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**INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS SCHOOL**

IBS Research Degrees Guide

Rules, Regulations, Processes and Information

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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 master's and doctoral 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 at the end of the first year and consequently assesses if progress with the research is adequate

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 the 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 Collaborations
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 2022, the following topics / areas are offered:

- MSc in International Development Economics by Research
- MA in International Relations and Diplomacy by Research
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Business and Management¹
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in International Affairs

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 in an intellectual challenge, which, although well supported by their IBS supervisors, will often seem a lonely and extremely difficult endeavour.

An MSc by Research is identical in many aspects to any master's 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 must contain a thorough literature review, well-established

¹ 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.

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 master's degree project) suggests, this dissertation must be of high quality, satisfying the most stringent 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 (PhD) is the UK 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 Officer

The central person for all research degree activities at IBS is the Research Officer. Their 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 and the Centre for Student Services;
- conducting interviews with applicants with a view to assessing their readiness to pursue a degree by research;
- organising and attending
 - o an induction session for research students, including to the IBS Library;
 - o research workshops for all registered research students;
 - o Annual Reviews, in collaboration with The University of Buckingham, and preparing a brief report on these;
 - o viva examinations, in collaboration with The University of Buckingham, and facilitating the related administrative processes;
- appointing an appropriate Personal Tutor to all new students;
- inducting new supervisors;
- collating the various student progress reports, and Semester Reports for master's by research students, and presenting them to the University of Buckingham;
- liaising with the designated professional staff and Research Officers ("Link Research Tutors") at the University of Buckingham, esp. regarding reviews and viva examinations;
- 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*;
- making sure that all information is made constantly available to all stakeholders, supervisors, students, prospective students, partners, etc.
- solving any unexpected issues pertaining to the delivery of the programme (change of supervisors, student complaints, etc.).

2.2 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 the initial 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 timeframe specified;
- Providing the student with guidance on the following:
 - 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.
- 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' Academic Conduct Policy, 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, within reasonable limits, 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 the generally expected;
- Providing a brief progress report twice a year for the deadline set out by the Research Officer and in the prescribed format on their research student(s) to the Research Officer, for consideration by The University of Buckingham.
- 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' form.

2.3 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 to 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;
- notify the Research Officer of any issues that may adversely affect student performance so that corrective action may be taken.

2.4 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 submissions do not contain material, copied from external sources;
- check the work submitted for the annual review and the final thesis for evidence of plagiarism using Turnitin and inform the Research Officer about the outcome;
- make a recommendation for any action to the Research Officer.

2.5 Research Link Tutors

The University of Buckingham nominates special tutors whose role is to liaise with the IBS Research Officer, 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 the IBS Research Officer;
- the confirmation on behalf of The University of Buckingham of each PhD applicant's admission;
- the approval of Supervisors designated by IBS;
- participation in the Annual Review Panel.

2.6 Students

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

The responsibilities of the student shall include the following:

- Preparing a fully-fledged research proposal, with the support and guidance of the supervisors, the research workshop tutors and the Research Officer.
- Engaging in independent work to be informed of the relevant academic knowledge and literature, develop and conduct their research, analyse their findings, draw insightful conclusions that contribute to the existing body of knowledge, and writing up their work to the highest academic standards.
- Discussing with the supervisor the type of guidance and feedback they find most helpful and agreeing on a schedule of meetings.
- Taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties at meetings, however insignificant or unsurmountable they may seem.
- Maintaining progress with the work in accordance with the schedule agreed with the supervisor, including the submission and presentation of written material as required.
- Participating in research workshops after submitting the relevant assignments on Moodle and taking into consideration the feedback received in those.
- Carefully considering the importance of avoiding academic misconduct, taking heed of the IBS Academic Conduct Policy, including the seriousness of plagiarism as viewed by the wider academic and professional community.
- Checking the work submitted for all workshop and annual review assignments and the thesis for evidence of plagiarism by using Turnitin. Checking copyright issues and the need to obtain permission from third parties.

