaknesses, based on their previous studies, exposure to research processes, proven writing and numerical skills, etc. Based upon this review, the Council may decide that a given student must attend one or several special workshops, normally at the beginning of their studies (first year for a PhD, first semester for a Masters student).

Attendance at these workshops is compulsory, if so decided by the Programmes Council, and students not showing up or not demonstrating a serious effort enough will not be allowed to proceed further with their submissions.

#### 4.5 Annual Review – PhD

Student progress is routinely monitored by the supervisor throughout the degree programme. The main progress review for each PhD research student is called the Annual Review. For full-time students the review will be conducted at the end of the first year of study, and then in each subsequent year of study. For part-time students the first three reviews follow this same pattern (i.e., yearly), but after the third-year review, assuming progress is good, the review may take place every 18 months. The Research Officer is responsible for convening and chairing the review (unless they are the supervisor, when another designated colleague will take this role). The annual review may take place at any time within the calendar year as appropriate to the student's needs and development. Its purpose is:

- to make a considered review of the progress of the research project in both intellectual and practical terms;
- to ensure arrangements for supervision are satisfactory;
- to receive feedback from the student via the completion of the 'Research Postgraduate Feedback Questionnaire', and, where appropriate, to take action in relation to that feedback;
- to act, at the appropriate time, as the formal stage-review for transfer from temporary PhD status to full PhD status;
- to discuss and grant an extension of time of up to a year if this is required.

The review will comprise a summary of progress by the student in the prescribed form; a written report on progress by the student's supervisor(s); and a viva voce examination.

The Academic Conduct Officer will check that the summary of progress does not contain plagiarized material and inform the First Supervisor about their findings. In case of plagiarism, adequate sanctions will be levied, according to the IBS Academic Misconduct rules published on the IBS Intranet.

The Research Officer will be responsible for, or will oversee, the resulting formal report on the review, a copy of which must be given to the student, and another copy kept by the Research Officer for inclusion in the student's central file.

The panel for the review will normally comprise the Research Officer (or a designated colleague) as chair, the supervisor(s), and at least one other member of the academic staff. The relevant Research Link Tutor from the University of Buckingham is an *ex officio* member of the panel. The discussion with the student should be a substantial one. At some point in the review the supervisor(s) should leave the room to allow the student the opportunity to discuss progress independently with the other panel members. Following the review the Research Officer may approve the continuation of the student's studies; impose conditions on the continuation of study; or terminate the student's studies. The supervisor shall prepare a full report of the viva voce examination for the Research Officer. The Research Officer shall prepare a brief report which shall be forwarded to the Programme Council.

#### 4.6 Semester Report – MA and MSc

Every Masters students' progression shall be closely monitored by his / her supervisors. At the end of each academic semester (in December and in May) the supervisors prepare a short report for the Programme Council on their student's achievements, focussing especially on the following points:

- the number and length of contacts between the student and his supervisors;
- the advancement of the research progress (has a suitable research topic been found, have the research methods been discussed and agreed upon, have there been any new chapters written, etc)
- are there material issues that might prevent the student to complete his or her dissertation by the original deadline?

The Programme Council shall review and discuss all such reports and recommend appropriate action if necessary.

#### 4.7 Deadlines and length of studies

##### Regular length of study

The prescribed periods of study shall be:

Full-time (part-time)

MA and MSc - one academic year (two years)

PhD - three academic years (six years)

These periods may be reduced in specific cases with the approval of the Programme Council, which may permit submission to be made no earlier than after the lapse of two-thirds of the prescribed period of study.

These periods may also be increased by up to one year for full-time study and two years for part-time study in specific cases, with the approval of the Programme Council. The Research Officer will provide the Council with its justification for longer periods.

#### Extension of time and Suspension of Studies

Students, both full-time and part-time, should submit the thesis within the prescribed periods of study or apply for an extension of time. For all students a first extension of time of up to a year may be granted with the agreement of the supervisor(s) and the Research Officer. This is called a Supervisor Extension. In the case of PhD, the extension request should be discussed at the Annual Review, in the second or third year of study respectively, and the reasons for it noted in the Annual Review report form.

