

Framework and Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study 2026/27

Policy owner: PVC Education and Student Experience

Version: 2.0

Implementation date: September 2026

Last review date: September 2026

Next review date: May 2027

Approved by: Academic Board

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Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Candidature Period	The maximum period of time allowed for a student to complete a research degree, including all required stages of study and assessment.
Submission Date	The date by which a student must submit their thesis or approved research output for examination.
Conditional Registration	An initial period of registration during which a student begins their research programme and must successfully meet specified requirements before full registration is confirmed.
Stage 1 and Stage 2 Review	Formal progress reviews that take place at key points during a research degree. These reviews assess progress, the quality of the research project, and readiness to continue to the next stage of study.
Referral	An outcome that requires a student to make further improvements, revisions or additional work before they can successfully complete a required review, assessment or examination.
Writing-Up Period	A period during which a student has completed the main research activity and focuses on finalizing, writing and submitting the thesis or approved research outputs.
Director of Studies	The lead supervisor who has overall responsibility for coordinating supervision, monitoring academic progress and providing guidance throughout the research degree.
Institutional Ethical Approval	Formal approval from the University confirming that a research project meets ethical requirements and can proceed, particularly if people, personal data, animals or sensitive issues are involved.
Public Works/Portfolio	A collection of creative, professional or publicly available outputs, such as performances, exhibitions, designs, publications or other works, that may form part of the research degree submission.
Target Award	The research degree that a student is aiming to achieve, such as a PhD, Professional Doctorate or MPhil.

Framework and Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study 2026/27

Introduction

1. These regulations explain how Middlesex University manages postgraduate research (PGR) study. They form part of the University's Enrolment Terms and Conditions.
2. This Framework and Regulations for Postgraduate Research Studies apply to all students who enrol to study for Middlesex University postgraduate research awards from 1st September 2026. This includes those at International Branch Campuses, and at all UK and International Academic partnerships, unless otherwise agreed by exception.
3. The academic standards of all Middlesex University (the University) awards should be aligned with the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), and the descriptors in the [Credit Framework for England](#). Additional external reference points include [QAA Characteristic Statements](#).
4. These regulations will be reviewed annually for approval by the University's Academic Board. Changes made will help the University to ensure academic quality standards and compliance with legislation and the requirements of any Professional, Statutory, or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).
5. The Framework and Regulations for Postgraduate Research Studies should be read in conjunction with:
 - a. The Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy
 - b. The PGR Handbook
 - c. The PGR and Gen AI Guidelines
 - d. The [QAA Qualification Framework](#)

Scope

6. The Framework and Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study applies to all postgraduate research programmes at the University. These awards include:
 - a. MA/MSc/LLM by Research
 - b. Master of Theology (MTh)
 - c. Master of Professional Studies (MProf)
 - d. Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
 - e. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
 - f. Master/Doctor of Professional Studies (DProf)
 - g. Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
 - h. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Public Works
 - i. Doctor of Professional Studies by Public Works/Portfolio
 - j. Doctor of Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy by Professional Studies
 - k. Doctor of Professional Studies (Existential Psychotherapy and Counselling)
 - l. Arts Master/Doctorate (ArtsM/ArtsD)

Admissions and Enrolment

7. The University's general and programme entry requirements are published for each programme on the University website, and in the Admissions Policy.
8. If an applicant provides relevant information that is false, fraudulent or misleading, the University will normally withdraw the offer.
9. Any complaints about the Admissions process may be made under the Applicant Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure, at the campus of study.
10. Postgraduate Researchers admitted to the University must normally complete enrolment before the start date specified in their offer. Students must re-enrol every year.
11. A Postgraduate Researcher who has not enrolled or paid the appropriate fees, by the published deadline in any year of study, will be treated as having withdrawn from their programme, and their record will be closed. An exit award will be made if credit has been achieved and payment for learning has been made. Student Finance Regulations may vary at international campuses.
12. The University reserves the right to decline or withdraw any students who do not hold the appropriate visa, or do not comply with the conditions of their visa.
13. The University may offer Postgraduate Researchers a place on a research degree programme different to that for which an applicant has applied.
14. In the case of research degrees if there are linked awards at level 7 (Master's) and level 8 (doctoral) Postgraduate Researchers are admitted at the level 7 (Master's) programme.