- Carefully considering the importance of ethical questions in research, obtaining ethical clearance for their research proposal, and observing explicit and implicit academic and professional guidelines on conducting their research ethically.
- Providing a brief monthly report on the progress of their research to the Research Officer and their supervisors using the appropriate facility on the PhD Moodle-page.
- Keeping track of when they have to submit their thesis, consulting with their supervisors on whether the work is ready for submission.
- Contacting their Personal Tutor for pastoral support when concerns or problems arise.

3. Admissions

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

3.1 Initial Contact

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 effort typically required;
- 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 their interest in one of the Research Degrees offered, the CMA will verify their 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 the Single English Test at IBS (SETI).

As part of their application, students submit the document “Application for Admission as a Postgraduate Student” and attach references from two academic referees. (The online application form is available at: <http://www.ibs-b.hu/programmes/doctorate-programmes.>) Furthermore, students must submit a draft proposal, no longer than 1,500 words. The purpose of the draft proposal is to evaluate if the applicant’s research idea is feasible and worth doing from an academic perspective and help identify the member of faculty to involve therein.

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 they fully understood all the main points listed above, as evidenced by a completed application form. The proposal at this stage must contain a clear enough understanding of the topic, the methodology and demonstrate familiarity with the relevant bodies of literature.

3.2 Developing Applications

Once a serious candidate has been passed on by the CMA staff to the Research Officer, they will evaluate the information available on the prospective student’s background and on the intended research. They will do so by reviewing the file sent over by the CMA and, if the research idea outlined in the proposal is deemed worthy, a prospective supervisor’s opinion on the proposal will be sought. If the draft proposal fails to convince the Research Officer and/or the prospective supervisor in the worth of the research idea or the applicant’s capacity to execute it to completion, the Research Officer will reject the application right away and inform the CMA about the decision. In case of a positive evaluation, the Research Officer invites the applicant for an interview preferably through Skype, Teams, phone or, if possible, face to face.

The purpose of the interview is to verify:

- that the prospective student understands the principles of this particular type of degree;
- that the prospective student is ready to take on the tasks and responsibilities required for postgraduate work;
- that the prospective student has a clear enough research topic;
- that the prospective student seems capable of conducting the intended research.
- that the research methods, ethical considerations, and problem areas raised by the proposed research;
- the fit between the applicant's own research interests and research interests of IBS faculty.

Additionally, if deemed appropriate, the Research Officer may give feedback to the applicant on the proposal and advise them to resubmit a new version within the timeframe of the current or the next application process. Upon the applicant's resubmission of the research proposal, the Research Officer may deem it necessary to invite the applicant for a second interview, where the prospective supervisor may be invited too.

Based on the evidence collected, the Research Officer either rejects the candidate and informs the CMA about the decision or informs the candidate that their final proposal will be discussed more in depth to make a final decision on the application. The Research Officer may ask the candidate to re-write the proposal taking their feedback into consideration.

3.3 Decision on Application

Based on the elements gained in the discussion, the Research Officer evaluates the candidate and, after seeking guidance from the Rector, decides on their admission, depending on the following:

- 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 their skills and knowledge as well as available time and energy) and willing (based on their personal drive, interest and connection with the prospective student) to act as a supervisor for this research?

If an applicant is rejected, the CMA shall be informed accordingly, giving the exact reasons for the rejection. If the applicant is admitted, the Research Officer notifies the relevant Link Administrator at The University of Buckingham. The admission and the appointment of the first supervisor become final once the relevant Research Link Tutor at The University of Buckingham 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 applicant has been accepted. The CMA then officially notifies the applicant on their preliminary acceptance and deals with all subsequent administrative matters (visa, payment of fees, etc). Once all legal conditions have been fulfilled, the CMA contacts the student for enrolment.

3.5 Admission Conditions

Applicants are normally expected to have a first or second class, upper division master's degree.

The language proficiency should be in the range of IELTS 6.5 (or SETI equivalent).

Students wishing to apply for a PhD shall 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. 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 Supervision

The student-supervisor relationship lies at the heart of a successful research practice. The following regulations are to help ensure the integrity and quality of that relationship.

