

University of Wolverhampton

Regulations for the Degree Award of: Doctor of Medicine (MD)

1. GENERAL REGULATIONS

- 1.1 The Degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) is awarded by the University in recognition of the successful completion of a period of supervised research and training, the results of which show convincing evidence of scholarship, the competence of the candidate to pursue research and a significant contribution to new knowledge and understanding in the theory and/or practice of any area of medicine. The results of this research shall then be embodied in a thesis or other appropriate form and must contain material of a standard appropriate for peer-reviewed publication.
- 1.2 The mode of admission to the course and other conditions relating to the degree shall be prescribed in Regulations.
- 1.3 Applicants must satisfy the entry requirements for admission to the degree as prescribed by the Regulations and must satisfy the University that they are fit by reason of their ability and training to undertake the degree.
- 1.4 Except in so far as relaxation is granted in accordance with the Regulations:
 - 1.4.1 for full-time study the degree shall be a continuous one, extending over such period as may be prescribed by the Regulations; students will however be permitted to perform limited clinical duties if the prior approval of their supervisor(s) is obtained. Such limited duties might equate to one session per week (10% of working week) and 'out of hours' on call duties. Students will be required to devote the whole of the remaining time to the degree and to attend in the University at all appropriate times;
 - 1.4.2 for part-time study the degree shall be continuous and include study time equivalent to a full-time degree but registration should not exceed twice the full-time study. The students shall be required to attend the University at all appropriate times.

2. ADMISSION TO THE DEGREE

- 2.1 All applicants to the University will be required to complete the appropriate application form which is subject to consideration by appropriate staff within the School of Medicine and Clinical Practice and authorisation by the Dean of Research.
- 2.2 Applicants for admission must be recognised graduates in Medicine of at least three years' standing who holds a M.B., Ch.B degree or an equivalent qualification conferring eligibility for full or provisional registration with the General Medical Council; and either
 - 2.2.1 have for at least three years prior to the entry for the degree, held a research or teaching appointment; or
 - 2.2.2 have been engaged in the practice of medicine or surgery
- 2.3 Applicants proposing to undertake hands-on clinical research must be registered and hold appropriate indemnity.
- 2.4 An Applicant whose entry award was not delivered in English, or non-native speaker of English shall be required to demonstrate proficiency in English at least to the level of an IELTS score of 7.0 or its equivalent to be registered as an MD Student.
- 2.5 The University will not admit or allow the continuation of study for any person found to have made a fraudulent application.
- 2.6 Applicants who demonstrate that they have met the entry requirements and have provided an acceptable outline of the research that they propose to conduct will be asked to complete a research proposal in conjunction with a senior experienced clinical advisor (normally a senior consultant in the field of research but not the proposed clinical supervisors). The proposal should give sufficient detail to enable the MD Research Student Board to determine whether the proposed study is of sufficient academic weight and is capable of completion within the available time.
- 2.7 Applicants may also be admitted as a part-time student for the degree of MD if:
 - the periods for which they will be free from employment or other commitments will be sufficient for the purposes of the degree; and
 - the subject is suitable for part-time study.
- 2.8 A student may be admitted to a MD degree only if an appropriate research environment is available for the duration of the degree. This should include the availability of appropriate academic staff to provide supervision and training, other research-support staff, research facilities and learning resources.
- 2.9 Applicants for an MD will have a contract in a specialism (usually at Registrar or equivalent level) at a hospital with appropriate resources and support for clinical research. The hospital/Trust will provide the student with the appropriate time (usually 70%) over the two years for their research whilst allowing them to continue to undertake appropriate clinical duties (usually 10% up to a maximum of 30% of their time) as essential for continued GMC registration and in order to effectively undertake clinically-related research.

