

**Research Degrees**

**Reasonable Adjustment Regulations Registration**

**How this policy applies to you**

The regulations outlined below have been identified by Research Degrees Committee as those for which a waiver can be made where a case for a reasonable adjustment has been put forward by a student who has registered a disability with the University or is a registered carer.

**Research degree qualification regulations specifically for Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy**

**Registration and Re-registration**

**RD 7.4** The minimum and maximum periods of registration shall be as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Minimum** | **Maximum** |
| **MPhil** |  |  |
| Full-time | 15 months | 48 months |
| Part-time | 30 months | 72 months |
| **PhD** |  |  |
| Full-time | 24 months | 48 months |
| Part-time | 36 months | 96 months |

**Attendance Requirements**

**RD 8.1** Directly registered students must be resident in the UK for the duration of their studies. Students registered through an Affiliated Research Centre must be resident in the same country as the Affiliated Research Centre through which they are registered. Exceptions supported by a recommendation from the Faculty, or the Affiliated Research Centre, will be considered by Progress Board for those students whose topic of study necessitates residence overseas.

**RD 8.2** Full-time students are expected to be available to undertake their research, attend related training, re-registration or other relevant events and meet supervisors and other members of their academic unit on a regular basis. Consequently, they are expected to live within easy commutable distance of the campus or Affiliated Research Centre (approximately 40 miles). In exceptional cases the Faculty/Affiliated Research Centre may apply to the Progress Board on behalf of the student for a residency waiver. Although part-time students are not expected to live within a commutable distance of the campus/Affiliated Research Centre they are expected to engage fully with the University and its research community.

**RD 8.4** Full-time students are required to spend a minimum of 37 hours a week on their studies throughout their registration period. Part-time students are required to spend a minimum of 18.5 hours per week on their studies throughout their registration period.

**Study Breaks**

**RD 9.4** Full-time students may request a study break, for a maximum of 12 months in total on the following grounds:

* 1. Certified serious ill health of the student or a family member or dependent for whom the student is acting as a carer.
  2. Internship or placement.
  3. Accrued study breaks can be used as a reasonable adjustment where the student has a registered disability or long-term health condition with the University. Such requests should be submitted upon accrual of one month of disrupted time. The on- month time frame applies to both full-time and part-time students.

**RD 9.5** A part-time student may request a study break, for a maximum of 24 months in total on the following grounds:

* 1. Certified serious ill health of the student or a family member or dependent for whom the student is acting as a carer.
  2. Work related difficulties.
  3. Domestic commitments.
  4. Internship or placement.

**RD 9.6** Following submission of the thesis, students, regardless of mode of study, may only request a study break on the grounds of exceptional circumstances[[1]](#footnote-1). Requests will to be considered by the Progress Board.

**Extensions**

**RD 10.1** Students approaching their maximum registration may in only truly exceptional circumstances[[2]](#footnote-2) apply to the Progress Board for an extension to their registration of up to a maximum of 12 months in total. Requests must be submitted no later than one month prior to the maximum registration date and should be accompanied by supporting evidence and an agreed plan of work for completion. Requests submitted after the maximum registration date will not be considered as the student will have been deemed to have withdrawn from the research degree programme (RD 7.5).

**RD 10.2** Students seeking an extension to their registration must commit to meeting the minimum number of study hours per week (see RD 8.4).

**RD 10.3** Extensions to registration are not permitted post thesis submission.

**Upgrade**

**RD 15.2** For those students whose aim is to obtain an MPhil, confirmation of continued registration must be completed, including any revisions, within the following time frames:

* 1. 7 months for a full-time student
  2. 14 months for a part-time student

and will follow the upgrade process for students intending to obtain a PhD.

Extensions to these deadlines are only permissible in truly exceptional circumstances[[3]](#footnote-3), where recommended by the Faculty or Affiliated Research Centre and with the prior approval of the Progress Board. It is expected that students who are unable to study will apply for a study break (RD 9.1 to 9.5).

**RD 15.3** The upgrade assessment is in four stages:

c) An oral presentation, by the student, of their research in a public forum to the satisfaction of their Associate Dean Research.

**RD 15.5** Students whose aim is to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy must complete, including any revisions, the upgrade assessment within the following time frames:

* 1. 12 months for a full-time student;
  2. 24 months for a part-time student.

Extensions to these deadlines are only permissible in truly exceptional circumstances[[4]](#footnote-4), where recommended by the Faculty or Affiliated Research Centre and with the prior approval of the Progress Board. It is expected that students who are unable to study will apply to suspend their registration (RD 9.1 to RD 9.5).