A supervisor is appointed to their role by the Research Officer. 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 publish 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 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 equal supervisors. Normally, one of the Supervisors should be an IBS faculty member. 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 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 University of Buckingham.

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

The Supervisors are jointly responsible for guiding the student to completion of their thesis. There might be a wide array of arrangements possible regarding the exact distribution 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 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 student's 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, their role will focus more 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 provide input as they feel appropriate.

4.2 Research Proposal

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. The research proposal should include

- the working title;
- the exact topic of the research;
- a critical evaluation of the academic literature in the relevant field(s), identifying the need for the proposed research;
- a proposed methodology, justifying the chosen research approach;

All research proposals must be accompanied by a review of the ethical issues raised by the proposed research design and an informed discussion of how these will be accounted for and, if applicable, mitigated by the research student. Ethical clearance for the proposed research must normally be sought before the commencement of the research as set out in [Section 5](#). Research students who agree with their supervisors to undertake preliminary research or who must seize a narrow time-sensitive window of opportunity to undertake (part of) their research before having an accepted final research proposal and/or receiving ethical clearance, should discuss this with the Research Officer in advance.

For a PhD student, the research proposal must be submitted for the first Annual Review and it will form an important part of the discussion at the Review. For master's level students by research, the research proposal should normally be fully evolved 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 Annual Review panel may grant an extension to achieve a satisfactory proposal or may terminate the student's studies. If the research proposal at master's level is not considered satisfactory after one semester by the supervisor(s) (after two semesters for part-time students), they may grant an extension 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 Research Officer, 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:

- i. Formal supervisor-led meetings with students should be held minimum once a month (except holiday periods).
- ii. Students must maintain a logbook of formal meetings, whether in person or by video conference/telephone/email discussions, using the appropriate facility on the PhD-page on

Moodle. Both supervisors are encouraged to keep their own notes and memos of these formal supervisory meetings.

- 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.

If 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 in advance.

For the supervision meetings, either one or both 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 most efficiently.

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

Students are required to come prepared to their supervision meetings and submit at least one week in advance any new chapters or parts of chapters, research plans or research plan fragments, so that the Supervisors have sufficient time to read and comment on it.

4.4 Workshops

Although there is no formal teaching on these research degree programmes, IBS organises regular workshops to help prepare students for the various stages of research work. Research workshops in the first year focus on guiding students through to writing their research proposal for the end of the first semester at master's level and the first annual review at PhD level. Advice is given on students' individual work focusing on using and critically engaging with academic sources to write a literature review; planning and justifying the research methodology; avoiding academic misconduct; and so on. During the second year, workshops focus on supporting students through piloting their research instruments, doing the fieldwork, and analysing the data collected. In the third year, there are workshops on data analysis and preparing for the *viva voce*.

Active participation at the workshops and the timely submission of assignments prescribed are compulsory. The Annual Review Panel will consider both attendance and the quality of the assignments submitted when evaluating the student's progress over the course of the academic year (see the next section).

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 satisfactory, the review may take place every 18 months. The IBS Research Officer and the Link Administrator at The University of Buckingham are responsible for convening the review. The annual review may take place at any time within the calendar year as appropriate to the student's needs and development; however, reviews are generally held in November and March. The purpose of the review is:

- to consider 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 on the programme;

- to allow a formal decision to be made, at the end of the first year, about the student's transfer from probationary to full PhD status;
- to discuss and grant an extension of up to a year, should this be 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); a review of assignments submitted for the workshops; and a viva voce examination.

The Research Officer and/or the Academic Conduct Officer will check that the summary of progress does not contain plagiarised material and inform the First Supervisor about their findings. In case of plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct, penalties will be levied by the Research Officer, based on the recommendations of the Academic Conduct Officer, in line with the spirit of the Academic Conduct Policy published on Moodle.

The Research Officer is responsible for, or oversees, the resulting formal report on the review, a copy of which must be sent to the student and another kept on file by the Research Officer.