Recognised Prior Learning and Study and Advanced Standing Admission

15. Applicants who apply to the University having started, but not completed, research study at another university, may be admitted with recognition of prior learning and may not need to repeat parts of this programme. For an advanced standing admission, a Stage 1 or Stage 2 panel will decide how much of the applicant's previous research study can be recognised. The total length of the registration period will be adjusted accordingly. Advanced standing applicants will need to comply with any relevant Intellectual Property (IP) conditions from the university at which they were originally registered. Compliance with such IP conditions is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Researcher.

Modes of Study

16. Postgraduate Researchers may complete their award on full-time or part-time study. These are defined as:
 - a. **Full-time:** on average, 35 hours per week on research study, this includes contact with the supervisory team.
 - b. **Part-time:** on average, 17.5 hours per week on research study, this includes contact with the supervisory team.

Minimum Registration Periods and Candidature Periods

17. Postgraduate Researchers are normally expected to complete their studies within the normal period of registration for their mode of study. The candidature period provides additional time for students should they need to retake modules, interrupt their studies, or study part-time temporarily.

18. Postgraduate Researchers may change from full-time to part-time study, or vice versa, if their programme is validated in both modes of study. The minimum and maximum (registration periods will be re-calculated to match the new mode of study. The maximum registration period is referred to as the candidature period and may extend beyond the expected submission date if the period allows for extensions or further writing-up periods. When Postgraduate Researchers change mode of study, the remaining registration period is recalculated.

Award	Mode of study	Minimum Registration Period (in months)	Submission Date (in months)	Candidature Period (in months)
MA/MSc/LLM by Research and MTh	Part-time	18	24	24
MA/MSc/LLM by Research and MTh	Full-time	12	12	12
MPhil/ArtsM/MProf	Part-time	24	36	48
MPhil/ArtsM/MProf	Full-time	12	24	36
MPhil/PhD, ArtsM/ArtsD	Part-time	48	60	84
MPhil/PhD, ArtsM/ArtsD	Full-time	24	42	60
MProf/DProf and DBA	Part-time	48	60	84
MProf/DProf and DBA	Full-time	24	42	60
Doctorates by Public Works or Portfolio	Part-time	18	24	24
Doctorates by Public Works or Portfolio	Full-time	12	12	12
Doctor of Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy by Professional Studies	Part-time	18	24	24
Doctor of Professional Studies (Existential Psychotherapy and Counselling)	Part-time	48	60	84

Interruption (Break in Study)

19. If illness or other serious circumstances prevent a Postgraduate Researcher from

studying, they may apply for a break in study. There may also be circumstances where the University requires a student to interrupt their study take a break from their studies. This is referred to as an interruption. This is explained in the University's Extenuating Circumstances Policy. A break in study is excluded from the candidature period.

20. Postgraduate Researchers may take a break from their research study for a maximum of 24 months across the whole programme, but they can only apply for a maximum of 12 months at a time. If, after 12 months, Postgraduate Researchers wish to extend their break, they must apply again and should seek advice from the Advice and Inclusion team. Postgraduate Researchers may be approved for an additional 12-month interruption as parental leave, beyond the 12 or 24 month break.

21. Interruptions may have implications for both fees and visa status. These include possible fee waiver upon their return to study, and / or potential interruption of student visa until return to study. Postgraduate Researchers are advised to consult with the supervisory team and the Advice and Inclusion Team to fully understand the implications of a break in study before applying.

22. During a break in studies Postgraduate Researchers will not have access to supervisory support, laboratories, studios or other research facilities. They will have access to library and computing facilities and welfare and pastoral support offered by the University.

The Supervisory Team

23. Each Postgraduate Researcher has a supervisory team and access to a Director of Studies to supervise them as they undertake their research project.

24. Supervision is individual advice and guidance provided by experts in the Postgraduate Researchers' fields/domains of practice. This supports their development as a researcher and progress with their research.

