

**Board:** Mathematical, physical and life sciences division

**Approved at** the meeting of MPLS Graduate School Committee on 31 October 2017

**Change 1:**

Rationale: No substantive change. This change replaces text with hyperlinks

With effect from the start of HT 2018

<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/rgoveresedegr/>

In 'General Regulations Governing Research Degrees', in §4. Residence and other Requirements of Probationer Research Students

In the following paragraph:

9. For a full-time Probationer Research Student registered on a doctoral training programme listed in the special regulations for the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences and the Medical Sciences Division. Found in the 'Research Degrees in the Mathematical, Physical and Life sciences Division' and 'Research Degrees in the Medial Sciences' sections, the maximum number of terms for which he or she may hold that status is as specified in the special regulations.

Delete

"Found in the 'Research Degrees in the Mathematical, Physical and Life sciences Division' and 'Research Degrees in the Medial Sciences' sections"

and place hyperlinks in the previous sentence as follows:

"For a full-time Probationer Research Student registered on a doctoral training programme listed in the special regulations for the [Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences](https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/dtproginmpls/) and the [Medical Sciences Division](https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/msdocttraicent/)"

Where the MPLS hyperlink is: <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/dtproginmpls/>

And the Medical Science hyperlink is: <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/msdocttraicent/>

**Change 2:**

Change and rationale: Permission to undertake their research in a well-found laboratory outside the University for MPLS doctoral students to be granted by the Director of the Graduate School in MPLS, rather than the Head of the MPLS division. This is more proportionate and reflects existing practice.

With effect from the start of HT 2018

<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/rdtm-palifesciedivi/>

In

## 19. Research Degrees in the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division

### 1. PERMISSION TO WORK IN A WELL-FOUND LABORATORY OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY

Last sentence.

Change as follows

Dispensation from these rules shall be sought from ~~the Head of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division~~ Director of the Graduate School through the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

#### **Change 3:**

Remove sections 2 and 3 of the MPLS divisional regulations, as these duplicate:

- a) Section 14: General regulations General Regulations Governing Research Degrees
- b) Section 19: Special regulations for Research Degrees in Biological Sciences , in Mathematical Sciences and in Physical Sciences
- c) Education Committee University Policy & guidance on Research Degree.

With effect from the start of HT 2018

<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/rdtm-palifesciedivi/>

In Section 19: Research Degrees in the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division

Delete section 2 and 3

## **~~2. TRANSFER OF STATUS AND CONFIRMATION OF STATUS~~**

### **~~1. Transfer of Status~~**

~~All research students will be admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student in the first instance. The status of Probationer Research Student may be held for a maximum of four terms (other than students registered on the doctoral training programmes listed in the Doctoral Training Programmes in MPLS section). Probationer Research Students should normally apply to transfer status to M.Sc. by Research or D.Phil. status before the end of the fourth full term from admission, subject to the further guidance below. Cases to defer applications for the transfer of status must be made by the candidate with the supervisor's support to the departmental Director of Graduate Studies by the end of the fourth full term after admission. Approval will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, in accordance with section §4 of the General Regulations Governing Research Degrees, set out in §4.~~

~~In the Biological Sciences (the Departments of Plant Sciences and Zoology), candidates should apply to transfer from the status of Probationer Research Student by the end of the fourth full term after admission as a research student.~~

~~In the Mathematical Sciences (the Departments of Computer Science, Mathematics and Statistics) students in Category A (those who have had no previous experience of research work, and normally all candidates in the Department of Computer Science) should apply to transfer from the status of Probationer Research Student between the second and fourth full term after admission as~~

a research student. Students with no previous experience of research work are advised to apply in the third full term after admission. Students in Category B (those who have had previous experience of research work who may have completed a taught master's course) should apply to transfer immediately after admission to Probationer Research Student status. (This category is only available to candidates in the Department of Computer Science in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.)

*In the Physical Sciences* (the Departments of Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Engineering Science, Materials and Physics), candidates should apply to transfer from the status of Probationer Research Student in the third or fourth full term after admission as a research student.