The panel for the review will normally comprise the relevant Research Link Tutor from The University of Buckingham as chair, the Research Officer, the supervisor(s) as observers, and at least one other member of faculty. 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 and after a thorough discussion with the panel, the annual review panel may approve the continuation of the student's studies (and their upgrade to full PhD status when appropriate); impose conditions on the continuation of study; or terminate the student's studies. The Research Officer shall prepare a report of the viva voce examination which shall also be forwarded to the University of Buckingham. Any appeals against the decision of the panel should be made following the guidelines set down in [Section 7](#).

4.6 Semester Report – MA and MSc by Research

Every master's students' progression shall be closely monitored by their supervisors. At the end of each academic semester (in December and in May), the supervisors have to prepare a short report for the Research Officer on their student's achievements, focusing especially on the following points:

- the number and length of contacts between the student and the supervisor(s);
- 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.);
- any material issues that might prevent the student from completing the thesis by the original deadline.

4.7 Deadlines and length of studies

4.7.1 Regular length of study

The prescribed periods of study shall be:

	<i>Full-time</i>	<i>Part-time</i>
MA and MSc by research	one academic year	two academic years
PhD	three academic years	six academic years

These periods may be reduced in specific cases with the approval of The University of Buckingham, 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 Research Officer. For longer extensions, the approval of The University of Buckingham must be sought.

4.7.2 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 on the Annual Review report form.

If at the end of this first extension 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 at The University of Buckingham must be made.

The Research Officer will not normally grant a suspension of studies (passive semester). 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 tuition fee until they submit their thesis according to the Rector's Decree regulating tuition fees for doctoral programmes, available on the IBS Regulations page.

A student who is in arrears of fees of one semester and who has not applied for a suspension of studies with the Research Officer before the final deadline the payment needs to be made, will automatically have their studies terminated.

4.8 Examination and Viva Voce

4.8.1 Selection of Examiners

The thesis may be submitted once the First Supervisor gives their 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). The 'Notice of Intention to Submit a Thesis for a Higher Degree' form (see on Moodle) must be submitted by the student and their supervisor to the Research Officer no later than one month prior to the thesis submission. The form contains the supervisor's suggestion for an external examiner, who must be 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. Once the notice is submitted, the Research Officer informs the Collaborations Department at The University of Buckingham, which formally approves the nominations.

Alternatively, and exceptionally, there shall be two External Examiners. Both these Examiners shall be approved using 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 cases, two

external examiners should be appointed and a senior IBS member, normally be the Research Officer, also attend the viva in a non-participatory role.

- 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 IBS faculty or staff member.

4.8.2 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, together with the Research Officer and the Link Administrator, the Examiners agree on a date for an oral examination of the student (“viva voce”). The viva is compulsory for all master’s by research and PhD theses.

The supervisor is required to provide any information requested by the examiners, and may, if s/he wishes, volunteer information in advance of the viva. The supervisor will normally be present at the viva as an observer.

4.8.3 Conduct of the Viva Voce Examination

Internal and external examiners should meet before the viva to determine between themselves how it 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, normally 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) NB. 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.

4.8.4 Decisions by the Examiners

There are five ‘final recommendations’ open to the examiners, which may be summarised 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 at a new viva. Recommendations (5) a, b, and c are subject to the candidate's acceptance.

Minor modifications are of two types:

1. simple corrections (typographical errors, references, etc.), and
2. changes of certain claims, paragraphs, and/or structure 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 at the viva, usually by handing them a list of corrections or indicative corrections, and/or in the report, by 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 3 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 or resubmission** are required under (3) and (4), the Examiners are required to provide clear and detailed feedback to the candidate, in their report and any additional material that seems advisable, so that the nature of the amendments 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 period to amend their thesis.

Candidates on all programmes 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 12 months. The Examiners may choose to specify a minimum time period, normally of 6 months, before the amended thesis is allowed to be submitted. Candidates whose thesis is not acceptable to the Examiners and are thus required to revise and resubmit their thesis under condition (4), may present themselves for re-examination (resubmission) on one subsequent occasion, at the discretion of the Examiners. The resubmission must take place within 24 months at the PhD level and within 12 months at the master's level of the original decision being made known. The Examiners may choose to specify a minimum period before resubmission is allowed.