If at the end of this first extension of time the thesis is not ready for submission; or if the first extension request is for longer than one year, an application for a Programme Council Extension must be made.

The Research Officer will not normally grant a suspension of studies. Periods of suspension cannot be counted towards the prescribed period of study for the degree.

Research students who have reached the end of the prescribed period of study for their programme and have been granted an extension to their studies in order to satisfactorily complete their degree are required to pay a supervision fee of up to 500 euros per semester.

A student who is in arrears of fees of one semester will automatically have his or her studies terminated and will need the formal approval of the Research Officer to resume studies.

## 4.8 Examination

### Selection of Examiners

The thesis may be submitted once the First Supervisor gives its approval to do so, upon reading the Final Draft of the Thesis (at least one month of reading time should be allocated by the student in order to allow the Supervisors to read and form a grounded opinion on their work). Once the thesis is submitted, the Research Officer informs the Collaborations Department at the University of Buckingham, which nominates an External Examiner, who is a recognised expert in the field. The Research Officer then nominates an Internal Examiner, who did not act in a supervisory quality for this thesis. The nominations are approved by the Programme Council.

Alternatively, and exceptionally, there shall be two External Examiners. Both these Examiners shall be approved by the procedures above. This situation will occur in the following circumstances:

a) Where, aside from the supervisor, there is no appropriate member of the academic staff to act as Internal Examiner. (The supervisor cannot act as an Internal Examiner.) In these circumstances, two external examiners may be appointed, and a senior member of IBS will also attend the oral examination in a non-participatory role. This member of staff will normally be the Research Officer.

b) A less experienced External Examiner is approved (e.g. when they are subject specialists with a good publication record). In this case, two external examiners should be appointed and the internal examiner must be experienced in the assessment process.

c) Two external examiners must be appointed in those cases where the candidate is a current or former member of staff of IBS.

### Examination

Both Examiners are to read the submitted thesis independently. If they are “New Examiners” nominated after the previous two Examiners couldn’t agree on a decision, they should not be given the reports, notes and written opinions of the previous Examiners.

After reading the thesis, the Examiners agree on a date for an oral examination of the student (“viva voce”). The oral examination is compulsory for all masters by research and doctoral degree theses.

The supervisor is required to be available in the Department/School to provide any information requested by the examiners, and may, if s/he wishes, volunteer information in advance of the oral examination. The supervisor will not normally be present at the oral examination. At the discretion of the Examiners and the candidate jointly, however, the supervisor may be present at the oral examination but only in a non-participatory role.

### Conduct of the Viva Voce examination

Internal and external examiners should meet before the viva to determine between themselves how the viva should be conducted. Examiners have the full confidence of the University and are given a substantial degree of discretion as to how the viva should be conducted. They are asked, however, to observe the following guidelines:

- Candidates are liable to be nervous and examiners should do everything that is possible to put candidates at their ease to give them the best chance of performing well;
- Examiners should not, however, give any indication of their likely recommendations at the beginning of the viva. They may take the opportunity to explain that the viva itself is part of the examination process and hence no final recommendation can be determined until after it has been completed;
- At the conclusion of the viva, the examiners may:
  - a. Inform the candidate of their recommendation (provided that this recommendation is for a pass, revision, or referral) Note: Examiners should not give any indication of their recommendation if this is likely to be a fail.
  - b. Inform the candidate that further discussion is needed before any recommendation can be made.

### Decisions by the Examiners

There are five ‘final recommendations’ open to the examiners, which may be summarized as follows:

- 1) approval for the degree;
- 2) approval for the degree subject to minor modifications to the thesis;
- 3) approval for the degree subject to major modifications to the thesis;
- 4) leave to revise the thesis more broadly, and subsequently to resubmit it for the degree;

- 5) Or:
- a. the award of an appropriate lower degree;
  - b. the award of an appropriate lower degree after emendation;
  - c. complete resubmission of the thesis for an appropriate lower degree.