*In the Biological Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, and Physical Sciences*, a first application for transfer of status must take place within the six term limit of PRS status, as set out in the General Regulations Governing Research Degrees, §4. Any application outside those limits (other than in the General Regulations Governing Research Degrees, §4, cl.6), must be approved by or on behalf of Education Committee.

*Doctoral training programmes*, the regulations applying to research students following doctoral training programmes are set out in the Doctoral Training Programmes in MPLS Section.

Advice on the timing of transfer of status in each department will be provided by the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

Applications to transfer status should be considered by a minimum of two assessors on behalf of the Board of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division, one of whom may be the student's academic advisor, but neither of whom should be the student's supervisor nor normally a member of his/her supervisory team. Each department has its own assessment procedures, which should include as a minimum the following four components:

(i) completion of the appropriate graduate studies application forms to be submitted to the Divisional Graduate Studies Office, 9 Parks Road;

(ii) submission of written work by the student. For example: a progress report; a literature review; any required course work; a plan for the development of the student's research; any published papers. Each department will set out its own requirements in this area;

(iii) an interview between the student and his/her assessors. The process of assessment must always include an interview with the candidate if the assessors cannot recommend transfer to D.Phil. status;

(iv) the student should have made a brief presentation or talk whilst a Probationer Research Student. This need not be part of the transfer interview.

A report will be written to provide feedback to the student, their supervisor, and college. The report will include an assessment of the viability and suitability of the proposed research, and of its completion on a reasonable timescale.

A candidate whose first application for transfer to D.Phil. status is not approved, shall be permitted to make one further application, and shall be granted an extension of time for one term if this is necessary for the purposes of making the application.

These procedures are also set out in the Division's Postgraduate Research Student Handbook.

## *2. Confirmation of Status*

Confirmation of status for D.Phil. students must take place no later than nine terms after admission to graduate status. Students are advised to apply for their first attempt at confirmation of D.Phil. status by the end of the eighth full term after admission as a graduate research student.

*Doctoral training programmes*, the regulations applying to research students following doctoral training programmes are set out in the Doctoral Training Programmes in MPLS Section.

Students are encouraged very strongly to apply for confirmation of status at least six–twelve months before they expect to submit their thesis for examination to make this process a constructive part of the development of the student's research. The application for confirmation of status must be made and approved before requesting the formal appointment of examiners.

The requirements for confirmation of status may vary for each department within the following framework:

- (i) completion of the appropriate graduate studies application forms to be submitted to the Divisional Graduate Studies Office, 9 Parks Road. The candidate and their supervisor are required to provide a clear indication of progress to date, and the timetable for submission of the thesis;
- (ii) all applications must be reviewed by two assessors, one of whom may be the departmental Director of Graduate Studies, but neither of whom should be the candidate's supervisor;
- (iii) the candidate should produce a brief written report about their research achievements to date. The specific requirements will be set out by the department, for example a publication(s) or draft chapter(s) from the candidate's thesis, a plan and the timetable for submission of the thesis;
- (iv) an interview between the student and their assessors.

The assessor(s) will write a brief report to provide feedback to the candidate, the supervisor, and college. The report will include an assessment of progress and submission of the thesis within the planned timescale.

A candidate whose first application for confirmation of status is not approved, shall be permitted to make one further application, normally within one term of the original application, and shall be granted an extension of time for one term if this is necessary for the purposes of making the application.

If a candidate's application for confirmation of status is unsuccessful, the board may approve a transfer from D.Phil. to M.Sc. by Research status.

Cases to defer applications for the confirmation of status must be made by the candidate with the supervisor's support to the departmental Director of Graduate Studies by the end of the ninth full-term after admission. Approval will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Students may apply to defer confirmation of status for a maximum of three terms. The Director of Graduate Studies in each department may decide how many terms, up to the maximum, a candidate may be allowed to defer.

These procedures are also set out in the Division's Postgraduate Research Student Handbook.

