

Definitions

- 5.1 *Candidate*: means an individual seeking enrolment for an award or under consideration for achievement of an award.
- 5.2 *Programme specification*: means definitive published programme document.
- 5.3 *Postgraduate research degree*: a postgraduate programme comprising a research component (including a requirement to produce original work) which is larger in terms of student effort than any accompanying taught component.

General

- 5.4 The research degrees awarded by the University are set out in the [General Regulations for Awards](#).
- 5.5 Research degrees conform to requirements set out in the [Credit Framework for York St John University Awards](#) as approved by Academic Board. Additional requirements or variations will be set out in a relevant [programme specification](#).
- 5.6 Other than where specified within these regulations, research degrees will be subject to the application of the [General Regulations for Awards](#).
- 5.7 Programmes of study leading to research degrees may be offered on a full-time or part-time basis within the periods of enrolment specified in these regulations (see [Periods of Study](#) below).
- 5.8 Detailed information on research degree awards is set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#), [Research Degrees Handbook](#) and other supporting documentation.

Admission

- 5.9 Entry requirements for research degrees are set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#).
- 5.10 Entrants to a programme of study leading to a research award of York St John University may be eligible for consideration for the accreditation of prior learning under procedures set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#) in respect of taught components only. Accreditation of prior learning is not permitted in any circumstances against the research thesis or thesis preparation components.
- 5.11 Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to demonstrate sufficient competence in English as specified by the University. Current English language requirements for research degrees are set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#).
- 5.12 Recommendations for admission where *candidates* meet minimum entry requirements will involve at least two academic staff members. Decisions regarding admission will be made by the Research Degrees Committee.
- 5.13 All formal offers of admission to the University will be made by the University's Admissions teams. Offers of admission will set out any conditions to be met. No other communication is regarded as a formal offer of admission.
- 5.14 Permission to register for the PhD (by Published Work) will not be granted to applicants who are in a position to submit a PhD thesis for examination or who already possess a doctoral degree. Applicants must be active postgraduate researchers in their field of expertise, and they must not submit material published more than ten years prior to the date of registration.

- 5.15 Where a student has a debt to the University, re-admission will not normally be permitted. This is also the case where a student's debt has previously been written off by the University on compassionate or similar grounds but where there is no evidence of ability to pay the necessary fees for a new enrolment.

Periods of study

- 5.16 The standard, minimum and maximum periods of study shall normally be as follows:

Award	Mode of study	Minimum period of enrolment	Standard period of study	Normal maximum period of enrolment to submission
Doctor of Philosophy	Full-time	2 calendar years	3 calendar years	4 calendar years
	Part-time	3 calendar years	6 calendar years	7 calendar years
Doctor of Philosophy (by Published Work)	Part-time	3 calendar months	1 calendar year	2 calendar years
Master of Philosophy	Full-time	1 calendar year	2 calendar years	3 calendar years
	Part-time	2 calendar years	4 calendar years	5 calendar years
Master of Arts by research	Full-time	1 calendar year	1 calendar year	1 calendar year
Master of Science by research				
Master of Research	Part-time	2 calendar years	2 calendar years	2 calendar years

- 5.17 Permission to submit the final assessment for a research award earlier than three months prior to the standard period of enrolment may be granted by the Research Degrees Committee, subject to the minimum periods of study specified above.
- 5.18 Permission for extensions or suspensions to the period of enrolment beyond the normal maximum period may be granted by the Research Degrees Committee under procedures set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#). Students will not usually be granted periods of extension and suspension equivalent to more than two calendar years in total.
- 5.19 Students who have not submitted for an award within the normal maximum period of enrolment will have their enrolment withdrawn unless permission for an extension or suspension has been granted. Recommendations for any exceptions to this regulation will be considered by the Research Degrees Committee.
- 5.20 Where a *candidate* changes from full-time to part-time study or vice versa, the minimum and maximum enrolment periods shall be calculated on a pro rata basis, in whole months.

