

# **University of Wolverhampton**

## **Regulations for the Degree Award of: Professional Doctorate**

### **1. GENERAL REGULATIONS**

- 1.1 The Degree of Professional Doctorate is awarded by the University of Wolverhampton (hereinafter referred to as 'the University') to registered candidates in recognition of successful completion of an approved course of study and supervised research and development within a particular profession.
- 1.2 Professional Doctorates are of a level and intellectual challenge equivalent to PhD degree courses. They are rooted within a particular profession. A Professional Doctorate course is designed to develop research and professional skills in addition to supporting the conduct of original research related to professional practice.
- 1.3 The work of Professional Doctorate students must demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge within their profession, through original research or the original application of existing knowledge or understanding, to a level which merits publication. Candidates need to demonstrate that through their body of work they have made a substantial contribution to professional knowledge with the potential to bring about improvements in professional practice beyond their own workplace.
- 1.4 Professional Doctorates develop competence and skills to advance professional development, research and leadership within a professional field. The programme of study is situated within professional practice, and students will be required to show evidence that, through the course of their studies, they have made a significant contribution to working practices within their professional area.
- 1.5 Some Professional Doctorate courses will be designed to meet professional or statutory body requirements, and this must be specified at the time of approval. Also, all these courses must conform to the relevant sections of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- 1.6 In order to meet the requirements of professional bodies, some programmes will include work-based learning, alongside research and taught study. Discipline specific modules will develop the candidates understanding of theoretical issues relevant to their professional context. Candidates will be expected to make a contribution to professional knowledge and practice and evidence this within academic and research submissions.
- 1.7 Professional Doctorate awards will include the name of the discipline in the title. The title of the award and its abbreviation will be agreed at the time of course approval. Successful completion entitles the use of the phrase 'Doctor in...' prior to the name.
- 1.8 All Professional Doctorate students are Research Students of the University and as such are expected to be able at all times to demonstrate an awareness of:
  - i) research-related topics such as respecting copyright, safeguarding intellectual property rights, ethical concerns in conducting research, health and safety, etc
  - ii) practice-related issues such as developing and demonstrating competences relevant to the profession and appropriate to their level of training, adhering to professional ethical guidelines, equality and diversity etc
- 1.7 These regulations should be read in conjunction with the Research Student Handbook and the relevant course and modules guides.
- 1.8 The University Research Committee will approve and monitor:
  - The methodology for the allocation of Supervisors.
  - Criteria for the composition of Examining Teams.

- Contents of Research Handbooks to support the conduct and behaviour of all Research Students, Supervisors and Examiners.
- A list of staff that can act on the authority of the Dean of Research, together with the permitted powers of delegation. (In these regulations the “Dean of Research” equally refers to these approved staff).

## 2. STRUCTURE OF AWARD

- 2.1 Professional Doctorate courses delivered by the University are credit rated and modular, with an emphasis on professionally-relevant and practice-oriented independent learning and research that together make an original contribution to knowledge. Successful completion of a Professional Doctorate course will require the award of 540 credits at level 7 and 8, as specified below. A minimum 360 credits are at level 8 (Doctoral or “D” level), with assessment reflecting the QAA Masters and Doctoral outcomes as defined in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.
- 2.2 Each module has a set of formally identified learning outcomes. Credit for the module will be awarded once a student has demonstrated through assessment that they have achieved these outcomes.
- 2.3 A University of Wolverhampton Professional Doctorate course will comprise two stages, a taught component, (Stage 1) and a research component (Stage 2):

	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Professional Doctorate course totals:</b> Comprising:	540 credits
<b>Stage 1:</b> Assessed taught modules, developing professional and research skills; to include the development and approval of a proposal for independent research in Stage 2	Maximum of 240 credits, at L7 or L8. (Maximum of 180 credits at L7)
<b>Stage 2:</b> Independent, supervised research May include in addition a practice-based component	Minimum of 300 credits, at L8.