3. REGISTRATION

- 3.1 Registration is the annual process through which Students formally agree to be a Student member of the University for either the whole or part of the academic year.
- 3.2 The University Research Committee will agree, on an annual basis, the number of registration points at which new Students may commence their study. The minimum registration points will be two per annum.
- 3.3 Students are responsible for ensuring that they are fully registered at the appropriate point each year. Students not fully registered may be de-registered and barred from study.
- 3.4 All new Students will be required to provide evidence of their identity and relevant qualifications when they join the University.
- 3.5 Students requiring a visa to study in the UK must ensure that they meet, both at the beginning and for the duration of the course, requirements stipulated by UK Visas and Immigration and conditions of their visa.
- 3.6 Students must remain registered with the University until conferment of the award. This includes any periods following the examination (including re-submission) during which the Examiners' recommendations are implemented.
- 3.7 Continuing Students who do not re-register will be assumed to have withdrawn from their course.
- 3.8 In registering Students agree to abide by the University Regulations, Bye-Laws and their liability for annual fee payments.
- 3.9 Students must ensure that all fees and other payments due to the University are paid within the academic year such costs are incurred. Where appropriate they may agree to use any sponsorship or bursary in part payment of fees. Students owing the University money from a previous year or course, outside any agreed limit set annually by the University, will not be permitted to register. Students unable to register, because of outstanding debts, will be obliged to take a leave of absence or withdraw.
- 3.10 Any Student who is not registered, (including those on a Leave of Absence – see section 9), will not be covered by the University Insurance policy or by the University Health & Safety policy and will be excluded from their study, research, supervision and direction at the University.
- 3.11 Students must, at all times, ensure that the data the University holds for them are accurate. The registration process allows Students to check and update key personal information in their record. Changes which occur at other times in the academic year must be notified to the University. This includes notifying the University of their withdrawal, leave of absence or transfer following procedures published by the Academic Registrar.
- 3.12 The University has a statutory requirement to share data with certain other bodies. The Academic Registrar will publish annually a list of organisations which receive data from the University.

3.13 A student who is registered for a MD may apply for conversion to an alternative degree, including completing a 2 year full time equivalent prescribed period to complete a MPhil, or extending the prescribed period to 3 years full time equivalent in order to complete a PhD. Conversion can only be considered prospectively, in advance of completing the necessary prescribed period of research, and will incur fees applicable for the new degree.

4. DURATION OF THE DEGREE

4.1 Candidates for the degree of MD shall normally be registered for a continuous prescribed period of not less than 2 years in which they will conduct the research.

4.2 The duration of a part-time prescribed period will be dependent upon the time to be committed by the candidate for study but shall be no more than 4 years.

4.3 Extensions to the duration of a MD degree to permit further supervised research may be considered only in exceptional circumstances.

4.4 Full-time candidates registered on an MD degree may register for the submission period at the discretion of the University to allow additional time for preparation of the thesis for up to one year (3 years PT) beyond the prescribed period of the MD degree.

- A 'writing up' fee will be payable annually for any such submission period that is granted by the University.

4.5 The maximum period over which an MD award may be studied will be:

Mode of Study	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Full-time	Prescribed Period		Submission Period

Mode of Study	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Part-time	Prescribed Period			Submission Period		

5. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

5.1 A programme of skills development is a mandatory component of the MD degree.

5.2 All candidates for the degree of MD must undertake a skills audit at the beginning of their degree, and annually thereafter throughout their degree to determine their research, transferable and generic skills requirements. The audit will provide the basis for a planned programme of skills training and development. The outcomes of the audit and programme of skills development must be agreed by the student and the supervisory team. The supervisory team will be responsible for ensuring that the student has access to the required skills training and development opportunities. (See 6.8 continuation regulations)

6. CONTINUATION REGULATIONS

- 6.1 Student progress will be considered by the Supervisory team as part of the regular Supervisory process, following criteria agreed by the University Research Committee and published in the Research Handbooks.
- 6.2 All Research Students must meet their Supervisor on at least 12 occasions each year (part time Students on at least 6 occasions), using the agreed methods depending upon the location of the Student.
- 6.3 If the Supervisor judges that a Student's ability to progress is endangered, they will declare that Student to be subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' process. A Student may be subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' process under the following circumstances:
- 6.3.1 They have not met the requirements to satisfy the Supervisor that they should proceed
- 6.3.2 They have repeatedly failed to meet deadlines or quality thresholds as specified as part of the informal Supervisory review of progress.
- 6.4 When a Student meets the criteria of the 'Proceed with Caution' process the Dean of Research will be advised, and an action plan agreed. Where a Student continues to meet the 'Proceed with Caution' criteria for two or more months, the issue will be reported to the University Research Awards Sub-committee.
- 6.5 Where the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure does not result in an improvement in the Student's ability to progress, the Dean of Research may recommend to the Research Awards Sub-committee that the withdrawal procedure be initiated.
- 6.6 Progress is formally assessed annually through a formal Annual Progress Review (APR) process and continuing registration is dependent upon satisfactory progress.
- 6.7 Full-time Students admitted to the degree of MD shall demonstrate satisfactory progress by month 9 (Part-time month 21) of their research degree by submission of an 'Annual Review and Progression Form' accompanied by an oral presentation to the independent assessors.
- 6.8 Successful completion of the agreed programme of skills development and training will be a condition of progression between each year of the prescribed period of study.