### 3. APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS

In applying for appointment of examiners, candidates should note that a supervisor is disqualified from appointment, and that the divisional board will not normally appoint as examiner individuals previously closely associated with the candidate or his or her work, representatives of any organisation sponsoring the candidate's research, representatives of any organisation at which a candidate dispensed from residence under the provisions of cl.1 above, is based, or former colleagues of the candidate. In particular, an examiner, whether internal or external, who has played a significant part in advising the candidate is inappropriate and particularly so where the collaboration has led to the publishing of joint papers by the candidate and the examiner. It is accepted that examiners will usually be acquainted with the supervisor, and sometimes the candidate, and that this in itself is not a bar to acting as an examiner. Dispensation from this rule should be sought from the Head of Division through the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

#### **Change 4:**

Insert new divisional regulation for Examination by integrated thesis in section 19 as a new section 2. These regulations are required by the University's Education Committee following its agreement that each division should set out separate regulations for this.

With effect from HT 2018

<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/rdtm-palifesciedivi/>

### **2: Examination by integrated thesis**

An integrated thesis may constitute an acceptable thesis for students registered on the following programmes: DPhil and MSc by Research Physical & Theoretical Chemistry, DPhil and MSc by

Research Earth Sciences, DPhil and MSc by Research Plant Sciences, DPhil and MSc by Research Statistics, DPhil and MSc by Research Zoology.

An integrated thesis may either be a hybrid of conventional chapters and high-quality scientific papers, or be fully paper-based. Regardless of the format, the content of the thesis should reflect the amount, originality and level of work expected for a conventional thesis. It should not be assumed that the act of publication (in whatever form) means the work is of suitable academic quality and content for inclusion in a thesis, and students should discuss all papers in detail with their supervisor before including. It would be anticipated that the candidate would be a lead contributor, rather than a minor author, on at least some of the papers in order to consider this format. There is no minimum, or maximum, number of papers a candidate is expected/allowed to include as part of such a thesis and it will remain a matter for the examiners to conclude whether the contributions are equivalent to that which would be expected of a standard DPhil.

Any papers utilised must concern a common subject, constitute a continuous theme and conform to the following guidelines:

- (i) If a candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy wishes to be examined through an integrated thesis, they should apply for permission to be examined in this way when they apply for confirmation of status, as detailed in the relevant departmental handbook. A candidate for the Degree of Master of Science by Research should normally apply for permission to be examined in this way six months before submitting their papers for examination. To revert to being examined by a conventional thesis rather than an integrated thesis, the candidate must inform their department of the change as detailed in the relevant departmental handbook.
- (ii) Work can be included regardless of its acceptance status for publication but candidates may be questioned on the publication status of their work by the examiners.
- (iii) Any submitted/published papers should relate directly to the candidate's approved field of study, and should have been written whilst holding the status of PRS or a student for the MSc (by Research), or DPhil.
- (iv) The collection of papers must include a separate introduction, a full literature review, discussion and a conclusion, so that the integrated thesis can be read as a single, coherent document.
- (v) The candidate must ensure all matters of copyright are addressed before a paper's inclusion. A pre-print version of any published papers should be included as standard.
- (vi) Joint/multi-authored papers are common in science based subjects and thus acceptable if the candidate can both defend the paper in full and provide a written statement of authorship, agreed by all authors, that certifies the extent of the candidate's own contribution. A standard template is available for this purpose.

The length and scope of theses, including word limits for each subject area in the Division are set out in Departmental guidelines.

**Change 5:**

Delete those regulations within 'Research Degrees in Biological Sciences' and within 'Research Degrees in Mathematical Sciences' (Statistics only) that are replaced by the new divisional regulation for Examination by integrated thesis.

With effect from the start of HT 2018

Within Research Degrees in Biological Sciences: <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/rdinbiolscie/>

Delete:

~~A set of scientific papers prepared as for publication, but not necessarily yet published, that concern a common subject may constitute an acceptable thesis, provided that with the addition of an Introduction, General Discussion, and General Conclusions they constitute a coherent body of work. Such papers should either be incorporated as typescript pages or as offprints bound in to the body of the thesis. Papers written in collaboration should not be included unless the greater part of the work is directly attributed to the candidate himself or herself, and the supervisor so certifies. Joint papers may however be included as appendices in a thesis.~~

Within Research Degrees in Mathematical Sciences: <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/rdinmathscie/>

