

Research Degrees Committee: timely submissions and completions

During the academic year 2018-19, the Research Degrees Committee agreed to a series of measures to improve OBU’s overall timely completion rates, which had been falling for the previous five years. The circulation of this document was one of these measures. Subsequent work on improving these rates was severely disrupted by the arrival of Covid-19, however. Given that the risk of another Covid-19 pandemic has receded significantly, we think that now is a good time to return to this work and re-circulate this document, which aims to summarize all the key points of information and advice.

We only would reiterate how important it is that students complete in a timely fashion. No student should have to spend any longer than necessary obtaining their research degree and setting aspirational time frames is crucial to this. The following information and advice is in keeping with the OBU research degrees regulations 6.13 Time limits for Level 7 and 8 courses , as well as standards of good practice at other UK HE institutions.

It is also important to note that Oxford Brookes University has a statutory duty to report all current PhD students to the Office of Students, each academic in line with benchmarking across the sector.

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**1. Submission and completion dates: what’s the difference?**

* **Submission** is when a student submits copies of his/her/their thesis to the Research Degrees Team, so that it can be sent to the examiners. The submission date is calculated from the effective date of registration, as confirmed following approval by RDC S&T or HESS.
* **Completion** occurs when the degree is finally awarded and conferred (that is, the date on the letter of conferment). The completion date is calculated from the effective date of registration as confirmed following approval by RDC S&T or HESS.

Please see for more information: 7.2 Programme length - RDC Regulations

## 2. Timescales for timely submission:

**Full-time PhD study: 3 years**

**Part Time PhD study: 5 years**

**Timescales for a timely completion:**

**Full-time PhD study: 3.5 years**

**Part-time PhD study: 5.5 years**

**3. Measures that should be implemented in order to facilitate timely completions**

# DURING THE PROGRAMME OF STUDY

**Students responsibilities:**

* As a student you must start planning the timescale for your programme from the first year of study following your first enrolment. You are required to present a timeline in your registration application.
* Your timeline should always work towards the submission timescales outlined above.
* Where the research project is deemed overly ambitious, you should work with your Postgraduate Research Tutor (PGRT) and Director of Studies to refine the proposal prior to submitting an application for registration.
* Within your timetable please ensure you have clear deadlines for each of your key milestones - that is, registration, transfer, and submission - including the timely submission of associated applications. See the Research Degree Regulations as follows:
  + Section 5.1 :Registration
  + Section 12.1:Transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD
  + Ethical approval, where appropriate
* Your registration application should be submitted within 6 months if you are a full-time student, and 9 months if you are a part-time student.
* Your transfer application should be submitted within 18 months if you are a full-time student, and 24-26 months if you are a part-time student.
* The submission of your thesis should be as outlined in section 2 of this document: that is, at 3 years for full-time students and 5 years for part-time students.

**Director of Studies responsibilities:**

* As Director of Studies, you should support your student to plan their timescale for the programme from the first year of studying, which begins with the student’s first enrolment. You should ensure that your student checks thoroughly the timeline presented in their student’s registration application.
* Where the research project is deemed overly ambitious, you, the student and the PGRT are responsible for refining the proposal prior to submitting the application for registration.
* As Director of Studies, you should ensure that your student’s timetable corresponds to the timely schedules detailed above.
  + This should include attention to the timely submission of applications for registration and transfer, and ethical approval, where appropriate.
* The submission of the thesis should be 3 years from first enrolment for full-time students and 5 years for part-time students.
* As Director of Studies, you **must** ensure that the examiners are appointed at least 3 months before the submission of the thesis.

**Postgraduate Research Tutor responsibilities:**

* As PGRT, you should support the Director of Studies to ensure all students are reminded of the timely schedules attached to their programmes, whether full-time or part-time.
* You will also ensure that the deadlines for each milestone are reviewed during the Annual Progress Monitoring process, and remedial action should be taken where appropriate.
* Where the research project is deemed overly ambitious, you, as PGRT, the Director of Studies and student are responsible for refining the proposal prior to submitting an application for registration.

## POST-SUBMISSION

**Internal examiner responsibilities:**

* The viva should be organised as soon as the examiners receive the thesis to ensure that the viva takes place within two to three months of receiving the thesis;
* The internal examiner should where possible, 're-evaluate the thesis once the revised version is received post-viva'
* Where major amendments can be approved by a non-subject expert, the internal examiner should be nominated to re-evaluate the revised thesis.

**Internal and External examiner(s) responsibilities:**

* To produce their joint final report as soon as possible after the viva, and within 2 weeks of the viva;
* All examiners should set aside time to review the revised thesis as soon as it is submitted

**Students responsibilities:**

* Ensure they have been clear as to their preference for the format of the viva with the internal examiner as early as possible.
* When they have been informed by the examiners of a requirement for amendments to the thesis post-viva, to prioritise the amendments in line with the given deadline.

**PGRT/Director of Studies responsibilities:**

* To support and encourage the student to prioritise and complete any amendments in a timely manner by the given deadline.

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