The revision required in 4 is more substantial than the 'major modifications' required in 3. In the case of 4 it is usual for the thesis to be re-examined by a new oral examination. Recommendations 5 a, b, and c are subject to the candidate's acceptance.

Minor modifications are of two types:

- i. simple corrections (typographical errors, references, etc.), and
- ii. changes of statement or arrangement that do not alter or affect the conclusions of the thesis in any significant manner.

If the examiners require such amendments, they will make the candidate aware of them directly on the occasion of the oral examination, usually by handing him/her a list of corrections or indicative corrections, and/or by, in the report, indicating the nature and extent of the corrections, and/or in a statement they should prepare for the candidate's guidance. Minor modifications should normally be made within three months. The Internal Examiner should indicate to the Research Officer when they have been satisfactorily completed by checking the edited thesis and signing the emendations' form. This process ensures that the copy of the thesis deposited in the library is professionally presented for the benefit of future researchers who may wish to consult it.

Where major modifications are required under (3) and (4), the Examiners are required to provide clear and detailed feedback to the candidate, via their report and any additional material that seems advisable, so that the nature of the re-workings required to bring the thesis up to the standard of the degree are clear both to the candidate and to the candidate's supervisor(s). Hence a recommendation under 3 and 4 will permit the candidate a longer time lapse before in accordance with 3 (major modifications) and under 4 major modifications and resubmission. The examiners may choose to specify a minimum period before resubmission is allowed.

A PhD candidate whose thesis is not acceptable to the Examiners may, at the discretion of the Examiners, present him/herself for re-examination (resubmission) on one subsequent occasion within two years of the original decision being made known. Students on the other programmes may present themselves for re-examination (resubmission) on one subsequent occasion within one year of the original decision being made known. Candidates approved for the award of the degree under condition (3) above (where major modifications are required, but not so onerous as to require a resubmission) must complete these modifications within one year for all programmes.

Such period as is recommended by the Examiners in accordance with the above must elapse before re-examination, except where a candidate is asked to make what are deemed by the Examiners to be minor changes.

If a thesis submitted for the degree of PhD is not deemed to be of an adequate standard then the Examiners may recommend that the degree of MPhil, MA or MSc (as appropriate) be awarded.

#### After the Examination

Examiners' recommendation shall be communicated to the Research Officer, and thereafter shall be reported to Programme Council. The following internal process will apply:

- i. When the Examiners' Report recommends the award of the degree without conditions, the Research Officer is to send the Examiners' Report for checking and signing off to the Chairman of the Programme Council, and then to liaising Research Officer at the University of Buckingham, for Chairman's action to be reported to Senate (Examination Senate).
- ii. When the Examiners' Report recommends the award of the degree subject to minor modifications to the thesis, then the Internal Examiner will certify once the amended thesis has been submitted to the Research Officer that the required changes have been made. From there on the process is identical to the one described above
- iii. When the Examiners' Report recommends a resubmission, the Research Officer is to inform the Chairman of the Programme Council. A new round of examination is then required.
- iv. When the Examiners' Report recommends rejection or the award of a lower degree, the Research Officer is to inform the Chairman of the Programme Council. Thereafter, if the candidate accepts the lower degree, the Research Officer is to send the Examiners' report for checking and signing off to the Chairman of the Programme Council.

After due internal process, and as soon as possible thereafter, IBS will inform the candidate of the final result.

## 5. The Thesis

### 5.1 General Rules

All thesis must be written in English, unless prior permission is obtained. The submission of the thesis to the Research Officer should be accompanied by a 'Notice of Intention to Submit a Thesis for a Higher Degree', filled in by the student, the supervisor, and the Research Officer.

The length of a MA/MSc thesis should be a maximum of 40,000 words, while a PhD thesis should be a maximum of 100,000 words. These word limits exclude appendices, footnotes, tables, and the list of references.

A candidate is required to submit the thesis in a condition which is suitable for preservation in the IBS Library and for clear photographic reproduction.

The texts of theses must be printed with a left-hand margin of 40mm on good quality international A4 (297mm x 210mm) paper and paginated.