Delete:

~~For students in Statistics a set of scientific papers prepared as for publication, but not necessarily yet published, that concern a common subject may constitute an acceptable thesis, provided that with the addition of an Introduction, General Discussion, and General Conclusions they constitute a coherent body of work. Such papers should either be incorporated as typescript pages or as offprints bound in to the body of the thesis. Papers written in collaboration should not be included unless the greater part of the work is directly attributed to the candidate himself or herself, and the supervisor so certifies. Joint papers may however be included as appendices in a thesis. Candidates should note that the acceptance of such material for publication does not of itself constitute proof that the work is of sufficient quality or significance to merit the award of the degree concerned. This remains a judgement of the relevant board on the recommendation of its examiners.~~

~~Candidates with some published work may also include that as part of a traditional thesis, normally as an appendix.~~

~~Approval to submit a thesis using this format must be sought in advance from the appropriate Director of Graduate Studies, and should have the support of their supervisor~~

#### **Change 6:**

Corrections and clarifications to the divisional regulations for doctoral training programmes

- a) Correct an error made during a previous regulation change ((4 June 2015) in 1 (a) (i). The CDT in the 'Science and Application in Plastic Electronic Materials' is listed in both 1(a) (i) and in 1 (b). It should only be appear in one of these lists, and that is in 1(b).

- b) The meaning of paragraph 2e is confusing, and refers readers back to general regulations, which in turn refer readers back to paragraph 2(e). The paragraph has been replaced by additional sentences in 2(a) to convey the intended meaning, which is that the six term limit for PRS status for a student on a doctoral training programme can be extended by up to 2 terms to a maximum of 8 terms (just as the 4 term limit on a standard non-CDT programme can be extended by 2 terms to a maximum of 6 terms).
- c) Complete a sentence that is currently incomplete in *paragraph 4*, possibly due to a drafting error made during a previous regulation change (4 June 2015).

With effect from the start of HT 2018

<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/dtproginmpls/>

## Doctoral Training Programmes in MPLS

### 1. *Programmes covered by these regulations*

(a) The regulations in cl. 2, 3, and 4 shall apply to all research students registered on the following doctoral training programmes, irrespective of the division or department they are based within for their research project:

- (i) Centres for Doctoral Training in: Autonomous Intelligent Machines and Systems; Biomedical Imaging; Cyber Security; Healthcare Innovation; Industrially Focused Mathematical Modelling; Oil and Gas; Partial Differential Equations: Analysis and Applications; Renewable Energy Marine Structures; ~~Science and Application of Plastic Electronic Materials~~; Science and Technology of Fusion Energy; Statistical Science; Systems Approaches to Biomedical Science; Synthesis for Biology and Medicine; and Synthetic Biology;
- (ii) Doctoral Training Centres in: Life Sciences Interface; and Systems Biology;
- (iii) Doctoral Training Partnership in Environmental Research;
- (iv) Doctoral Training Partnership in Interdisciplinary Bioscience;
- (v) Students for the DPhil in Cardiovascular Medicinal Chemistry.

The programmes listed in (i), (ii) and (v) shall be under the supervision of the Board of the Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division.

The programmes listed in (iii) shall be under the joint supervision of the Boards of the Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division, and the Social Sciences Division. They shall appoint a Management Board to run the programme.

The programme listed in (iv) shall be under the joint supervision of the Boards of the Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division, and the Medical Sciences Division. They shall appoint a Management Board to run the programme.



(b) The regulations in cl. 2, 3, and 4 shall not apply to the doctoral training programmes listed below. Students shall be registered for the first year of their programme as follows:

(i) Centre for Doctoral Training in Gas Turbine Aerodynamics: students shall be registered for the first year of this programme at the University of Cambridge,

(ii) Centre for Doctoral Training in Science and Application of Plastic Electronic Materials: students shall be registered for the first year of this programme at the Imperial College of Science and Technology,

(iii) Centre for Doctoral Training in Diamond Science and Technology: students shall be registered for the first year of this programme at the University of Warwick,

(iv) Centre for Doctoral Training in Theory and Modelling in Chemical Sciences shall be registered for the first year of this programme on the MSc in Theoretical and Computational Chemistry.