Enrolment and progression

- 5.21 An entrant for a research degree will be required to enrol as a student at York St John University or approved partner institution, paying the prescribed fees. Students enrol for a specified programme of study and for all associated modules as specified in the regulations for the programme. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are correctly enrolled for their programme of study.
- 5.22 All research degree students must be assigned to a supervisory team that meets university supervisory eligibility criteria for the duration of their enrolment. Decisions regarding the allocation of supervisory teams will be made by the Research Degrees Committee. Within each team, a main supervisor will be designated and will be responsible for monitoring student progress. The responsibilities of supervisors are set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#) and related documentation.
- 5.23 During prescribed periods of study, students will attend regularly and participate in all activities and assessment prescribed for the programme of study as directed. Expectations of the time commitment required for all research degree candidates, including those studying by distance, is as follows (this includes relevant professional activities including fieldwork and conferences, for example):
- Full-time: a minimum of 40 hours per week for 45 weeks per year
 - Part-time: normally a minimum of 20 hours per week for 45 weeks per year
- 5.24 Distance learning research degree candidates are not normally required to attend the University, except for induction and oral examination where attendance is expected. Contact with the University must be maintained during the overall enrolment period at the same frequency as if the candidate were in full attendance. At the point of admission, the supervisor and student will agree details of the supervisory arrangement, which will include the frequency and mode of contact, the extent of face-to-face contact envisaged, and arrangements for written reports on research progress. Students on distance learning programmes are expected to demonstrate engagement through participation in all designated academic requirements.
- 5.25 A research degree student may not be enrolled simultaneously for another programme of study either at York St John University or at another higher education provider, except with the express permission of the Research Degrees Committee.
- 5.26 Continued enrolment is conditional on satisfactory progress being maintained by the student within the time periods specified in these regulations and the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#). Persistent absence, failure to make satisfactory progress or failure to meet other specified requirements – such as those relating to research integrity and ethical approvals – may lead to enforced withdrawal. For distance learning research degree candidates, attendance and engagement will be counted as participation in scheduled supervisory sessions.
- 5.27 Decisions relating to transfer between programmes of study within the University will be made by the Research Degrees Committee and will be considered on the basis of the ability of individual *candidates* to meet regulatory requirements for the award and with the recommendation of the receiving School.
- 5.28 Students who are absent through illness must communicate their absence promptly, providing medical evidence as required. Exceptionally, the [Fitness to Study Policy](#) and procedure may be used by the University to seek a review of a student's continuing ability to remain enrolled for a programme of study on health grounds.
- 5.29 Students awaiting examination are permitted to remain enrolled until the examination has taken place. Enrolment status beyond initial examination is determined following the consideration of the examiners' recommendation.

Initial enrolment and transfer

- 5.30 *Candidates* for doctoral programmes will initially hold a provisional enrolment status. Decisions on enrolment for a specific research award are made by a Transfer Assessment Panel. The transfer process to be followed and the decisions that can be reached by a Transfer Assessment Panel are set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#).
- 5.31 The period of initial enrolment counts towards the overall enrolment period for the award.

Progression

- 5.32 Progression requirements for research degrees are set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#) and the associated procedures relating to progress monitoring and transfer. Recommendations regarding progression are reached on the basis of periodic reviews carried out in accordance with these procedures and considered by the Research Degrees Committee.
- 5.33 Where a student is, for good reason, not able to progress as expected, a request may be made for a suspension of or extension to enrolment. The procedure set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#) should be followed. Any suspension or extension must be approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

Assessment

- 5.34 Assessment for research degree awards must be conducted according to procedures set out in the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#).
- 5.35 Research degree students must:
- a) Submit an application for assessment not less than three months (or two months in the case of Doctor of Philosophy (by Published Work)) before the submission of the thesis in accordance with the procedure set out in the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#); **and**
 - b) Submit a thesis for examination presented in accordance with the University's requirements at the time of submission. Detailed requirements are specified in the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#); **or**
 - c) Where enrolled on an approved practice-led route, submit a substantial body of creative practice together with a related written submission in accordance with the University's requirements at the time of submission. Detailed requirements are specified in the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#) **or**
 - d) Where enrolled on the Doctor of Philosophy (by Published Work), submit a portfolio of published work, accompanied by an abstract and a critical review by the candidate of all submitted work, in accordance with the University's requirements at the time of submission. Detailed requirements are specified in the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#); **and**
 - e) Submit themselves for an oral examination (viva) as specified in the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#) (except where enrolled on a Master of Arts/Master of Science by research).