One copy of an abstract of the thesis, not exceeding 1000 words, should be placed at the front of each copy of the thesis submitted and bound with the text. This abstract shall be clearly typed or printed and shall be headed by the word 'Abstract', the candidate's name, and thesis title.

The title page should bear the full title and sub-title; (exceptionally) the total number of volumes, if more than one, and the number of the particular volume; the full name of the author, including forenames; the qualification for which the thesis is submitted, in the form 'Thesis submitted for the degree of . . . to the School of . . . in the University of Buckingham'; and the month and year of submission.

All works consulted should be listed in a bibliography at the end of the text; and may also appear as footnotes on the relevant page. The form of these references should conform to the stylistic conventions in the referencing system used (see later).

A candidate must submit to the Research Officer:

- Three copies of the thesis in the required form, including the title page and abstract. One copy should be soft-bound (e.g. wire/comb bound), one copy should be hard-bound and the third should be unbound.
- Three separate copies of the abstract of the thesis. If the candidate is awarded the degree, the University of Buckingham may publish the abstract in any manner approved by the Senate.
- A statement showing what part, if any, of the material offered has previously been submitted by the candidate for the degree in this or any other university, and if joint work is submitted, what part of it is the candidate's independent contribution. The usual form of this declaration of originality will be: "I hereby declare that my thesis/dissertation entitled . . . is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text, and is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Buckingham or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or is concurrently submitted for any such degree,

diploma, or other qualification at the University of Buckingham or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. Signature: Date:"

Diagrams, maps, or similar documents may be submitted in a portfolio of any size and must bear equally the particulars mentioned above.

If a candidate is successful, the unbound copy of the thesis will be bound in boards with a blue cloth back and bear the name of the candidate, the style of the degree, and the year of submission upon successful examination and will be deposited in the University Library. Of the two soft-bound copies, one will be retained by the candidate's supervisor, while the hard-bound copy will be retained by the IBS Library.

## 5.2 Guidelines on the production of a thesis

These guidelines are intended to provide practical advice to the production of the thesis. They should be read in conjunction with the rules as given above.

### Use of style systems

The thesis should be presented as professionally as possible, conforming to the conventions used in high-level scholarship or research in the particular field. It should be correctly presented, in conformity with one of the standard scholarly style manuals. The supervisor will advise on the most appropriate styling/referencing system to use. In most cases, a thesis submitted at IBS must follow the Harvard-style referencing. However other styles can also be used, upon prior discussion with the supervisor, like the New Hart's Rules, ed. R. M. Ritter (Oxford, 2005), and the MHRA Style Guide, 2nd edition (Modern Humanities Research Association, 2008) (available on the web).

In all subject-fields it is consistency and accuracy that are crucial. Apart from the fact that it is double spaced, the thesis should as far as possible conform to the appearance of a good scholarly book or series of journal articles in the chosen field. It is important that it be correctly styled in all respects, with regard to everything from simple matters of punctuation and paragraphing, to correct use of notes and internal references, through to consistency in punctuation and indenting, use of abbreviations, quality of diagrams, and so forth.

### Format

Paper size and font size:

The thesis should be printed in A4 format. The paper should be of good quality and not be transparent. One-sided printing is usual, but two-sided printing is acceptable provided the paper is of sufficient thickness. The minimum font size for text is 11pt (12pt is preferred) and 10pt for footnotes. Easily readable fonts are preferred (e.g. Times New Roman, Garamond, Ariel, Georgia, etc.).

Margins:

At least 20mm should be left all round, and a left-hand margin of 40mm to allow for binding. Larger margins, however, at the top and bottom sometimes make for a clearer appearance.

Spacing:

One-and-a-half or double spacing should be used throughout, except for indented quotations or footnotes, where single spacing is adequate, if this is preferred.

Pagination:

Pages should be numbered consecutively throughout the thesis, including preliminaries and appendices. The preliminary sections should be in lower case roman, and the text of the thesis itself in Arabic numerals. If there is more than one volume, each volume should be separately paginated and have its own title page. The majority of theses will be one volume, given the word limits. Please remember these: for the MA by research, MSc by research: 40,000 words; for the MPhil: 80,000 words; for the PhD: 100,000 words. These word limits include appendices but exclude footnotes, tables, references, and bibliography/works cited.