25. The Supervisor is a member of academic staff appointed to supervise and guide the Postgraduate Researcher. This will normally be a member of Middlesex University staff ; In cases in which the research expertise is not available in the University, it may be an external supervisor.

26. The Director of Studies is the lead member of the supervisory team. Roles and responsibilities across the Postgraduate Researcher candidature period are presented in Appendix 1.

Conditions of Registration, Progression and Transfer

27. Within research degrees there may be taught elements and mandatory research training. These may be distinct elements of the programme or integrated within it. There will also be milestones and other progression checkpoints. Postgraduate Researchers will need to demonstrate they are making sufficient progress to continue their study and period of registration.

28. Postgraduate Researchers will initially be registered on a conditional basis. Registration is confirmed at the Stage 1 Review (see para. 31) and approved by the

Postgraduate Research Board. Criteria considered as part of the confirmation of registration are:

- a. attendance at supervision and other prescribed development sessions, including induction and relevant research development programme activities, as outlined in the agreed individual Postgraduate Researcher registration plan.
- b. satisfactory performance and progress as agreed in the individual Postgraduate Researcher registration plan.
- c. payment of fees.

29. The University may withdraw a student if these conditions are not met.

30. Postgraduate Researchers may transfer from one research degree programme to another research degree programme provided that they have met ongoing conditions of registration.

Stage 1 Review

31. Stage 1 Review will take place on the following timescales:

Degree	Review
MA/MSc/LLM by Research and MTh (Full-time)	2 months
MA/MSc/LLM by Research and MTh (Part-time)	4 months
MPhil/PhD, DBA, MProf/DProf (Full-time)	6 months
MPhil/PhD, DBA, MProf/DProf, (Part-time)	12 months
ArtsM/ArtsD (Full-time)	6 months
ArtsM/ArtsD (Part-time)	12 months
MProf (Part-time)	12 months
Doctorates by Public Works or Portfolio (Full-time)	3 months
Doctorates by Public Works or Portfolio (Part-time)	6 months

32. Review panels are comprised of a Chair, who does not contribute to the assessment, the Director of Studies and, when appropriate, the other supervisors, and an independent reviewer who has had no prior engagement with the candidate's work or familiarity with the candidate. Further details about review panels are outlined in the PGR Handbook.

33. Postgraduate Researchers must submit a report, including a registration plan and timeline which sets out anticipated dates for milestones significant for the research and a supervision plan for the review as appropriate to their programme, which will be considered by a review panel. Further details are set out in the PGR Handbook.

34. The review considers whether:

- a. the Postgraduate Researcher is demonstrating the necessary skills and abilities to undertake the research programme.
- b. the researcher development plan and engagement in development activities is

appropriate.

- c. the supervision arrangements proposed for the Postgraduate Researcher are adequate.
- d. the viability of their proposed research project, and if the facilities and resources required to undertake the research are available and adequate.
- e. the reflective positioning in the field of professional practice is at the required standard (for DProf and DBA).
- f. the works in the public domain are suitable and support achievement the doctoral award with an adequate depth of critical engagement with the works in the public domain and their context (for doctorates by public works/portfolio).

35. The possible outcomes of the Stage 1 Review are:

Outcome	Description	Impact
Pass	Confirmation of the registration status as a Postgraduate Researcher	Conditional registration is converted to full PGR registration
Referral	Further work is required	Resubmission required within two months (for full-time study) or four months (for part-time study). If the second attempt does not meet requirements, a third and final attempt authorised by the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board. possible. Referral periods may be extended through the University Extenuating Circumstances Policy.
Fail	If the third and final attempt does not meet requirements.	The registration will be ended and Postgraduate Researchers withdrawn from the programme.