Conduct of oral examination (viva)

- 5.36 Oral examinations will:
- a) Usually be undertaken within three months of submission of the thesis.
 - b) Be undertaken by at least two independent examiners, at least one of whom must be external to the University (where the student being assessed is also a member of university staff on a fixed term or permanent contract at grade 7 or above for a combined total of 12 months or more during any point in the candidature, two examiners must be external to the University).
 - c) Have an independent 'non-examining' Chair, whose role will be to ensure that the examination is conducted fairly and in accordance with university requirements.
 - d) Permit, on the written request of the student being assessed, the attendance of a member of the supervision team as an observer. Additional observers will only be allowed with the approval of the Research Degrees Examination Panel and the agreement of the student.
 - e) Be subject to audio (or, where appropriate, video) recording.
- 5.37 Examiners and independent chairs for the conduct of the oral examination (viva) are considered for appointment alongside the application for assessment from the student. Decisions on appointments are made by the Research Degrees Examination Panel. Eligibility criteria for examiners and independent chairs are set out in the [Criteria for the appointment of examiners and independent chairs document](#). Detailed information on the conduct of the oral examination can be found in the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#).

- 5.38 The outcome of the oral examination will usually be communicated to the student within one full working day.
- 5.39 On conclusion of the oral examination, the examiners will formulate a single report that will recommend one of the following:
- a) That the degree is awarded.
 - b) That the degree is awarded, subject to identified amendments being carried out to the satisfaction of the nominated examiner/s with no further requirement for oral examination of the work.
 - c) That a lower degree is awarded, with or without further amendment to the thesis, in accordance with the criteria and requirements of that lower degree.
 - d) That the degree is not awarded but that the student be permitted to resubmit the thesis, following further work and on one occasion only, as prescribed within the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#). This may be for the original or a lower award. A further oral examination must usually be conducted following resubmission. At the point of resubmission, the examiners may however recommend to the Research Degrees Examination Panel an exemption from a further oral examination.
 - e) Fail. This recommendation is only possible on resubmission and not on the first oral examination, other than where specified under the [Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#).
- 5.40 Final awards will be decided by the University's Progress and Award Examination Panel following consideration of the examiners' recommendation by the Research Degrees Examination Panel.
- 5.41 A *candidate* who is not successful in the final attempt to meet the award requirements of a programme of study after all assessment opportunities have been exhausted will have their enrolment withdrawn (enforced withdrawal) from their programme of study.

Resubmission

- 5.42 The Research Degrees Examination Panel will determine the timescale and deadline for the completion of amendments or resubmission of the thesis, taking account of the report provided by the examiners.
- 5.43 Requests for extensions to the deadline for amendments or resubmission will be considered according to the procedure set out in the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#) and will only be considered when made in advance of the specified deadline.

Access, copyright and intellectual property

- 5.44 Following a successful award outcome, electronic copies of theses will be made available through the University and the British Library.
- 5.45 Where the content of the thesis requires confidentiality (e.g., in the event of commercial sensitivity), approval from the Research Degrees Examination Panel may be sought by the student for access to be suspended for a defined period. Approval should be sought at the point of submission as set out in the [Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees](#).
- 5.46 The copyright of the thesis is owned by the student unless stated otherwise.
- 5.47 Intellectual property rights in relation to the thesis are addressed in the University's [Policy on Intellectual Property](#).

Eligibility for awards

Eligibility for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

5.48 *Candidates* will be eligible for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy when they have:

- a) Fulfilled specified enrolment requirements, including the payment of relevant fees; **and**
- b) Met the required learning outcomes and satisfied the examiners that their achievements are of sufficient merit through:
 - Presentation of a thesis (or body of creative practice and written submission, in the case of an approved practice-led route) on the subject of their research in accordance with the University's specified requirements and which contains evidence of originality and independent critical ability and matter suitable for publication; **and**
 - Presenting themselves for oral examination and other such tests as the examiners may prescribe.