These programmes shall be under the supervision of the Board of the Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division.

Students on the programmes listed in b (i)-(iii) must pass the postgraduate taught course that they are registered on for the first year in order to be admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student. Students on the programme listed in b (iv) must meet the conditions specified in the regulations for the MSc in Theoretical and Computational Chemistry in order to be admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student. Students listed in b (i) to (iv) who are admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student may hold that status for up to four terms. The General Regulations Governing Research Degrees and the regulations for Research Degrees in Physical Sciences shall then apply.

## *2. Probationer Research Student Status*

(a) Students admitted to the doctoral programmes listed in (1) (a) shall hold the status of Probationer Research Student for a maximum of six terms.

(b) Students admitted by The University of Warwick to the Centre for Doctoral Training in Statistical Science, and students admitted by the University of Bristol or the University of Warwick to the Centre for Doctoral Training in Synthetic Biology, and students admitted by the University of Nottingham to the Centre for Doctoral Training in Biomedical Imaging shall be matriculated and hold the status of Probationer Research Student Status at the University of Oxford for the first three terms of their doctoral training programme.

(c) A Probationer Research Student on a doctoral training programme listed in (1) (a) shall apply for admission to D.Phil. status normally before the end of the fifth term, and no later than the eighth week of the sixth term.

(d) A Probationer Research Student registered on the Centre for Doctoral Training in Renewable Energy Marine Structures programme may choose to apply for admission to either the degree of

Doctor of Engineering or the degree of Doctoral of Philosophy. A Student must choose which degree to apply for no later than the end of the third full-term. The Regulations below apply to students seeking to apply for and supplicate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. For students seeking to apply for the degree of Doctor of Engineering, the Regulations for the Doctor of Engineering shall apply.

(e) A candidate whose first application for transfer to D.Phil. status is not approved shall be permitted to make one further application, following the procedures laid down in the General Regulations Governing Research Degrees §4, clauses 1-4, and shall be granted an extension of time for one term if this is necessary for the purposes of making the application.

(f) Subject to the approval of the divisional board, and for good cause, a student may be permitted to hold the status of PRS prior to the first application for transfer of status for a further one or two terms, on the condition that the first application for transfer of status is submitted and assessed within eight terms of the student being admitted to PRS status. Any application outside this limit (other than in clause 2(e) above) must be approved by or on behalf of Education Committee.

~~(e) The Education Committee regulations applying to a Probationer Research Student on a doctoral training programme that govern applications for transfer from Probationer Research Student Status are set out under General Regulations Governing Research Degrees §4 cl.6; and extensions to the maximum number of terms specified above are set out under General Regulations Governing Research Degrees §4 cl.7.~~

~~(f)~~ (g) A Probationer Research Student on a doctoral training programme shall cease to hold such status in accordance with General Regulations Governing Research Degrees §4.10 (i)–(iii).

~~(g)~~ (h) The board may grant a student suspension from the Register of those admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student or deprive a student of his or her status; and in such cases it shall at all times follow procedures determined by the Education Committee by regulation. The board may also reinstate a student to the Register, provided that the total number of terms a Student has spent as a Probationer Research Student has not exceeded eight terms in the case of a Student on a doctoral training programme listed in (1) (a).

### *3. Confirmation of Status as a Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*

A candidate on a doctoral training programme listed in (1) (a) who has been admitted to the status of Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy must apply to the board for confirmation of his or her status as a D.Phil. Student no later than the eighth week of the tenth term after admission as a research student; and not normally earlier than the ninth term after that in which he or she was initially admitted to the status of a Probationer Research Student or to the status of a student for another higher degree of the University.

A Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy on a doctoral training programme listed in (1) (a) shall cease to hold such status unless it has been confirmed within ten terms of his or her admission to Probationer Research Student status.

*4. Other requirements for students for the Degree of Philosophy following a doctoral training programme*

A full-time Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy following a doctoral training programme may hold that status for twelve terms from admission to Probationer Research Student status, ~~or~~  
~~nine terms from admission to Probationer Research Student status.~~