- 2.4 Normally, these stages are sequential, and a student progresses to stage 2 when stage 1 is completed (as illustrated below):

<b>Mode</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>
Full-time	Stage 1 (Taught)		Stage 2 (Research)

<b>Mode</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6</b>
Part-time	Stage 1 (Taught)				Stage 2 (Research)	

However, it is possible that stages 1 and 2 are concurrent.

- 2.5 Supervised, independent research must comprise the majority of the Professional Doctorate course (where Professional, Statutory, Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) guidelines permit). Candidates will undertake a research project and present for assessment a thesis (which may include, where appropriate, a portfolio or collection of other artefact(s), together with an extended commentary). The thesis will represent a single, sustained, independent research project. The final assessment will include an oral examination.
- 2.6 Candidates who withdraw from or are required to withdraw from a Professional Doctorate course will be considered by the Professional Doctorate Progression & Award Board for an interim award based on the number of credits obtained (see table 1). Candidates may be required to undertake additional work in order to meet the criteria for an interim award. A candidate awarded such an intermediate award, will not be guaranteed, re-entry onto a Professional Doctorate programme through the University’s Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedures.

- 2.7 Candidates who at the final assessment fail to meet the criteria for the award of a Professional Doctorate degree will be considered by the Professional Doctorate Progression & Award Board for an interim award based on the number of credits obtained (see table 1). Candidates may be required to undertake additional work in order to meet the criteria for an interim award. A candidate awarded the intermediate award in these circumstances will not be able to continue studying on the professional doctorate.

Table 1: Hierarchy of Awards

Qualification	Total Credits	Level 7	Level 8
Post Graduate Certificate	60	60 or above	
Post Graduate Diploma	120	120 or above	
Master's Degree	180	180 or above	
Professional Doctorate	540	180	360

### 3. THE ADMISSION OF RESEARCH STUDENTS

- 3.1 The University will ensure that procedures in place for the recruitment and admission of students are readily accessible, fair, clear and implemented consistently and that decisions regarding admissions are made by those equipped to make the required judgment and who are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.
- 3.2 The University will ensure the speedy conversion of appropriate applications into offers to suitable prospective students by having transparent academic and non-academic entry requirements which lead to the enrolment of new entrants at appropriate levels in the University.
- 3.3 Applicants will be provided with timely information and advice needed for them to make informed choices best suited to their individual needs and circumstances and financial support and costs, together with the obligations placed upon them at the point at which an offer of a place is made.
- 3.4 The University will inform prospective students as soon as possible of any significant changes, and will inform successful applicants of the arrangements for enrolment, registration and induction. The University will ensure that effective and appropriate arrangements are in place for providing feedback to applicants who have not been offered a place.
- 3.5 The University will ensure that procedures are in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of the admissions process, and appeals about the outcome of a selection decision, and will ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the procedures.
- 3.6 This regulation and associated procedures are framed within the Institution's published Equal Opportunities Policy and operate to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants to the University and its partner colleges irrespective of colour, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, age, disability, religion or socio-economic background.
- 3.7 All applicants to the University will be required to complete the appropriate application form.
- 3.8 The University will not admit or allow the continuation of study for any person found to have made a fraudulent application and /or breached other standards and requirements specified by a PSRB (where relevant).
- 3.9 Students who have previously been excluded from any course in the University for reasons of discipline, academic misconduct, professional misconduct or fitness to practice will have no right to study at the University again.