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.

4.8.5 After the Examination

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

- i. When the Examiners' Report recommends the award of the degree without amendments, the Research Officer is to send the Examiners' Report for checking and signing off to the liaising Research Officer at the University of Buckingham, for the 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 in (i).

- iii. When the Examiners' Report recommends the award of the degree subject to major modifications to the thesis, then the Internal and External Examiners will together 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 in (i).
- iv. When the Examiners' Report recommends a resubmission, a new round of examination (including a viva) is then required.
- v. When the Examiners' Report recommends rejection or the award of a lower degree, and if the candidate accepts the lower degree, the Research Officer is to send the Examiners' Report for checking and signing off to The University of Buckingham.

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

5. Research Ethics

Research as a social practice requires broad public trust and cooperation. Most people are very willing to be involved in research for a variety of motives. One of the most common is an altruistic belief that research is important – people will often agree to be involved even if there is no obvious direct benefit for them. Many people are predisposed to be particularly helpful and generous with their time with students, as they are supportive of educational endeavour. The institutional position of doing research based at IBS and The University of Buckingham also carries a substantial amount of weight.

This goodwill towards research and research students in general – and the University/School in particular – depend upon high levels of trust in the integrity and competence of researchers and the institutional processes supporting these traits. Negative experiences with researchers, misunderstandings, or malpractice will damage this underlying goodwill on which researchers depend for access.

The approach to research ethics undertaken here does not assume that all researchers are malicious or lack integrity; it rather acknowledges that it is easy to overlook aspects of ethical issues in conducting research. The process of ethical review and approval is therefore an important part of safeguarding participants and researchers. Beyond the formal review process students must complete, the fundamental aim is to raise awareness of ethical considerations.

5.1 Ethics Review Process

If the research involves human subjects and/or their data, the student must obtain research ethics approval before the research starts. Research involving interviewing, online or offline surveys, focus groups, experimental games, ethnographies etc., all require ethical review.

The process of research ethics review at IBS is not onerous and reflects the fact that the majority of the research undertaken in the School is not exceedingly problematic in ethical terms. However, even with uncontroversial research it is still important that research participants are able to give informed consent to participate and have all of the information required about what will be required of them and what will be done with the information they provide.

Students are required to complete an ethics approval application form (to be found on Moodle) and, if applicable, a research participant information sheet and a consent form (templates can be found on Moodle). Students should seek advice from their supervisor and participate at the relevant research workshop before completing the form. For any further questions, they can turn to the IBS Research Officer. The completed forms will normally be reviewed by the IBS Ethics and Equal Opportunities Committee. Reviews normally take two weeks, but this will vary according to the availability of reviewers and the complexity of the student's application.

Students should apply for research ethics approval well in advance of starting any research, and normally are expected to obtain ethical clearance before their first semester report at master's level or first annual review at PhD level. At the same time, there is little value in applying too early before research plans are finalised.

5.2 General Guidance

Students and Supervisors can find up to date research ethics guidance and materials on the PhD Moodle-page. The following six key principles of ethical research are adapted from the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Framework for Research Ethics:

1. Research should aim to maximise benefit for individuals and society, and minimise, preferably completely avoid, risk and harm, especially to research participants.
2. The rights and dignity of individuals and groups, which extends to the confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents, should be respected.
3. Wherever possible, participation should be voluntary (i.e. consent must be sought and the possibility of withdrawal ensured) and appropriately informed about the purpose, methods, and uses of the research, the nature of involvement and any potential risks to participants.
4. Research should be designed to ensure and conducted with integrity and transparency.
5. Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined.
6. Independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided, they should be made explicit.