Eligibility for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (by Published Work)

5.49 *Candidates* will be eligible for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (by Published Work) when they have:

- a) Fulfilled specified enrolment requirements, including the payment of relevant fees; **and**
- b) Met the required learning outcomes and satisfied the examiners that their achievements are of sufficient merit through:
 - Presentation of a portfolio of published work, which must add up to a substantial and coherent body of work which would have taken the equivalent of three years of full-time study to accomplish. It must consist of works already in the public domain. The material should not have been published more than ten years prior to the date of registration for the degree. The candidate must either be the sole author of the portfolio of published work or must be able to demonstrate that they have made a major contribution to all of the work that has been produced by more than one author; **and**
 - Presentation of a critical review and abstract, covering the body of work submitted; **and**
 - Presenting themselves for oral examination and other such tests as the examiners may prescribe.

Eligibility for the award of Master of Philosophy

5.50 *Candidates* will be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy when they have:

- a) Fulfilled specified enrolment requirements, including the payment of relevant fees; **and**
- b) Met the required learning outcomes and satisfied the examiners that their achievements are of sufficient merit through:
 - Presentation of a thesis (or body of creative practice and written submission, in the case of an approved practice-led route) on the subject of their research in accordance with the University's specified requirements and which contains an independent contribution to knowledge and scholarship and material at a level suitable for publication; **and**
 - Presenting themselves for oral examination and other such tests as the examiners may prescribe.

Eligibility for the award of the Master of Arts/Master of Science by Research

5.51 *Candidates* will be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Arts/Master of Science by Research when they have:

- a) Fulfilled specified enrolment requirements, including the payment of relevant fees; **and**
- b) Met the required learning outcomes and satisfied the examiners that their achievements are of sufficient merit through:
 - Presentation of a thesis (or body of creative practice and written submission, in the case of an approved practice-led route) on the subject of their research which interprets and communicates knowledge in the discipline and contains material at a level suitable for publication in accordance with the requirements of the relevant prescribed programme of study.

Eligibility for the award of Master of Research

5.52 *Candidates* will be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Research when they have:

- a) Fulfilled specified enrolment requirements, including the payment of relevant fees; **and**
- b) Met the required learning outcomes and satisfied the examiners that their achievements are of sufficient merit through:
 - Presentation of a thesis (or body of creative practice and written submission, in the case of an approved practice-led route) on the subject of their research which interprets and communicates knowledge in the discipline and contains material at a level suitable for publication in accordance with the requirements of the relevant prescribed programme of study.

Appeals

5.53 Students enrolled for research degrees may appeal decisions relating to their enrolment status, progression or award. Full details and the procedure to be followed are set out in [Appeals Policy](#).

Research integrity and ethical approval

5.54 Students enrolled for research degrees must ensure that their work meets the University's expectations relating to research integrity (set out in the [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#)) and ethical approval (set out in the [Research Ethics Policy](#)). The University's expectations of students and its policy and procedure for investigating allegations of misconduct are set out in the [Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#).

Variations

5.55 Any change to these regulations needs the explicit approval of the Academic Board.

5.56 Any variation to these regulations for an individual student needs the prior express permission of the Research Degrees Committee.

Associated links:

<https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/regulations/>
<https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/programme-specifications/>
<https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/students/policies-and-documents/fitness-to-study-and-fitness-to-practise/>
<https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/research/research-degrees/>
<https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/appeals-and-complaints/>
<https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/research/ethics-and-integrity/>

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4	Changes to committee names	09/10/2019	Academic Board
5	Numbering updated. Addition of PhD by Published Work and PhD by Distance Learning.	24/06/2020	Academic Board
6	Removal of viva for Masters by Research programmes.	23/06/2021	Academic Board
7	Change to committee name	29/06/2022	Academic Board
8	Inclusion of Masters of Research as a research degree	28/06/2023	Academic Board
9	Definition of research degree added. Terminology updated from 'termination' to 'enforced withdrawal'. Eligibility for Award of the Masters of Research added	26/06/2024	Academic Board