## **4. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

- 4.1 To be eligible to study the Professional Doctorate Award students should be working or have experience of working in the subject area relevant to the Professional Doctorate.
- 4.2 Applicants for a Professional Doctorate course will:
- Will be judged on the basis of their professional experience or professional practice. Other relevant experience, training, publications, contracts, consultancies, residencies, exhibitions, performances, written reports or other evidence of accomplishment shall be taken into consideration as appropriate to the nature and scope of the Professional Doctorate;
  - have relevant professional experience at a level and for a minimum period agreed by the University at the time of course approval;
- 4.3 An applicant for a research degree shall normally hold either:
- a first or upper second class honours degree, or
  - a master's degree, or
  - evidence of prior practice or learning that is accepted by the Dean of Research.
- 4.4 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 a Research Degree Student. However, if the candidate holds a Master's degree from a U.K. University, this requirement may be waived.
- 4.5 Applicants may apply for entry with advanced standing through the University's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedures, if they hold appropriate experience or accredited learning, or qualifications. Applicants must demonstrate that the learning was appropriate to the objectives of their chosen Professional Doctorate course and met the learning outcomes of the Professional Doctorate course. Applicants shall not be awarded credit through RPLS for any Level 8 component of the course. Applicants awarded credit through RPLS for all Stage 1 Level 7 modules will have to seek approval from the relevant Research Student Board for their research proposal to be undertaken in Stage 2, which may require candidates to undertake the Stage 1 module in which this proposal is normally developed.
- 4.6 The total credit and level value of awarded RPL will be recorded on the student record. Any grades associated with the previous study and/or RPL will not be individually recorded and are excluded from the final classification calculations.

## **5. REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT**

- 5.1 Students are responsible for ensuring that they are fully enrolled on the correct course by the course commencement date. Students may be admitted later than the course start date provided they are enrolled no later than the start of the third week of teaching according to the academic calendar. Students not fully enrolled by the third week of teaching may be de-registered from their course and barred from study.
- 5.2 All new students will be required to provide evidence of their identity and relevant qualifications when they join the University.
- 5.3 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 the UK Visas and Immigration and conditions of their visa.
- 5.4 Students on Professional Doctorate Courses that require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must ensure that they apply for and obtain a certificate to remain registered on the course.

- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 Continuing students who do not re-enrol will be assumed to have withdrawn from their course and be presented at the next Progression and Award Board for consideration of a relevant interim qualification.
- 5.7 In registering students agree to abide by the University Regulations, Bye-Laws and their liability for annual fee payments.
- 5.8 Students can apply to be considered "at writing-up stage" only once they have completed their main studies. The maximum period of time a Student can be considered to be writing-up is 12 calendar months.
- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 Any student who is not registered, (including those on a Leave of Absence – see section 11), 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.
- 5.11 Continued enrolment for students on programmes of study leading to professional doctorate awards recognised for inclusion in a relevant professional register is subject to ongoing fitness to practise requirements.
- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 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.
- 5.14 Students may study on a full or part- time basis.
- Full-time students will normally devote on average 35 hours per week over a minimum of 45 weeks per year to the programme.
  - Part-time students will normally devote 15-18 hours per week over a minimum of 45 weeks per year to the programme.
- 5.15 A full-time student is normally expected to study 180 credits over a 12 month period.
- 5.16 A part-time student can study a minimum of 20 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in any University academic year.
- 5.17 Students may vary the pace at which they proceed through their course by varying the mode of study. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they are fully aware of any financial consequences that the decision to vary the pace of study may have.

5.18 The maximum period over which a Professional Doctorate award may be studied will be:

<b>Mode of Study</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Full-time	3 years	4 years
Part-time	6 years	8 years

5.19 Those students admitted with advanced standing will have their minimum and maximum period of registration adjusted appropriately. For candidates entering with 180 credits at Level 7, the minimum and maximum period of registration is as follows:

<b>Candidates entering with 180 Level 7 credits</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Full-time	2 years	3 years
Part-time	4 years	6 years

5.20 The maximum registration period includes the period up to the submission of the theses. Where any delay is outside the control of the student, the registration period will be adjusted to reflect the delay.

5.21 Where a student chooses to change their mode of study the maximum period of registration will be calculated pro rata.

5.22 Where a student has been granted permission to take a period of leave of absence, in accordance with section 11, the maximum period of registration will be extended by the relevant period.

5.23 Where a student has been granted an extension to maximum registration, in accordance with section 12, the maximum period of registration will be extended by the relevant period.