Points to consider when planning research:

- Have you considered risks to:
 - the research team?
 - the participants? (harm, deception, impact of outcomes)
 - the data collected? (storage, considerations of privacy, quality)
 - the School/University?
 - anyone else, often inadvertently, beyond the above?
 - What might these risks be?
- Details and recruitment of participants:
 - What types of people will be recruited?
 - How will the competence of participants to give informed consent be determined?
 - How, where, and by whom will participants be identified, approached, and recruited?
 - Will any unequal relationships exist between anyone involved in the recruitment and the potential participants?
 - Are there any benefits to participants?
 - Is there a need for participants to be debriefed? By whom?
- What information will participants be given about the research?
 - Does your information sheet (or equivalent) contain all the information participants need?
 - Does your information sheet allow participants to give their informed consent?
 - Who will benefit from this research?
 - Are there any conflicts of interest in undertaking this research?
- Have you considered consent?
 - Have participants been given the opportunity to ask questions before consenting?
 - Have you considered anonymity and confidentiality?
 - What will the data be used for? What kinds of research outputs are expected?
 - How will you store your collected data?
 - Until what point can participants withdraw their data?
 - How will data be disposed of and after how long?
 - If your research changes, how will consent be renegotiated?

- Where are you conducting your research?
 - Are there any additional issues that need to be considered as a result? (e.g. local customs, local 'gatekeepers', political sensitivities)
 - How will the ethical aspects of the project be monitored at these locations? (e.g. if the participants do not speak English)
 - How will unforeseen or adverse events in the course of research be managed?

5.3 Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

A participant information sheet is usually used to give research participants, who have already provisionally agreed to participate, full details of the research project, its goals, the research team, the research funder, and what they will be asked to do as part of the research. Participants should normally be allowed to ask for clarification and further details before consenting to participating.

The participant information sheet should:

- include details about why the study is being undertaken;
- include details about what taking part would involve for the participant (time commitment, etc.);
- include details about what will happen to the participants' data;
- be written in lay language;
- use a font size that will assist with the readability;
- be appropriate for the participant groups recruited, i.e. you may need different information sheets:
 - if you are recruiting different age groups (e.g. children of various ages and potentially their parents),
 - for different participant groups (e.g. staff and students; nurses and service users),
 - if there are more than one aspect to the study (e.g. an online survey and a focus group);
- be written on headed paper or have a digital logo, and clearly identify IBS as the responsible institution;
- clearly identify if you are collaborating with or the study is being sponsored by another institution or organisation.

A written participant information sheet is not always the most appropriate way of providing potential participants with information about a study. For instance, the use of videos (animated or otherwise) to explain to potential participants what taking part in the study would involve would be one alternative. This can be particularly appropriate when recruiting children or individuals with reading difficulties. However, note you may still need to provide information, such as contact details, by other means (e.g. downloadable) to ensure easy access for participants.

Once participants have familiarised themselves with the details of the research, they should be asked to sign a consent form where they indicate what they do and do not agree to with regard to the research. A consent form should:

- be a short document (normally one page but may need to be longer depending on the complexity of the study);
- contain explicit statements of what taking part in the research project involves; and
- contain explicit statements of what will happen to the data collected.

Participants to online surveys and questionnaires should be given information about the study at the start of the survey to ensure they can make an informed decision as to whether or not they wish to take part, after which they should be asked to agree to take part in the study. It is particularly important to include information about withdrawing data (e.g. if the participant doesn't complete the survey but closes the browser, will the data be up to that point be used in the study etc.) and to note where anonymity is not guaranteed (e.g. if IP addresses are being stored).

6. Thesis

6.1 General Rules

All theses must be written in English. The submission of the thesis to the Research Officer via Moodle should be accompanied by a 'Notice of Intention to Submit a Thesis for a Higher Degree' (submitted at least a month prior to the thesis submission), filled in by the student, the supervisor, and the Research Officer.

The length of a MA/MSc by Research 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.

6.2 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.

6.2.1 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. A thesis submitted at IBS must follow the Harvard-style referencing.

In all subject-fields consistency and accuracy are crucial. The thesis should be double spaced, correctly styled in all respects, 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 on.

6.2.2 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, Arial, 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/MSc by research max. 40,000 words; for the MPhil max. 80,000 words; for the PhD max. 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.

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.