Stage 2 Review

36. Depending on the research degree programme of registration, Postgraduate Researchers may be required to undertake a Stage 2 Review to transfer between a level 7 research degree and the linked level 8 research degree. Stage 2 review periods are:

Degree	Review Stage 2
MPhil/PhD, ArtsM/ArtsD (Full-time)	18 months
MPhil/PhD, ArtsM/ArtsD (Part-time)	36 months
MProf/DProf, DBA, (Part-time)	36 months
MProf/DProf, DBA, (Full- time)	18 months

37. For MPhil/PhD, ArtsM/ArtsD programmes – successful progress reviews at Stage 2

should comprise:

- a. research completed so far, which may be presented in a range of written, visual and aural forms. This must demonstrate clearly a developing body of research work and an adequate understanding, knowledge, and justification of appropriate research context design and methods. AND
- b. evaluation of progress to date and a clear plan for future research. This evaluation must clarify the independent and original contribution to artistic practice and/or interpretation/understanding that is likely to emerge.
- c. researcher development activity.

38. When work for the ArtsM/ArtsD suggests that the research is more theoretical than practical the researcher can apply to transfer to the PhD degree.

39. For all programmes, the Stage 2 review panel includes a Chair, who does not undertake any assessment, an independent reviewer, the Director of Studies and, when beneficial to the assessment of the work, another member of the supervisory team.

40. The review panel will consider ethical issues emerging from the project and researcher integrity, including adherence to the University's PGR and AI Guidelines. Transfer to level 8 study will be completed and approved only when evidence of institutional ethical approval is submitted to the Chair of the panel.

41. The possible outcomes of the Stage 2 Review are:

Outcome	Description	Impact
Pass	Confirmation of the ongoing registration status as a Postgraduate Researcher	Progression to the target award
Referral	Further work is required	Resubmission required within two months (for minor amendments) or six months (for major amendments). If the second attempt does not meet requirements, a third and final attempt is authorised by the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board. Referral periods may be extended through the University Extenuating Circumstances Policy.
Fail	If the third and final attempt does not meet requirements.	Ongoing registration for Level 7 and Level 7 award or withdrawal from study

Annual Progression Review

42. Progression will be monitored throughout the programme as well as via an annual progression review process.

43. All Postgraduate Researchers are subject to an annual progress review, including those on a break in study or in the writing-up phase. In assessing progress, the University will consider any extenuating circumstances that are declared and evidenced, in line with the University's Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

44. Satisfactory progress is judged in relation to meeting of milestones as set out in the individual Postgraduate Researcher registration plan, researcher engagement in research degree programme – particularly regular supervision - and the meeting of agreed in-year targets/goals. These are agreed between the Postgraduate Researcher and supervisory team.

45. An ad-hoc progression panel may be convened at any time by the supervision team with the authorisation of the Postgraduate Research Board to assess the progress of the candidate, if there are concerns about progress. Ad-hoc panels comprise a Chair, the supervisory team, and an independent reviewer. The Postgraduate Researcher will be provided opportunity to discuss progress and any extenuating circumstances.

46. The possible outcomes of ad hoc and Annual Progression Review are:

Outcome	Description	Impact
Pass	Progression made is in line with the registration plan	Ongoing registration
Referral	Progress is unsatisfactory	Improvements and timescale issued (maximum of six months).
Fail	Progress is unsatisfactory.	Withdrawal from study

Writing-up Period

47. PhD and DProf / DBA Postgraduate Researchers who have completed their active research may apply for a writing-up period, if the candidature period allows. To qualify for a writing-up period, students must have:

- successfully passed their Stage 2 Review Panel,
- completed all active research work, as verified by the supervisor. This includes, for example, all experimental work, laboratory work, field work, focus groups or interviews, archival work, and data collection or any work as detailed in the methodology),
- have completed their third year (if full-time, and enrolled on a programme with a 5 year candidature period) or fourth year (if part-time, and enrolled on a programme with a 7 year candidature period),
- have the approval of the supervisory team. The supervisory team confirms that the Postgraduate Researcher will submit within 12 months, and that the registration details are correct.

48. The writing-up period counts towards the specified candidature period, and it cannot exceed twelve months, regardless of full-time or part-time status. Writing-up periods cannot be extended, although students may apply for a break in study (see para. 19-22). If a Postgraduate Researcher interrupts during the writing-up period, the period will pause and recommence once the Postgraduate Researcher returns to their period of research study.