5.24 Professional doctorate programmes incorporate the possibility for a transfer to MPhil or PhD. Where this is approved the transfer is restricted to the early stage of the research degree programme – i.e. before completion of the “Progression” stage. Upon transfer to MPhil or PhD students become subject to the Research Degree Regulations.

## **6. CONTINUATION REGULATIONS – TAUGHT PHASE (STAGE 1)**

6.1 To gain academic credit, a student must demonstrate that they have achieved specified learning outcomes (see section 8). Academic credit will only be awarded to students as follows:

- i) through granted accreditation for recognition of prior learning through the defined University process, or;
- ii) successful completion of module summative assessments that meet the specified learning outcomes.

6.2 The modules in Stage 1 shall be assessed individually. All modules must include at least one summative assessment designed to enable students to demonstrate that the module learning outcomes have been met. Module Guides will detail all forms of assessment required.

6.3 There may be more than one element of assessment for a module. A range of assessment methods may be used including process reports, presentations formal examinations, class tests, essays, projects and case studies. The assessment requirements for each module will be stated in the course specification and the Award Handbook.

6.4 Students not registered for a module cannot study the module, cannot submit assessment for the module, nor will they be granted academic credit for the module.

6.5 Mandatory attendance is required at taught sessions where the course specification requires.

6.6 Students must ensure that they have studied any modules recorded in the Module Guide as being a pre-requisite module prior to beginning post-requisite modules, otherwise they will not be granted credit for any assessed work submitted.

- 6.7 Assessment of modules where all or a significant amount of the candidate learning is conducted in a workplace can involve feedback from a workplace mentor who should not be associated with the supervision of a candidate's professional research module. Arrangements for the assessment of work-based learning should be explained in the course specification and Award Handbook.
- 6.8 Students on a Professional Doctorate course are required to pass all modules. The pass mark for all taught modules shall be 50%.
- 6.9 All assessment marks of all taught modules on a Professional Doctorate course will be submitted to the University Professional Doctorates Assessment/Award Board, which will agree the results for each module.
- 6.10 The University uses grading schemes for recording the results of summative assessment and overall module results. There are two grading schemes operating, to meet the different requirements at different academic levels.

### **Level 7 Modules**

- 6.11 For modules at level 7, results will be recorded using the following percentage mark scheme;

<b>Mark</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Result Level 7</b>
90-100%	Outstanding Pass	Pass
80-89%	Excellent Pass	Pass
70-79%	Very Good Pass	Pass
60-69%	Good Pass	Pass
50-59%	Pass	Pass
0-49%	Fail	Defer (first attempt) Fail (following second attempt)
NS	Assessment not submitted	Defer (first attempt) Fail (following second attempt)
GA	Assessment grade awaited	Held - assessment has been submitted but mark / placement outcome has been delayed
AM	Academic Misconduct under investigation	Held
M	Valid Extenuating Circumstances	Defer - may submit assessment within the academic year the module was studied

- 6.12 Students must submit all pieces of assessment required for each module on or before the submission date set for each piece of assessment. The grade ONS will be awarded to all students who do not submit assessment, or submit after the published submission deadline.
- 6.13 Students who fail a module at the first attempt will be permitted to attempt the failed summative assessment task(s) again. This resit attempt must be taken at the first opportunity within the academic year the module was studied, unless valid extenuating circumstances are approved.
- 6.14 Students who successfully resit a failed summative assessment will be awarded a pass (50%) for this resit attempt. For any summative assessment tasks being awarded a capped pass, the pass awarded will contribute to the overall module grade.
- 6.15 Students who fail a module will be permitted to repeat the module. The University cannot guarantee that all modules will be available to be repeated, in which case the student will be required to take a replacement module. A student who fails an option module may study a suitable substitute module rather than repeat the module they have failed.

- 6.16 Where students pass a module they will have no further right to take re-assessment of the specific learning outcomes associated with that module, unless the student has been granted permission to submit assessment again because their claim for extenuating circumstances was accepted as valid. This submission must normally occur within the academic year that the module was studied.

