Middlesex University London

SUPERVISOR, CHAIR AND INTERNAL EXAMINER DEVELOPMENT

NUTS AND BOLTS: PGR PROCESSES – BEYOND COMPLIANCE

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SUPERVISOR AND CHAIR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Attendance requirements:

- For new supervisors: Session on “nuts and bolts” + two of choice per year
- For qualified supervisors: two sessions of choice per year

- Refresher “nuts and bolts”, every three year max.

- For Chairs – Session on viva training – refresher every three years

KEY DOCUMENTS

- PGR Regulations (current and previous ones) see “Our Policies”
- PGR Procedural Guidances
- Updated Forms
- Programme/Research Degree Handbook
- Examiner handbook
- PGR and GEN AI guidelines
- Forthcoming PGR supervisor handbook brings all of the above together

Where to find them: Postgraduate research studies | Middlesex University Intranet

Intranet > Postgraduate Research Studies > Useful documents > Forms for PGRs

- Academic misconduct procedures
- Middlesex University’s *Code of Practice for Research*
- QAA standards

SUBMISSION AND CANDIDATURE PERIODS

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

WRITING UP PERIOD

Year	Regulations at the time of PGRs first enrolment	Supervisor should be mindful of…
Pre-2022	One year of free writing up after active research is completed. Submission due at the end. For extenuating circumstances, one year extension of writing up at £2500	Be clear with the PGR that they cannot go on writing if they are still undertaking active research. Supervisor are responsible to sign it off from their perspective and then it has final approved from the Chair of PGR Board
2022-2026	Ww have now writing up under the 2026 terms	Communicate this to their supervisees
From September 2026	One year of writing up after active research is completed at a **reduced fee** (not determined yet). 3 years (FT) or 4 year (PT) must have been completed. Submission due at the end. For extenuating circumstances, extension of writing up at the **normal degree fee.**	The conditions: a. successfully passed their Stage 2 Review Panel, b. 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), c. 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), d. 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.
To be confirmed: - Amount of fee Communication will be sent on whether we are confirming £2500 (for Hendon)		

BREAK IN STUDY VS EXTENSION

Break in study

- Needs to be reported; no authorization needed
- Overall 24 months – no more than 12 months at a time
- Pauses the candidature period
- Does not entail supervision or use of resources
- Useful for PGRs to attend to work, health and family matters or to space out their studies
- Strategically useful to gain time if PGRs are near the end of candidature period
- Break in study has visa implications
- Break in study does not necessarily mean break in fees (still not resolved)
- NEW! Additional 12 month break in study for parental leave

Extension – NEW! Change in regulations

Up to 1 year of extension allowed in serious cases of extenuating circumstances to everybody

BREAK IN STUDY AND EXTENSION

Rationale

- Value of supervisors signalling openness to discussing interruption – minimising potential stigma can be protective for PGRs
- Funder requirements around leave entitlement and reporting are becoming more rigorous.
- Delayed or retrospective requests for break in study are not allowed; delays in requesting break in study often leading to greater disruption and stress for students
- Supervisors' openness to discussing break in studies and leave helps students feel more confident in considering them as options, reducing pressure.

PGR AND GENERATIVE AI

- Official Policy and guidance: Gen AI and PGR [myLearning]
- Use of AI encouraged but with guardrails:
    - Example of Appropriate use:

        - Brainstorming keywords or research questions.
        - Clustering literature (verifying all summaries manually)
        - Supporting reflective writing
        - Generating data visualisations or diagrams based on your own verified data.
        - Assisting in code debugging or documentation.
        - Improving clarity and grammar in your writing, provided meaning is unaltered.

- Disclosure statement for every submission, in the body of the work. A statement, not a disclaimer.

PGR AND GENERATIVE AI

Example of disclosure statement:

- In line with Middlesex University's *Guidance for the Use of Generative AI in Postgraduate Research* (V2.3), I declare the following uses of AI in this thesis.
- **Literature searching and organisation.** I used ChatGPT (GPT-5) to brainstorm search keywords and to propose initial thematic groupings for the 112 articles in my review.
- **Writing support.** I used Microsoft 365 Copilot (University licence) to improve clarity and grammar in passages of Chapters 1, 5 and 6 that I had already written. I accepted, edited or rejected each suggestion individually, and meaning was not altered. No AI-generated text is presented as my own writing.
- **Code support.** I used GitHub Copilot to debug and comment the R scripts that produce the descriptive statistics and figures in Chapter 4. I ran and tested all code myself.
- **AI as a research tool: first-pass qualitative coding.** For 6 of my 24 interview transcripts (25%), I used Microsoft 365 Copilot, accessed within the University's secure Microsoft 365 environment in January 2026, to suggest candidate codes. This was covered by my ethics approval (Ethics Monitor ref. EM-0000, illustrative; amendment approved 12 January 2026) and my Data Management Plan.