APR for Full Time Students	Month of Study	Indicative Word Count
First Year (APR & Progression)	9	20,000
Second Year	21	40,000

APR for Part Time Students	Month of Study	Indicative Word Count
First Year	9	10,000
Second Year (APR & Progression)	21	20,000
Third Year	33	30,000
Fourth Year	45	40,000
Fifth Year	57	50,000

- 6.9 Failure to return your Annual Progress Review Form will automatically invoke the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure.

- 6.10 Students who are not able to demonstrate satisfactory progress before the end of their first year of registration, will not be permitted to register for the second year of the degree. They may, at the discretion of independent assessors, be offered the opportunity to submit a thesis for the degree of MPhil.
- 6.11 At each Annual Progress Review it would be permissible for a student to transfer to the equivalent point of the PhD degree. For this purpose, the student shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the independent assessors, their understanding of the subject and that their ability plus the subject were suitable for PhD level research.

7. SUPERVISION

- 7.1 MD students are supported by a supervisory team and have access to specialist research skills training. Supervision and support is provided by a carefully selected team that will include at least one medical doctor in the specialty and others as required. Students meet with their supervisors at least monthly.
- 7.2 Depending on the research project students may be based in laboratories at the University of Wolverhampton but most will be clinically based at an approved hospital trust.

8. THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The MD is awarded to a candidate who, has presented and defended a thesis, by oral examination, to the satisfaction of the examiners.
- 8.2 Learning Outcomes for the Award of MD:
- an original work making a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of study;
 - contain material worthy of publication;
 - show a comprehensive knowledge and a critical appreciation of the field of study and related literature;
 - show that the student's observations have been carefully made;
 - show the exercise of independent critical judgment with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field;
 - contain material which presents a unified body of work;
 - be satisfactory in its literary and general presentation, give full and adequate references and have a coherent structure understandable to a scholar in the same general field with regard to intentions, background, methods, results, discussion and conclusions.

Thesis Submission

- 8.3 All Research Students must present a written thesis, presented in English, in the format agreed by the University Research Committee, on the subject of their research, for examination by a team of Examiners.
- 8.4 Research Students are required to submit their thesis for examination within the registration periods set out in 4.5.

- 8.5 If a thesis is not submitted before the end of the MD degree or submission period, the student's candidacy automatically lapses and the student cannot subsequently submit, unless further approval is granted by the University.
- 8.6 If a student wishes to submit a thesis more than 3 months before the end of their prescribed period (or 6 months if part-time) they will require the permission of the supervisory team and the University. Permission will only be granted up to one year before the end of the MD degree for full time students, and 2 years before the end of the MD degree for part time students.

Content and Length of Thesis

- 8.7 The thesis may contain work previously published by the candidate, and reference to such publication shall be made in the thesis. Where publications are jointly authored by the Student and others, the Student's contribution to the publication must be specified.
- 8.8 The thesis may not contain work that has been previously submitted for another award.
- 8.9 Following the award of the degree, an electronic copy of the theses (E-theses) will be lodged in the University's on-line repository unless an application for confidentiality has been approved by the Dean of Research.
- 8.10 The copies of the thesis submitted for examination and the final E-Thesis shall remain the property of the University but the copyright of the thesis shall be vested in the Student.
- 8.11 An application for confidentiality may be made to the Dean of Research on the following grounds:
- to enable a patent application to be lodged, or
 - to protect material that is sensitive commercially or personally, or due to its relation to questions of national security.
- 8.12 Approval must be sought and granted no later than the time at which examination arrangements are approved. The normal maximum period of confidentiality is two years. Where an application for confidentiality has been granted, the thesis will be retained by the University on restricted access and will only be made available to those directly involved with the project.
- 8.13 The thesis shall not exceed 60,000 words which includes footnotes and endnotes but excludes references, appendices and lists of contents.

Examination

- 8.14 A team of Examiners will be convened to examine Students at the appropriate time. The membership of the Examination Teams will be approved by the Dean of Research and reported to the Research Awards Sub-Committee. Members of the Student's Supervisory team or scholars whose own work forms the focus of the thesis may not be appointed as an Examiner.
- 8.15 The Examining team will comprise a minimum of two Examiners. One must be external to the University and/or any linked partners. In order to ensure the integrity of the examining process, Students who are employed by the University will be examined by at least three

Examiners, at least two of whom must be external to the University and/or any linked partners.