PDF:

The thesis should be available as a PDF, so that, where appropriate, it can be held on the Library's digital archival repository. The hard copies should be printed on a high-quality paper on a good quality printer.

Binding:

The thesis should be firmly bound, all pages being permanently secured, in blue cloth back. The spine should bear the candidate's name, the degree, and year of submission. The front cover should bear the thesis title. If, unusually, the work extends to more than one volume, the spine and front cover should also carry the volume number.

Accompanying or Illustrative Material:

Wherever possible diagrams, figures, illustrations, photographic prints, and computer tables should be scanned or printed into the text near the text to which they refer. Material which cannot be bound in the text such as maps, slides, film, computer programmes, or CD-Rom may be held in a pocket bound into the back of the thesis. If the amount of such material is substantial or awkward, it should be gathered into a supplementary volume and packaged in a rigid container similar in format to the bound thesis and similarly labelled and titled. Large, unfoldable pieces such as maps should be submitted in a similarly labelled portfolio.

### Order of Contents

(a) Title Page:

The title page should state:

- i. the full title and sub-title;
- ii. the total number of volumes, if more than one, and the number of the particular volume;
- iii. the full name of the author including forenames;
- iv. the qualification for which the thesis is submitted: (Thesis submitted for the degree of ... to the School of ... in the University of Buckingham);
- v. the month and year of submission.

The title should describe the subject-matter accurately and comprehensively, as it will subsequently appear in electronic archives and bibliographies, which will be consulted by other research workers.

(b) Abstract: A concise abstract of the thesis, not exceeding 1000 words in length, should be bound in the thesis immediately after the title page. Two additional copies of the abstract should be submitted. The abstract should be clearly typed or printed, and headed with the author and title of the thesis. One copy will eventually be submitted for inclusion in the Index to theses accepted for higher degrees in the Universities of Great Britain and Ireland, published by Aslib, and a second copy may be submitted to an abstracting journal in the appropriate subject.

(c) Acknowledgements: Optional.

(d) Abbreviations: A list of all abbreviations used in the text should be provided. A glossary of terms may be recommended by the Supervisor.

(e) Table of Contents: The table of contents should list, with page numbers, all the sub-divisions of the thesis. For theses comprising more than one volume, the contents of the whole thesis should be shown in the first volume and the contents of subsequent volumes in a separate contents list in the appropriate volume.

(f) List of Figures: This may also include lists of photographic plates or other illustrations, giving their page numbers.

(g) List of Tables: Giving page numbers.

(h) Declaration of Originality: See Rules for the Submission of Theses above.

(i) Main Text of Thesis: The main text of the thesis should be divided into chapters, each with a clear title.

(j) Appendices: Appendices, if any, each with a descriptive title.

(k) Bibliography: List of sources consulted. See notes below.

(l) Prior Publication: If any of the work embodied in the thesis has been, or is expected to be, published in a book or journal, copies of such publications or manuscripts should be bound at the end of the thesis. It should be noted that whilst such prior publication is positively encouraged for Science theses it is not normally permissible in Law and Humanities theses.

### Footnotes and endnotes

Notes may appear as either footnotes or, where the usual style for a discipline is to use endnotes and this has been approved by the supervisor, as notes at the end of each chapter. Given how easy it now is to set up footnotes in Word, and how convenient they are for the reader, footnotes may now often be preferred. It is not permitted to use both footnotes and endnotes.

Footnotes or endnotes may be used for any of the following reasons:

- to amplify a point which is not central to the main argument of the text, introducing parenthetical discussion which is not long enough to form an appendix;
- to provide a cross reference to other parts of the thesis;
- to acknowledge direct quotations or sources of information;

- to cite the authority for statements in the text, allowing the reader to check the evidence on which the argument is based.

In all cases, notes are an interruption to the reader and should be kept down to what is strictly necessary.