49. As Postgraduate Researchers are no longer engaged in active research, a reduced fee is charged and set by the campus of study. At the end of the writing-up period Postgraduate Researchers will be required to submit their thesis for examination. In exceptional cases and in line with Extenuating Circumstances policy, when, by the end of the writing-up period, Postgraduate Researchers do not submit their thesis, they will be required to pay full fees for any subsequent years.

50. Postgraduate Researchers will continue to be offered supervision during the writing-up phase and still be expected to complete the annual progression forms. They will not be permitted to use the labs, studios or undertake fieldwork, but will have ongoing access to other University facilities, e.g., the library and PGR Room.

51. The above writing-up provisions in paragraphs 47-50 apply only if they are consistent with the conditions of the external sponsorship or funding agreement. Postgraduate Researchers who have funding terms which require submission of the thesis or completion of the award within the funding period are not eligible for a university writing-up period beyond that funded period.

Extensions

52. Requests for extensions beyond the candidature period will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, must be supported by evidence and endorsed by the Director of Studies. This is explained in the University Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

53. Extensions will not normally exceed one year and are approved for this duration only in the most serious cases. Requests must be submitted via the Student Journey Administration Team before the candidature end-date. Where appropriate, Postgraduate Researchers may be advised to apply for an interruption instead.

Submission of Final Assessment / Thesis

54. Postgraduate Researchers are expected to submit their thesis for final assessment by the submission date, and not before the minimum registration period (see para. 18).

55. If Postgraduate Researchers have not submitted for final assessment by the candidature end date, they will be withdrawn and they will not be eligible for the award of a degree. Details of requirements for the final submission are in the PGR Handbook. These requirements include providing evidence of institutional ethical approval for all parts of the research, a plagiarism check report, and adherence to the PGR and GenAI guidelines.

56. The content of the submission and its adherence to the level required is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Researcher. The Postgraduate Researcher may submit without the authorisation of the Director of Studies. Students are encouraged to consult with

the Director of Studies before submitting.

57. The final examination process (viva) is outlined in the PGR Handbook.

Assessment and Award

58. Specific learning differences such as dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia are supported by the Disability & Inclusion Team. These must be declared at the time of enrolment and in any case before any assessment panel. Adjustments are made to examinations based on existing guidelines following the assessment of the Disability and Inclusion Team and the guidelines in the PGR Examiner Guide.

59. Academic Board delegates authority to the Postgraduate Research Board to confirm examination outcomes. Award outcomes will be reported to Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

60. The final assessment consists of thesis, or equivalent submission, in the format prescribed by the programme, and a *viva voce* (oral examination) conducted by an Assessment Panel.

61. A submitted thesis cannot be withdrawn or substituted with a new version. The examiners must conduct a viva, in line with the University Policy for Academic Integrity and Misconduct.

62. To be awarded the qualification Postgraduate Researchers must pass all of the required assessments and fulfil any other specific conditions.

63. To be awarded a Master's degree Postgraduate Researchers must demonstrate:

- a. a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights which is at the forefront of the academic discipline.
- b. a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.
- c. originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in their discipline.
- d. conceptual understanding that enables critical evaluation of current research and methodologies resulting in the advancement of scholarship in the discipline, and if appropriate, new hypotheses.

64. A successful outcome for an MA/MSc by Research programme will be awarded a grade of Pass, Merit or Distinction. The classification will be awarded only after any required amendments or revisions have been completed. Criteria for classification are set by the University.

65. To receive a doctoral degree, Postgraduate Researchers must demonstrate that their research makes an original and significant contribution to knowledge or professional practice, which merits wider dissemination. They should demonstrate:

- a. a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of one or more academic disciplines.
- b. the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a research project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, field or practice. They should be able to demonstrate how they adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen emerging considerations.
- c. a detailed understanding of contemporary complexity and of research approaches relevant to the focus and context of the research and most likely to produce new knowledge contributions to thinking and practice.