**RD 15.6** The upgrade assessment is in four stages:

* 1. An oral presentation by the student of their research in a public forum to the satisfaction of their Associate Dean Research or Affiliated Research Centre Research Degrees Coordinator.

**Research degree qualification regulations specifically for Professional Doctorates**

**Registration and Re-registration**

**PD 6.4** The minimum period of study before submission of the thesis is four years. The maximum period of registration is eight years.

**Attendance Requirements**

**PD 7.2** Students are required to spend a minimum of 18.5 hours per week on their studies throughout their registration period.

**Study Breaks**

**PD 8.4** A student may request a study break, for a maximum of 24 months in total, on the following grounds:

* 1. Certified serious ill health of the student or a family member or dependent for whom the student is acting as a carer
  2. Work related difficulties
  3. Domestic commitments
  4. Internship or placement.
  5. Disruption to study due to pandemic. Where this is the case, disruption should be recorded by the student and supervisors. A study break should be requested upon the accrual of 1 month of disrupted time.
  6. Accrued study breaks can be used as a reasonable adjustment where the student has registered a disability or long-term health condition with the University. Such requests should be submitted upon accrual of one month of disrupted time

**PD 8.5** Following submission of the thesis, students may only request a study break on the grounds of exceptional circumstances[[5]](#footnote-5). Requests will to be considered by the Progress Board.

**Extensions**

**PD 9.1** Students approaching their maximum registration may in only truly exceptional circumstances[[6]](#footnote-6) apply to the Progress Board for an extension to their registration of up to a maximum of 12 months in total. Requests must be submitted no later than one month prior to the maximum registration date and should be accompanied by supporting evidence and an agreed plan of work for completion. Requests submitted after the maximum registration date will not be considered as the student will have been deemed to have withdrawn from the research degree programme (PD 6.5).

**PD 9.2** Students seeking an extension to their registration must commit to meeting the minimum number of study hours per week (see PD 7.2).

**PD 9.3** Extensions to registration are not permitted post- thesis submission.

**Upgrade**

**PD 13.1** For those students whose aim is to obtain a Professional Doctorate upgrade must be completed within 24 months, including any revisions.

Extensions to this deadline are only permissible in exceptional circumstances[[7]](#footnote-7), where recommended by the Faculty or Affiliated Research Centre and with the prior approval of the Progress Board. It is expected that students who are unable to study will apply for a study break (PD 8.1).

## Research degree qualification regulations specifically for Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Published Work

**Registration**

**PW 5.3** The maximum period of registration is 12 months. There is no minimum registration period.

**Study Breaks**

**PW 6.4** Students may request a study break, for a maximum of 12 months in total on the grounds of certified serious ill health of the student or a family member or dependent for whom the student is acting as a carer. Where disruption to study occurs due to pandemic, this should be recorded by the student and supervisors. A study break should be requested upon the accrual of 1 month of disrupted time.

**PW 6.5** Following submission of the thesis, students may only request a study break on the grounds of exceptional circumstances[[8]](#footnote-8). Requests will to be considered by the Progress Board.

**Extensions**

**PW 7.1** Students approaching their maximum registration may in exceptional circumstances[[9]](#footnote-9) apply to the Progress Board for an extension to their registration of up to a maximum of 12 months in total. Requests must be submitted no later than one month prior to the maximum registration date and should be accompanied by supporting evidence and an agreed plan of work for completion. Requests submitted after the maximum registration date will not be considered as the student will have been deemed to have withdrawn from the research degree programme (PW 5.4).

**PW 7.2** Extensions to registration are not permitted post submission of the portfolio of work.

## Regulations specifically for Higher Doctorate awards

**Requirements for application and registration**

**HD 2.6** Following registration a candidate must submit their portfolio of work for examination within 12 months. There is no minimum registration period.

**Study Breaks**

**HD 4.4** Candidates may request a study break for a maximum of 12 months in total on the grounds of certified serious ill health of the candidate or a family member or dependent for whom the candidate is acting as a carer. Where disruption to study occurs due to pandemic, this should be recorded by the student and supervisors. A study break should be requested upon the accrual of 1 month of disrupted time.

**HD 4.5** Following submission of the thesis, students may only request a study break on the grounds of exceptional circumstances[[10]](#footnote-10). Requests will to be considered by the Progress Board.