PGR AND GENERATIVE AI

Role of the supervisory team:

- Supervisory responsibilities include:
- Clarify expectations at an early stage in your meetings, including how AI may and may not be used on the basis of this policy and of subject-specific conventions.
- Review proposals and ethics applications for AI disclosure and risk assessment.
- Review methodological justification for AI tools;
- Support students' critical understanding of AI's limitations, bias, and provenance;
- Ensure that PGRs understand the limitations of their chosen systems,
- Support choices between human-led, statistical, and AI-based approaches,
- Confirm that AI does not replace conceptual or analytical reasoning or creative input
- Encourage the AI Use Log and make sure submissions contain the AI Disclosure statement.
- Verify the authenticity and reproducibility of AI-assisted analysis or code, when applicable.

ENTRY

- Pre-application enquiry and support – how much do you engage?
- PGR Open Evenings
- ARC – Academic Review Centre – not easy to navigate
- Departmental and Faculty PGR Leads
- Interview – protocols (two interviewers, interview record,)
- Unconscious bias and inclusion – EDI in PGR Recruitment Guide (Nottingham)

JOURNEY: CONTRACTING

- Setting and managing expectations
- Key information about milestones
- Break in study and extensions
- Signposting disability & dyslexia support and other services

RATIONALE

- Initial meetings are particularly formative in shaping the supervisor-PGR relationship
- Signalling openness to discussing certain topics and role modelling good work-life balance can be protective of PGR wellbeing
- All PGRs will begin with expectations and assumptions, some of which will be incorrect; addressing these clearly can reduce miscommunication and mitigate risks
- Boundary-setting: clearly stating expectations can help establish boundaries regarding frequency of meetings, timeframes for receiving feedback.
- Many people lack confidence discussing disability, and ensuring that processes and responsibilities are clear can make these conversations less daunting. We have legal and institutional requirements.
- This gives more confidence in the relationship to both student and supervisor

JOURNEY

DOCTORATE (PhD; Dprof)

Full time: 6 months Part time: 9 months	Full time: 18 months max Part time: 36 months max	Full time: 36 months (expected) Part time: 60 months (expected)



ANNUAL PROGRESSION

- Differs for: Dprof/PhD by Public Works; MA/MSC by Research
- PGRs should a Break in study if needed

SUPERVISING PGRS ON A VISA

- If the University does not follow UKVI regulations, we could lose our license to sponsor students
- Is your supervisee a Tier 4 visa PGR?
- Report if there is in/sufficient engagement
- Discuss break in study as they have visa implication
- Make clear that they have to ask authorization if they go on research or study leave abroad.
- Student duties are outlined in the PGR handbook

STAGE REVIEW 1 - SUPERVISOR



- What are you looking at in the submission?
- Engagement with foundations of researcher development
- Research Development plan – imperfect but necessary
- Engagement with ethics – Ethics Monitor
- Review: Independent-led but panel is important.
- Outcomes: formative in the first instance; no straight fail
- Timeline: 6 months (FT); 9 months (PT)

Middlesex University
Research Degrees

Middlesex University London

RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Our research development programme is underpinned by a focus on wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, knowledge in action and interdisciplinarity. For clarity and to reflect researcher development needs we have developed **six core strands** as set out below.

- We invite you to discuss your researcher development plan with your supervision team within the first 6 weeks of starting your degree and to update it as you progress.
- Engagement with researcher development will be considered as part of Review Stage 1 and 2 (as appropriate to your degree).
- Candidates on all programmes are required to meet the minimum researcher development expectations set out below for annual progression, whilst noting that researcher development is an embedded feature of MProf/DProf Programmes. Researchers on these pathways may wish to use this process to identify additional development aims/activities.
- Please **read the guidance notes and prompts for reflection at the end of this document** to inform your planning

Name:		
Degree:	**Year of study:**	**Full or Part Time study**

PGR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

KICKSTARTING SERIES (1 month; novices)

RESEARCHER ENHANCEMENT SERIES
1- session per week

SAGE CAMPUS – On demand platform

ARCHIVE

Section: Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme | Research Area | mdx

MDX Research Degrees – Middlesex on MDX PLAY

PGR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Rationale

- Supervisors' attitude (real or inferred) to these sessions can influence PGR's engagement with them.
- Potential value of these sessions in broadening the support for PGR out beyond the supervisory team alone
- Supervisors encourage their students to engage with professional and career development opportunities.
- Supervisors recognise some of the wider support available to students, and feel less like they are required to be the sole source of guidance.
- Students feel more confident in voicing development needs and engaging with opportunities

LOCATING SUPPORT FOR PGRS

- How do **students** contact administration:
- In most cases this must go through Unihelp
- For very complex cases researchdegrees@mdx.ac.uk **[this email address will be decommissioned]**

