

SUMMARY OF KEY REGULATORY POINTS FOR SUPERVISORS OF MPHIL/ PHD STUDENTS

The key documents for doctoral students are:

- *Research Degree Regulations*
- *Code of practice for research students and supervisors*

Both are available on the following webpage as is a document outlining key changes for 2018-19. <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx>

KEY POINTS FOR SUPERVISORS

1. Section 2 (4) - Period of study

When does my student have to submit?

Degree	Submission of thesis
MPhil (FT)	Before the end of 3 calendar years of full-time study
MPhil (PT)	Before the end of 6 calendar years of part-time study.
PhD (FT)	Before the end of 4 calendar years of full-time study
PhD (PT)	Before the end of 8 calendar years of part-time study.

What happens if my student is funded by a Research Council which sets a different deadline?

Where a student is in receipt of Research Council funding with a deadline that precedes that of the College, the former will take precedence.

What happens if my student can't submit by the deadline because of illness or other extenuating circumstances?

The DoGs will need to submit a request for a suspension of regulations – see link at end of this document together with supporting documentary evidence.

When and under what circumstances can my student change from FT to PT study?

Full-time students are not normally permitted to change to part-time study after the end of the second year of the MPhil or PhD programme. To request such a change the DoGs will need to submit a request for a suspension of regulations – see link at end of this document. If students change mode after the end of the second year, they are still regarded as full-time from a HESA perspective.

2. Section 5 – Interruptions

Under what circumstances can my student interrupt his/ her studies?

- Students can normally only interrupt for up to 24 months in total over their programme of study on financial, medical or personal grounds on the recommendation of the student's Head(s) of Department or School.
- A period of interruption will not normally be granted during the writing-up year.

Interrupted students remain registered students of the College and subject to College regulations, but do not have the right to attend classes, use College facilities, or receive tuition or supervision other than occasional access to tutors by arrangement unless they are

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interrupting for maternity/paternity/ adoption leave. **Exceptions may also be made to support recovery in cases of interruptions due to mental health and wellbeing.**

- All requests for interruptions are considered by the Dean of Doctoral School on receipt of a request submitted by the DoGs via the Online PGR Form– see link at end of this document.

How long can Tier 4 visa holders interrupt for?

If Tier 4 visa holders interrupt their studies, the College is obliged to withdraw its sponsorship for the duration of the interruption and the student is obliged by the Home Office to leave the UK for this period. Before the student returns from interruption, they will need to apply for a new visa.

In exceptional circumstances where a student needs to interrupt for up to 60 days, they may be permitted to remain in the UK during the period of interruption, e.g. if they require medical treatment and are not able to fully engage with their studies. In such a case they need to complete an *Authorised Absence* form. Similarly should they need to interrupt their studies for up to 60 days and return home for medical treatment, a family emergency etc. they must also complete an *Authorised Absence* form. Student Administration (student-administration@royalholloway.ac.uk) can advise further on authorised absences for Tier 4 visa students

Can I backdate an interruption for a student?

The College cannot backdate interruptions into the previous academic year as statistical returns on student enrolment have already been made to HESA. Backdated interruptions within an academic year are only approved in exceptional circumstances and only for a restricted period. It is therefore important that when your student is experiencing difficulties such that s/he cannot fully engage with research work, an interruption is requested.

HESA is rolling out changes to reporting requirements, specially requiring 'live' regular reporting throughout the year rather than reporting once a year. This will impact quite significantly on how far the College can backdate an interruption.

If my student interrupts, how does this affect his/ her submission deadline?

If your student is not RCUK funded and interrupts for six months, for example, the submission deadline will be moved out by six months.

HOWEVER, if your student is RCUK funded, and the interruption is up to 13 weeks, s/he will still be expected to meet the RCUK deadline. In other cases where the interruption is longer than 13 weeks, it may still be the case that the Research Council will not extend the deadline. You should discuss the impact of your student's interruption request with scholarshipadministration@royalholloway.ac.uk.

3. Section 7: Registration on MPhil and PhD programmes

When does my student have to have her/ his first attempt at upgrading from MPhil to PhD?

Within the first twenty months of full-time study, or the first forty months of part-time study.

If unsuccessful at their first attempt, when does my student have to have her/ his second and final attempt at upgrading from MPhil to PhD?

Before the end of the second year of full-time study, or the fourth year of part-time study.

What happens if a first or second attempt at the upgrade can only happen after these deadline?

The DoGs will need to submit a suspension of regulations via the Online PGR Form – see link at end of this document

4. Section 8 - Annual enrolment with the College

Can my full-time student take on part-time work?

Yes but s/he is not permitted to work more than twenty hours per week as indicated in the Research Degree Regulations.

Can my part-time student take on part-time work?

Yes. A part-time student is not subject to the restriction on twenty hours per week as indicated in the Research Degree Regulations as this only applied to full-time students.

5. Section 9 - Reviews of academic progress

Who has to attend my student's annual review?

At least one member of the supervisory team present plus one member of staff who is completely independent of the supervisory team

Who has to attend my student's upgrade?

A minimum of three members, with at least one member of the supervisory team and one member of staff who is completely independent of the supervisory team in attendance.

How is the review/ upgrade conducted?

It is normally a face-to-face meeting.

What happens if a member of the panel can't be physically present?

A member of the panel may be present via video conference or by webcam where there are extenuating circumstances. You need to obtain prior agreement to the arrangements with your student. It should be noted in the written invitation to the student prior to the review meeting where a member of the panel will be present via video conference or by webcam.

6. Section 16: Conduct of the MPhil and PhD final examination

Do I, as the principal supervisor, attend the viva?

You will be invited to attend the oral examination as an observer, unless your student indicates otherwise at the time of his/her formal entry or re-entry to the final examination. You can't participate in the viva unless invited to contribute by the examiners.

Where can the viva take place?

The viva must be held at the College (in Egham) or in one of the buildings owned by the University of London in central London (Bedford Square or Senate House).

Can the viva be held at other venues?

Only if there are exceptional circumstances and the student and the College agree that it is expedient to hold the oral examination elsewhere. The DoGs would need to submit a request via the Online PGR Request Form.

What happens if a member of the panel or student can't be physically present for the viva?

In exceptional circumstances an MPhil/ PhD examiner or student may be present at the examination via video conference or by webcam. You need to obtain prior written agreement to the arrangements with your student. The DoGs would need to submit a request via the Online PGR Request Form.

For Online PGR Request Form and details of process for applying for a suspension of regulations:
<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/staff/teaching/aqpo/academic-regulations-and-policies/suspensions-of-regulations.aspx>