### **Extenuating Circumstances and Assessment Deadline Extensions**

- 6.17 If a student believes they have a valid reason (such as illness) for not completing a piece of summative assessment in advance, they must follow the University Fit to Sit and Extenuating Circumstances Policy, which includes the need to provide independent evidence in order to ensure that each case is assessed fairly as follows;
- 6.18 Before submitting work, or attend examinations, students are required to declare themselves as 'fit to sit' by confirming they are not aware of any extenuating circumstances which could affect their performance during the relevant assessment and therefore cannot subsequently claim mitigation. If a student does submit work for which an extenuating circumstances claim has already been granted, it will and be marked, the grade awarded and the extenuating circumstances claim nullified.
- 6.19 Retrospective claims for mitigation may be considered exceptionally within 10 working days of the original examination or submission date, and prior to publication of results, after which these must follow the University Academic Appeals procedure no later than 20 working days after the publication of results.
- 6.20 Students who are affected by unforeseen circumstances during an examination may be able to claim extenuating circumstances. If granted, no grade will be awarded for the examination at the first attempt.
- 6.21 Students with accepted extenuating circumstances on the first sit of a piece of summative assessment (where that work has not been submitted) are expected to submit the assessment at the next published opportunity. If they do not do so, they will be required to resit the assessment. The grade will be awarded in accordance with regulation 6.13.

### **Late Submission and Extensions**

- 6.22 Students may submit work up to 7 calendar days after the published submission date in accordance with the University Late Submissions and Extension Policy.
- 6.23 Students with a valid reason, as defined in the University Late Submissions and Extension Policy, may apply for an extension to the submission date of up to 7 calendar days.
- 6.24 Students without a valid reason, as defined in the University Late Submissions and Extension Policy, may submit work up to 7 calendar days after the published deadline but the mark will be subject to a penalty as follows;
- Up to 2 days after the published deadline - a deduction of 10% of the maximum mark available from the actual mark achieved by the student.
  - After 2 days and up to 7 days after the published deadline - a deduction of 20% of the maximum mark available from the actual mark achieved by the student.
- 6.25 The final mark for the assessment, after penalty has been imposed, will not fall below the minimum pass mark for that assessment.
- 6.26 If the awarded mark for the assessment was already below the pass mark, prior to late submission penalty, the awarded mark will stand as the final mark.
- 6.27 These regulations do not apply to assessments submitted in a published resit period.

## **Level 8 Modules**

- 6.28 For modules at level 8, a Pass/Fail grade will be used.
- 6.29 Students must submit all pieces of assessment required for each module on or before the submission date set for each piece of assessment. A fail grade will be awarded to all students who do not submit assessment, or submit after the published submission deadline.
- 6.30 Students who fail a level 8 module at the first attempt will be permitted to attempt the failed summative assessment task(s) again. This resit attempt must be taken at the first opportunity within the academic year the module was studied, no further attempt to resit will be offered.
- 6.31 Students who fail a level 8 module will not be permitted to repeat the module.

## **Compensation**

- 6.32 No compensation is allowed for modules on a Professional Doctorate course.
- 6.33 The Professional Doctorate Progression Award Board is responsible for determining whether a student has successfully completed Stage 1. Students must successfully complete all elements of Stage 1 before proceeding to Stage 2, unless the structure of the award is such as to allow concurrent study of stages.

## **7. CONTINUATION REGULATIONS – RESEARCH PHASE (STAGE 2)**

- 7.1 Where Stage 2 includes a practice-based module (one not constituting supervised research and not directly contributing to the research portfolio required of Stage 2), then the Regulations relating to Stage 1 will apply to this module.

The following Regulations will apply to the research component of Stage 2.