- 8.16 All oral examinations will be chaired by a representative of the University. They will be independent of the project, Student and Supervisors. Their role is to ensure that the examination is conducted fairly and in accordance with the University's regulations.
- 8.17 In cases of recorded disability where a candidate would be disadvantaged by an oral examination, alternative arrangements may be approved by the Dean of Research.
- 8.18 Once the examining team has been appointed, neither the Student nor the Supervisory team shall have any contact with the Examiners in relation to the thesis until the oral examination.
- 8.19 Following the oral examination, the Examiners will be asked to make one of the following recommendations:
- 8.19.1 Pass.
 - 8.19.2 Pass, subject to minor corrections, in accordance with 8.21
 - 8.19.3 Re-submit and/or be re-examined orally for the degree originally submitted, in accordance with 8.22
 - 8.19.4 Re-submit and/or be re-examined orally the original MD for the degree of MPhil, in accordance with 8.23
 - 8.19.5 Fail. The Student has no further opportunity for submission.
- 8.20 If the thesis is awarded a Pass subject to minor correction (8.19.2) of editorial or other stated deficiencies, the Student must resubmit the corrected work within 12 weeks. If the thesis is not resubmitted within 12 weeks, and in the absence of approved and recorded Leave of Absence, the University reserves the right not to confer the award.
- 8.21 If the thesis is not considered to be of sufficiently high standard to recommend the award submitted, but there is evidence of the potential of a successful submission, then the Examiners may recommend that the Student re-submit the thesis. Such re-submission will take place within 12 calendar months of the date of the oral examination and Students must remain registered at the University during this time. The Examiners have the discretion to request a further oral examination following re-submission of the thesis. The maximum registration period will be extended to accommodate this requirement
- 8.22 If the thesis for a MD award is not considered to be of sufficiently high standard to recommend the full award and the Examiners do not believe there is evidence of potential to reach the appropriate standard within 12 months, they may recommend that the Student re-submit the thesis for an MPhil award. Such re-submission will take place within 6 calendar months of the date of the oral examination. The Examiners have the discretion to request a further oral examination following re-submission of the thesis.
- 8.23 A Student whose thesis has been recommended for re- submission may exercise the option of re- submitting a revised thesis for consideration for the award of MPhil. Such re- submission will take place within 6 calendar months of the date of the oral examination. In such cases, the thesis will be considered a re-submission and bound by regulation 8.25 below.
- 8.24 Where the thesis is re-submitted, the Examiners will only consider the issues that were previously referred. They will be asked to make one of the following recommendations:
- 8.24.1 Pass

8.24.2 Pass, subject to minor corrections to be completed within 4 weeks

8.24.3 Fail. There is no further opportunity for submission.

- 8.25 Where Examiners are unable to reach an agreed recommendation, the Dean of Research may:
- 8.25.1 accept a majority recommendation;
 - 8.25.2 accept the recommendation of the external Examiner; or
 - 8.25.3 require the appointment of an additional Examiner.
- 8.26 In the case of 8.25.3 above, or where there has been a substantial procedural error, an additional Examiner shall prepare an independent report on the thesis and may request an additional oral examination. The only outcomes available to the additional Examiner are either Pass or Fail. S/he shall neither seek nor be informed of the individual recommendations of the other Examiners.
- 8.27 Where the Examiners believe that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose could be served by conducting an oral examination, they may decide that the thesis be referred for further work prior to conducting an oral examination. In such cases, when the thesis is re-submitted for examination it will be examined under regulation 8.24 above.
- 8.28 All Examiners' recommendations are subject to confirmation by the Research Awards Sub-Committee.

9. Appeals

- 9.1 The University has an appeals procedure that is available for all research Students.
- 9.2 Prior to the submission of the thesis for examination, a Student may appeal against any recommendation not to progress to examination stage.
- 9.3 Grounds for appeal against a recommendation not to progress may include:
- Procedural irregularity in arriving at the recommendation;
 - Evidence of unfair or improper assessment by either one or more members of the Supervisory team or of the designated authority;
 - Evidence of unsatisfactory or insufficient supervision, inadequate access to basic support facilities, or lack of provision of agreed specialist or other facilities, that can be demonstrated to have had a negative impact on the Student's ability to progress.
- 9.4 A Student may appeal against the recommendation of the Examiners following examination or re-examination. Grounds for appeal against an Examiners' recommendation may include:
- Evidence that there were circumstances of which the Chair and the Examiners were not aware that affected the Student's performance at the oral examination;
 - Evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) of such a nature as to cause doubt on the reliability of the recommendation;
 - Evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the Examiners.
- 9.5 Grounds for appeal against an Examiner's recommendation shall not include:
- The academic judgment of the Examiners;
 - Allegations of unsatisfactory or insufficient supervision.