### Layout

Notes are identified in the text by numbers, typed as superscripts, or, if on the line, enclosed in round brackets. For the placing of such numbers, see New Hart's Rules, or other style systems. Footnotes should appear at the foot of the same page, separated from the text by a ruled line. Endnotes should appear at the end of each chapter, each set of endnotes beginning on a new page. In both cases the note number should be typed on the line, followed by the note itself. Notes may be typed single spaced, but should be separated from each other by a double space.

### Citations in theses

In IBS, all references should consist of a bracketed insertion in the text of the author's name and year of publication, e.g. (Turabian, 2010). The reference is then given in full in the alphabetically arranged bibliography at the end of the thesis. Where two author papers are cited, both names should be listed e.g. (Turabian and Evans, 2010); references with three or more authors should be cited using the first author followed by "et al." e.g. (Turabian et al., 1976). If more than one references of any of these types in a given year are cited then lower case letters should be used to distinguish the publications, e.g. (Turabian, 1976a; Turabian and Evans, 1976b; Turabian et al., 2010c ). This name-and-year system of citation is sometimes called the Harvard system.

### References

All articles cited in the text of the thesis (and none which are not cited) should be listed in full in alphabetical order (and in date order where more than one publication by an author(s) has been cited). Specific page numbers should be given in the text, where these are especially relevant.

Where there are more than six authors, the author list may be truncated at six authors and completed as *et al.*

## 6. Appeals and Complaints

IBS and The University of Buckingham seek to ensure that candidates for higher degrees are treated fairly at all times: this is particularly so with regard to the annual review, the progression viva, and with regard to the examination process, i.e. submission and examination of the final thesis and the oral examination. The Appeals procedure is set out below. IBS and its officers should do everything they can to ensure that, at all times, the candidate is treated with consideration and sensitivity. The candidate can withdraw from the Appeals procedure at any stage.

### Informing on right to appeal

When a candidate has failed, or in the case of a PhD or MPhil student been awarded a degree lower than that for which they applied, or in the case of the annual review or progression viva been refused progression (PhD), the official letter informing them of the result will also inform them of the right of appeal, and of their right to request to see the reports/full Examiners' report. The candidate can request to see reports without it being part of an 'intention to appeal'.

### How and when to appeal

If, after due consideration, the candidate decides to appeal, then the candidate will inform the Research Officer in writing of his/her intention. This letter, informing of the intention to appeal, should be sent to the Research Officer within two months of the receipt of the original letter.

The candidate should consult, in as much detail as possible, with his/her supervisor(s). The supervisor should go carefully through the terms of the examiners' report with the candidate or, in the case of the progression viva, the report on the viva.

The candidate shall state the exact grounds of the appeal in writing. The candidate should be as specific as possible about the matters relating to which remedy is sought. The most obvious grounds for appeal are:

- procedural irregularities in the examination / viva
- circumstances affecting the student's performance of which the examiners were not aware when their decision was taken
- evidence of prejudice or of bias or of inadequate assessment

### Treatment of appeals

The candidate's letter of appeal and the examiners' report/viva report are passed through to the Chairman of the Programme Council, who will act to follow through the subsequent investigation. (If there is a conflict of interest, the Chairman will require Research Officer to nominate another senior academic, not connected to the case, to follow through the investigation.)

In investigating the case, the Chairman of the Programme Council should consult the supervisor(s), the internal and external examiners, and any other outside authorities whose views are considered relevant. The Chairman will invite the candidate to explain his or her case in person. This panel meeting will usually consist of the Chairman, another senior academic, the candidate, and a friend or advisor of the candidate's choice. All parties will have the right to speak at the panel meeting.

The outcome of the Chairman's investigation, and any subsequent recommendation, will be communicated to the candidate. A reasoned statement of his/her decision will accompany this. The supervisor, and in some circumstances, the examiners will also be informed.

If satisfied that the grounds of the appeal are just, the Chairman will recommend an appropriate course of action to Programme Council.

A report of the outcome of the investigation will be given to the Programme Council at its next meeting.

In case of decisions on disciplinary matters, the procedures set out for disciplinary action will apply (available on the IBS Intranet).