6.2.3 Order of Contents

(a) Title Page:

The title page should state:

- i. the full title and subtitle;
- 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 International Business School and 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 500 words in length, should be included in the thesis immediately after the title page. This abstract shall be clearly typed or printed and shall be headed by the word 'Abstract', the candidate's name, and the thesis title.
- (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: A statement showing what part, if any, of the material offered has previously been submitted by the candidate for a degree in this or any other university, should preface the dissertation. 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:”

- (i) Main Text of Thesis: The main text of the thesis should be divided into chapters, each with a clear title and starting on a new page. The use of headings and subheadings for sections within chapters is strongly encouraged.
- (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.

6.2.4 Footnotes and Endnotes

Given how convenient footnotes are for the reader, notes usually appear as footnotes. Exceptionally, 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. 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 certain types of 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.

Notes are identified in the text by numbers, typed as superscripts. 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.

6.2.5 Citations in Theses

In IBS, the Harvard referencing style is used. You can find the IBS referencing guide on Moodle, on the AllSchool page under the IBS Basics tab.

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 list of references 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.' (the abbreviation of the Latin *et alia*, meaning 'and others'), 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, 1976b; Turabian et al., 1976). Specific page numbers should be given for direct quotations and, in rare cases, where they are especially relevant.

6.2.6 References

All sources 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 the same author(s) has been cited).

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

7. 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 and the examination process, i.e. submission and examination of the final thesis and the oral examination (viva). 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.

7.1 Informing on Right to Appeal

When a candidate has failed, or in the case of a PhD student being awarded a degree lower than that for which they applied, or in the case of the PhD student being refused progression at the annual review, the official letter informing them of the result will also inform them of their right to 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'.

7.2 How and When to Appeal

If, after due consideration, the candidate decides to appeal, then the candidate shall inform the Research Officer of their intention in writing. The actual appeal letter should be sent to the Research Officer by email within two months of the receipt of the original decision letter.

The candidate should consult, in as much detail as possible, with their supervisor(s) about their intention to appeal. The supervisor should go carefully through the terms of the Examiners' report with the candidate or, in the case of the annual review where progression is refused, the report on the review.

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 made aware when their decision was taken;
- evidence of prejudice or of bias in the assessment.

7.3 Treatment of Appeals

The candidate's letter of appeal and the examiners' report/annual review report are passed through to the Rector, who will act to follow through the subsequent investigation. (If there is a conflict of interest, or, if deemed appropriate, the Rector will nominate another senior academic, not connected to the case, to follow through the investigation.)

In investigating the case, the Rector or nominee shall consult the supervisor(s), the internal and external examiners, the IBS Research Officer, and any other outside authorities whose views are considered relevant. The candidate will be invited to explain their case in person to an independent panel. This panel will usually consist of the Rector or nominee, another senior academic unrelated to the case, the candidate, and, if they wish to invite one, 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 investigation, and any subsequent recommendation, will be communicated to the candidate. A reasoned statement of the Rector's 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 Rector will recommend an appropriate course of action to the Research Officer.

In case of decisions on disciplinary matters, the procedures set out for disciplinary action will apply (available at <https://www.ibs-b.hu/en/about-ibs/regulations/>).

7.4 Complaints Procedure

7.4.1 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 or the final examination and viva of the thesis. A *complaint* covers other matters of dissatisfaction, worry, or disagreement, for example: 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 tendentious 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.

7.4.2 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 timeframe. Where one of the supervisors or the object of the complaint is also the Research Officer, then the complaint should immediately follow the procedure set out for further adjudication below.

7.4.3 Further Adjudication

If the complaint is still unresolved, because involving conflicting judgements or being a matter not easily submitted to compromise, or because the Research Officer is also a supervisor of the complainant, the complaint should go forward to the Pro-Rector (Academic) in cases involving MA /

MSc by Research students and to the Rector 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 and either adjudge the matter or (if possible) arrange a mediation meeting between the parties to the complaint. Subsequently, and normally no less than three weeks after receiving the formal complaint letter, the (Pro-)Rector must respond to the complainant in writing, 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 (Pro-)Rector should inform the complainant about this so that they may be assured that 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.

8. Bibliography

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