10. Academic misconduct

10.1 The University has a formal procedure for investigating allegations of academic misconduct for research Students outlined in the Research Handbooks.

11. Leave of absence

- 11.1 A Research Student may apply for a leave of absence, where they declare that they are not undertaking any research activities for a period of time (i.e. a temporary withdrawal from studies).
- 11.2 No single period of Leave of Absence will be granted for a period in excess of 12 months. The total period of Leave of Absence allowable is 24 months. Students cannot take consecutive periods of Leave of Absence for longer than 12 months and must re-engage with their research studies for a minimum of 3 months after taking the maximum 12 months allowable. Any request for leave of absence shall be referred to the Dean of Research or nominee and reported to the University Research Awards Sub-committee and, as appropriate, the Professional Doctorate Progression and Award Board.
- 11.3 Periods of leave undertaken due to statutory childcare (including maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave and adoptive leave) will not be counted towards the maximum total period of 24 months, although the maximum registration period will be amended accordingly.
- 11.4 Periods of leave undertaken due to statutory jury service will not be counted towards the maximum total period of 24 months, although the maximum registration period will be amended accordingly.
- 11.5 Whilst on a leave of absence, a Student will have restricted access to University services and facilities, including their Supervisor in respect of their research work, but will be encouraged to keep in touch with their Supervisor for pastoral support
- 11.6 A leave of absence will be granted in month-long blocks, and then added to the registration period.
- 11.7 Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively.
- 11.8 Students on a Tier 4 visa taking Leave of absence will be required to return to their home country.
- 11.9 Students in receipt of a studentship are not entitled to any bursary payments whilst on Leave of Absence.
- 11.10 In very exceptional circumstances, a Director of Studies may ask for a student's maximum registration period to be extended in accordance with section 12.

12. Exceptional Extension to Registration Period

- 12.1 A Director of Studies, on behalf of a research student, may apply for an extension to the maximum registration period only in very exceptional circumstances (e.g. because of a setback for which the University takes full responsibility). Extensions will not be granted for 'unexceptional' circumstances such as everyday life events, work pressure, financial difficulties, academic failure, and poor project/time management.
- 12.2 Any request for an extension shall be referred to the Dean of Research and Academic Registrar (or nominees) and reported to the University Research Awards Sub-committee and, as appropriate, the Professional Doctorate Progression and Award Board.
- 12.3 An extension will be granted in month-long blocks. A new maximum registration date will be calculated that takes account of the period granted by the Dean of Research.
- 12.4 The total period of extension allowable will not normally exceed 12 months.
- 12.5 Research Students may be liable for fees for any extended period of registration.
- 12.6 An extension shall not be granted retrospectively.

13. Posthumous and Aegrotat awards

- 13.1 The University may award consider an Aegrotat or Posthumous award, on the recommendation of the Dean of Research. In reaching the decision the Dean of Research will normally convene an Examination Panel in accordance with section 5.
- 13.2 In addition to MD and MPhil, the Examiners may recommend the award of Postgraduate Diploma (by research) if they believe the work is close to but not sufficient for an MPhil.
- 13.3 In considering whether to accept such a thesis, the relevant committee will assure itself that the work available is of sufficient quality to demonstrate to Examiners that the candidate had achieved the objectives of the research programme.
- 13.4 In considering the request for an Aegrotat award, the University Research Awards sub-committee will assure itself that appropriate efforts have been made to support the Student and to retrieve the programme of study, and that the Student is unlikely to be able to complete the programme in the foreseeable future.

14. Revocation of Award

- 14.1 In exceptional circumstances, following an investigation, the University may at any time, on the recommendation of the Academic Registrar, revoke an award and all privileges connected therewith, having determined that there is good cause to do so.
This may include:
 - a. Where an award is found to have been obtained by fraud or deception including academic and research misconduct.
 - b. Where a graduate has not met the requirements of the award conferred or
 - c. Where the award has been obtained due to administrative error or irregularities in the conduct of the Research Awards Sub-committee.