66. The Assessment Panel will recommend one of the following outcomes:

Outcome	Description	Impact
Pass	Requirements and standards have been met	The degree is awarded
Award with Minor Corrections	The degree is awarded subject to minor corrections being made to the submitted work. Minor corrections are usually considered revisions that do not fundamentally change the intellectual content or findings of the work, require any additional data or substantive research	A period for making minor corrections is agreed, normally up to 6 months (3 months for a Master's level award). Degree is awarded after corrections are submitted and approved. The candidate may use the title of Dr once final award is made.
Award with Major Corrections	The degree is awarded subject to major corrections being made to the submitted work with or without a new viva. Major corrections are more fundamental in nature (i.e. substantive) and may, for example, result in additional research, the inclusion of a substantive amount of text, and/or a change to the overall claims/conclusions of the research.	A period for making major corrections is agreed, normally up to 12 months (6 months for a Master's level award). Degree is awarded after corrections are submitted and approved. The candidate may use the title of Dr once final award is made.
Fail	Requirements and standards have not been met.	The degree is not awarded. No resubmission for the target award is permitted. The candidate may submit the work for a lower award, revising the work to ensure it meets award criteria.

67. In exceptional circumstances, extensions to the resubmission period may be granted

by the Postgraduate Research Assessment Board.

68. Examiners must assess corrections within two months of resubmission. If this period is exceeded, the Postgraduate Research Board may authorise alternative examining arrangements.

Intellectual Property

69. Postgraduate Researchers own the intellectual property they generate in the course of their studies except in the cases listed by the Intellectual Property Rights: Students policy.

70. After completion Postgraduate Researchers must grant the University an irrevocable, transferable licence to upload the thesis to the online research repository. The award of a degree will not be confirmed until this requirement has been met.

71. If the thesis contains confidential, commercially sensitive, or politically sensitive material, the Postgraduate Researcher may ask the University to restrict access to the thesis in line with University policy. Access restrictions may also be requested after publication of the thesis if circumstances have changed.

Appeals and Complaints

72. A Postgraduate Researcher may make a complaint about any aspect of the programme. This should be done in line with the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

73. Postgraduate Researchers may appeal. This should be done in line with the University's Academic Appeals Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities across the Postgraduate Researcher Candidature Period

Role	What this role does
Research Degree Student	Registers each year, pays any required fees, engages fully with supervision, attends required reviews and training activities, makes satisfactory progress with the research project, follows ethical and academic integrity requirements, submits work on time, and completes the thesis and examination process within the permitted timeframes.
Supervisor	Provides academic guidance and feedback, supports the development of research skills, advises on research methods and ethics, helps monitor progress, and supports the student throughout their research journey.
Director of Studies	Leads the supervisory team, oversees the student's progress, provides academic leadership and support, and helps ensure that the student receives appropriate supervision and guidance.
Supervisory Team	Works with the student to set goals and milestones, monitors progress, provides advice and support, identifies any concerns that may affect progress, and helps prepare the student for examination.
Independent Reviewer	Provides an impartial view of the student's progress during formal review stages and contributes to decisions about progression.
Review Panel Chair	Leads progression review meetings, ensures that procedures are followed fairly and consistently, and oversees the review process.
Postgraduate Research Board	Oversees research degree registrations, progression and examination processes, approves key decisions relating to a student's research degree journey, and ensures regulations are applied consistently.
Examiners	Assess the thesis and oral examination (viva), determine whether the required academic standard has been met, and recommend an outcome for the award.
Student Administration Team	Maintains student records, supports registration and progression processes, receives formal applications and requests, and provides administrative support throughout the research degree.
Advice and Inclusion Team	Provides guidance and support on personal, wellbeing, financial, or study-related matters that may affect a student's ability to continue their studies successfully.
Disability and Inclusion Team	Works with students to identify support needs and arrange reasonable adjustments to help ensure equitable access to study and assessment.
Academic Board	Approves and maintains the University's academic regulations and has overall responsibility for academic standards.
Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee	Receives reports on research degree outcomes and helps monitor the quality and standards of research degree provision.

The University	Provides the framework, facilities, resources, policies and support services needed for research degree study and ensures that academic standards and quality requirements are met.
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