### Complaints procedure

#### Distinction between appeals and complaints

Students on a Research-based Programme who wish to complain formally about matters not concerning examination performance or discipline should follow the procedure set out below. This procedure relates to matters not concerned with progression, examination performance, or disciplinary matters. As set out above, an appeal is a request to review, revise, or overturn an academic judgement resulting from formal assessment or examination: in the case of postgraduate research students, usually the decision of an annual review, progression viva, or the final examination and viva of the thesis. A complaint covers other matters of dissatisfaction, worry, or agreement, for example: not having free access to software; incompatible software database problems; slow response to requests for ethical clearance; lack of or inappropriate feedback from the supervisor(s); insufficient supervisory time; problems in the relationship between student and supervisor(s).

Every situation can never be adequately captured in a code, since situations and events are unforeseeably various, so the following steps should be applied intelligently.

- In contentious and contested situations, courtesy and reasoned argument should prevail at all times
- most complaints should if possible be resolved informally, as near as possible to the point of origin, and (in matters significantly contested, but then agreed upon) the parties should leave bad feelings behind as soon as possible;
- both complainant and persons complained against, should be supported by others during the process;
- with complaints not quickly resolved, because concerned with problematic matters, a range of people should be involved in the resolution of the complaints.

### Research Officer adjudication

In the first instance research students should take their complaint to their primary supervisor. If unresolved, it should pass to the second supervisor, and then to the Research Officer. The Research Officer should review the complaint and respond to the complainant within a two week time-frame. Where one of the supervisors is also the Research Officer, then the complaint should be dealt with by a member of staff identified by the Chairman of the Programme Council.

### Further adjudication

If the complaint is still unresolved, because involving conflicting judgements or being a matter not easily submitted to compromise, it should go forward to the Pro-Rector responsible for Teaching and Learning in cases involving MA / MSc by Research students and to the Chair of the Programme Council in cases involving PhD students. The complainant should put the complaint in writing to the Pro-Rector, who should arrange an appointment to talk through the matter with the complainant. The complainant should bring with them to the meeting with the Pro-Rector either the postgraduate representative or a trusted friend, as witness and second voice. The Pro-Rector will consult with all other parties—in conjunction with the Programme Council if deemed appropriate—and either adjudge the matter or (if possible) arrange a mediation meeting between the parties to the complaint. In the meeting, the complainant and the person who is the object of the complaint or who is primarily dealing with it, should both be supported by others. Subsequently, and normally no less than three weeks after receiving the formal complaint letter, the Pro-Rector must respond in writing to the complainant, giving her/his decision and an account of the reasoning behind it, and copying to the other parties. (Where, because of legitimate factors, there is a delay in adjudicating the complaint, the Dean should inform the complainant about this so that he/she may be assured due process is being taken forward.) Actions deemed necessary to mend the situation must be taken as soon as possible thereafter, usually within eight weeks.

## References

- Bohrer, J. (2010). Quality assurance at doctoral level: the case of England, UK. In: Costes, N. and Stalter, M. (eds.) *Workshop on quality assurance in postgraduate education*. Brasov: ENQA, pp. 21-26. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.engq.eu/indirme/papers-and-reports/workshop-and-seminar/ENQA%20workshop%20report%2012.pdf> (Accessed: 30 November 2016)
- University of Buckingham (2018). *Research Degrees Handbook*. 14th ed. Buckingham: University of Buckingham. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/handbooks/research-degrees-handbook/>
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2010). *The Bologna Process in higher education*. Gloucester: QAA. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Bologna-Process-in-HE.pdf> (Accessed: 1 September 2016)
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2011). *Doctoral degree characteristics*. Gloucester: QAA. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Doctoral\\_Characteristics.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Doctoral_Characteristics.pdf) (Accessed: 1 September 2016)
- University of Oxford (n.d.). *What is a DPhil?* Available at: [https://uni-of-oxford.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/185/~/\\_what-is-a-dphil%3F](https://uni-of-oxford.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/185/~/_what-is-a-dphil%3F) (Accessed: 15 November 2016)