STAGE REVIEW 2 - SUPERVISOR

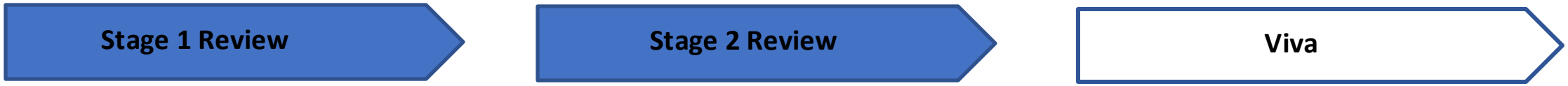


- What are you looking at in the submission?
- Engagement with customised and professionalising RDP
- Finalising **Ethics Monitor** form (if not done earlier)
- Participation to PGR Conference
- Review: Independent-led but panel is important.
- Outcomes: transfer to target award, formative in the first instance

ANNUAL PROGRESS

- Progression forms
- Faculty Progression Board
- Any red flag?
- Setting goals
- Interruption, and impact on candidature period and fees
- Case review, if necessary

VIVA - SUPERVISOR



- Pre-Submission: 3 months before make examiners arrangements
- What are we looking for in the externals? Expertise, Experience, Independence.
- Lengthy Right to Work requirement (Home Office)
- Mock viva (PGR to join a session or organise one)
- Supervisor to read last draft
- Turnitin
- Level 7 and Level 8 Research Degree award criteria

LEVEL 7 AND LEVEL 8 RESEARCH DEGREE AWARD CRITERIA

The descriptor provided for this level of the frameworks is for any master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at level 7/ SCQF level 11 on the FQHEIS, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- 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 the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level

4.18 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8 on the FHEQ and SCQF level 12 on the FQHEIS: doctoral degree

The descriptor provided for this level of the frameworks is for any doctoral degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other level 8/level 12 qualifications.

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

QAA The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies
QAA Characteristic Statement Doctoral Degree
Our regs paragraph 55

LOCATING SUPPORT FOR PGRS

		Arts and Creative Industries	Business and Law	Health, Social Care and Education	Science and Technology
Student Journey, Timetable and Curriculum	**Business Partner(s):** Student Journey Administration Officers	Jerry Pereira Patricia Babatunde	Kei Pao (Business) Naima Akhtar (Business) Jerry Pereira (Law) Patricia Babatunde (Law)	Lili Xiang Roslyn Gray	Terri Demetriou Maeve O'Neil
		Stu.AdminACI@mdx.ac.uk	Stu.AdminBAL@mdx.ac.uk	Stu.AdminHSE@mdx.ac.uk	Stu.AdminSAT@mdx.ac.uk
	Student Journey Administration Managers	Zara Johnson		Wendy Maharaj	
	Student Journey Administrators	Gabby Yordanova Sonia Martinelli Hailey Tran Rugiyya Gorbani		Priscilla Adu-Mantey Jia Yan Chloe Shiu Angela Walker	
	Business Partner(s): Timetabling and Curriculum Administrators	Shah Vali	Saima Ali Deniz Alic Elinor Briginshaw Somayen Ghayoomi	Deniz Alic Elinor Briginshaw Maria Chalepi Leigh Kelly	Maria Chalepi Deniz Alic
		TT.Curricula@mdx.ac.uk			
	Timetabling and Curriculum Manager	Paulo Preto			
	Head of Student Administration and Timetabling	Laura Mercer			

FACULTY OPERATIONS

- Key Contacts:
  - ACI Faculty Operations Manager – Raveena Assi
  - BAL Faculty Operations Manager – Joanne Nunn
  - HSCE Faculty Operations Manager – Karen Ridout
  - SAT Faculty Operations Manager – Adele Kelly
  - Head of Faculty Operations – Fabio Smith

- **Induction**
  - Support the Director PGR with planning of induction, arranging room requests and logistics.
  - Inform the Comms & Engagement Team of arrangements so student comms can be sent.
  - Support the DD RKE with Faculty relevant induction activity.
- **Boards of Study x 2 per year**
  - Liaise with PGR leads to set dates and ensure all paperwork is available to students, including PRES results. Ensure SVLs are recruited.
  - Officer the BoS meetings
- **EE Right to Work Checks (RTW)**
  - Examiner information submitted on the exam arrangement form to Student Journey Admin. (SJA)
  - Request for RTW submitted to Faculty Ops
  - Faculty Ops conduct RTW, share with HR and update SJA
- **External Payment Processing (EPP)**
  - Payment requests submitted to Faculty Ops once examination has completed
  - Process the EPP uploading to PAFIS and share with Payroll.
- **Programme handbooks**
  - Support Director PGR to make annual updates to the handbook ahead of their approval
  - Publish the handbook on My Learning
- **Research Ethics Committees**
  - Support REC processes and faculty meetings.

STUDENT LIFE: CAMPUS LIFE, STUDENT ADVICE, CAREERS & FUTURES

- UniHelp
- Care & Concern
- Academic skills
- Student Advice (financial, international, disability support)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Student engagement comms and events
- Promoting the PRES
- Careers and Futures support with: Graduate Competencies reflection and articulation, CV writing, interview preparation, exploring career options, starting a business, part time paid student roles

Middlesex University London

THANK YOU

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