**Extensions**

**HD 5.1** Candidates approaching their maximum registration may, in exceptional circumstances[[11]](#footnote-11), apply to the Progress Board for an extension to their registration of up to a maximum of 12 months in total. Requests must be submitted no later than one month prior to the maximum registration date and should be accompanied by supporting evidence and an agreed plan of work for completion. Requests submitted after the maximum registration date will not be considered as the student will have been deemed to have withdrawn from the research degree programme (HD 2.8).

**HD 5.2** Extensions to registration are not permitted post submission of the portfolio of work.

## Regulations specifically for MPhil/PhD by distance learning

**RDD 6.4** The minimum and maximum periods of registration shall be as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Minimum** | **Maximum** |
| **MPhil** |  |  |
| Full-time | 15 months | 48 months |
| Part-time | 30 months | 72 months |
| **PhD** |  |  |
| Full-time | 24 months | 48 months |
| Part-time | 36 months | 96 months |

**Attendance Requirements**

**RDD 7.1** Registered students may reside anywhere in the world. Students must be available to attend any required courses in the UK and must attend The Open University campus to undertake registration and induction. Where a student’s health or other exceptional circumstances[[12]](#footnote-12) prevents attendance Progress Board may, having received prior notice, waive this requirement. Where a student is unable to attend a required course, alternative methods of provision must be established.

**RDD 7.2** Full-time students are expected to be available to undertake their research, attend related training or other relevant events and meet supervisors and other members of their academic unit on a regular basis.

**RDD 7.4** Full-time students are required to spend a minimum of 37 hours a week on their studies throughout their registration period. Part-time students are required to spend a minimum of 18.5 hours per week on their studies throughout their registration period.

**Study Breaks**

**RDD 8.4** Full-time students may request a study break, for a maximum of 12 months in total on the following grounds:

* 1. Certified serious ill health of the student or a family member or dependent for whom the student is acting as a carer.
  2. Internship or placement.
  3. Accrued study breaks can be used as a reasonable adjustment where the student has a registered disability or long-term health condition with the University. Such requests should be submitted upon accrual of one month of disrupted time.

**RDD 8.5** A part-time student may request a study break, for a maximum of 24 months in total on the following grounds:

* 1. Certified serious ill health of the student or a family member or dependent for whom the student is acting as a carer.
  2. Work related difficulties.
  3. Domestic commitments.
  4. Internship or placement.

**RDD 8.6** Following submission of the thesis, students, regardless of mode of study, may only request a study break on the grounds of exceptional circumstances[[13]](#footnote-13). Requests will to be considered by the Progress Board.

**Extensions**

**RDD 9.1** Students approaching their maximum registration may in only truly exceptional circumstances[[14]](#footnote-14) apply to the Progress Board for an extension to their registration of up to a maximum of 12 months in total. Requests must be submitted no later than one month prior to the maximum registration date and should be accompanied by supporting evidence and an agreed plan of work for completion. Requests submitted after the maximum registration date will not be considered as the student will have been deemed to have withdrawn from the research degree programme (RDD 6.5).

**RDD 9.2** Students seeking an extension to their registration must commit to meeting the minimum number of study hours per week (see RDD 7.4).

**RDD 9.3** Extensions to registration are not permitted post thesis submission.

**Upgrade**

**RDD 14.2** For those students whose aim is to obtain an MPhil, confirmation of continued registration must be completed, including any revisions, within the following time frames:

* 1. 7 months for a full-time student
  2. 14 months for a part-time student

and will follow the upgrade process for students intending to obtain a PhD.

Extensions to these deadlines are only permissible in truly exceptional circumstances[[15]](#footnote-15), where recommended by the Faculty and with the prior approval of the Progress Board. It is expected that students who are unable to study will apply for a study break (RDD 8.1 to 8.5).

**RDD 14.3** The upgrade assessment is in four stages:

c) An oral presentation, by the student, of their research in a public forum to the satisfaction of their Associate Dean Research.

**RDD 14.5** Students whose aim is to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy must complete, including any revisions, the upgrade assessment within the following time frames:

* 1. 12 months for a full-time student;
  2. 24 months for a part-time student.

Extensions to these deadlines are only permissible in truly exceptional circumstances[[16]](#footnote-16), where recommended by the Faculty and with the prior approval of the Progress Board. It is expected that students who are unable to study will apply to suspend their registration (RDD 8.1 to RDD 8.5).

**RDD 14.6** The upgrade assessment is in four stages:

* 1. An oral presentation by the student of their research in a public forum to the satisfaction of their Associate Dean Research

1. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree by Distance Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree by Distance Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 of the Research Degree by Distance Regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. For a definition of exceptional circumstances please see Appendix 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)