- 7.2 Where the taught and research phases are being delivered sequentially, the Professional Doctorate Progression & Award Board must confirm completion of Stage 1, before a student progresses to Stage 2 and the research proposal must be approved by the relevant Research Student Board (RSB). Where the taught and research phases are concurrent, due to requirements of professional bodies, the research proposal must be approved before the independent research project commences.
- 7.3 In approving the proposal, the RSB will ensure that:
- i) the proposed project is of doctoral-level scope and depth; the project design and methods are appropriate and realistic; and the outcomes would represent a contribution to professional knowledge in the area.
  - ii) Ethics and risk approval, and any third party agreements, are all in place before the student commences the research.
- 7.4 When a student progresses to stage 2, by acceptance of the research proposal this includes the appointment of a supervisory team. The team will normally comprise a Director of Studies and one or more additional supervisors.
- 7.5 All Professional Doctorate students undertaking the research component must adhere to the University's Intellectual Property and Ethical Review Policies.
- 7.6 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.

- 7.7 The University Research Committee will convene a Research Awards Sub-committee, which will meet at least six times each year, to consider:
- 7.7.1) The performance of students currently subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' process,
  - 7.7.2) The annual progress review of all students,
  - 7.7.3) The performance of students at the "progression" stage
  - 7.7.4) The confirmation of awards of students completing their studies
- 7.8 All Research Students must meet their Supervisor on at least 9 occasions each year (part time students on at least 5 occasions), using the agreed methods depending upon the location of the student.
- 7.9 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:
- 7.9.1) They have not met the requirements to satisfy the Supervisor that they should proceed, as outlined in the Research Handbooks;
  - 7.7.2) They have repeatedly failed to meet deadlines or quality thresholds as specified as part of the informal Supervisory review of progress.
- 7.10 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 and the Professional Doctorate Progression and Award Board.
- 7.11 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 and, as appropriate, the Professional Doctorate Progression and Award Board, that the withdrawal procedure be initiated.
- 7.12 Progress is formally assessed annually through a formal Annual Progress Review (APR) process and continuing registration is dependent upon satisfactory progress.
- 7.13 Full-time students in Stage 2 of the Professional Doctorate shall demonstrate satisfactory progress by month 33 (month 9 of year 3) of their Professional Doctorate by submission of an 'Annual Review and Progression Form' accompanied by an oral presentation to the independent assessors.

APR	Month of Study	
	Full-time Students	Part-time Students
Year 1	-	-
Year 2	-	-
Year 3	33	-
Year 4	42	-
Year 5		57
Year 6		69
Year 7		81
Year 8		90

**Indicative word count at each APR for full time Professional Doctorate Student:**

<b>Year of APR</b>	<b>Written Work – Guide for Anticipated Word Count (no upper limit)</b> <i>Where word counts are significantly below the guides given here, students should provide an outline of the work that they have undertaken)</i>	
Year 3	Professional Doctorate Sciences	15,050 - 18,750
	Professional Doctorate Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities	24,000 - 30,000
Year 4	Professional Doctorate Sciences	20,000 - 25,000
	Professional Doctorate Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities	32,000 - 40,000

**Indicative word count at each APR for part time Professional Doctorate Student**

<b>Year of APR</b>	<b>Written Work – Guide for Anticipated Word Count</b>	
Year 5	Professional Doctorate Sciences	12,400 - 15,500
	Professional Doctorate Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities	19,840 - 24,800
Year 6	Professional Doctorate Sciences	15,050 - 18,750
	Professional Doctorate Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities	24,000 - 30,000
Year 7	Professional Doctorate Sciences	17,400 - 21,750
	Professional Doctorate Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities	27,840 - 34,800
Year 8	Professional Doctorate Sciences	20,000 - 25,000
	Professional Doctorate Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities	32,000 - 40,000

(Where Professional Doctorate Sciences = Professional Doctorate in Biomedical Science & Professional Doctorate Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities = Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, Professional Doctorate in Education and Professional Doctorate in Health and Wellbeing)

- 7.14 Failure to return your Annual Progress Review Form will automatically invoke the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure.
- 7.15 Students who are not able to demonstrate satisfactory progress before the end of their first year of stage 2 registration will not be permitted to register for the second year of the degree. They may, at the discretion of the Professional Doctorate Award & Progression Board be considered for an interim award within the programme. In this event, candidates must fulfil all the requirements for the alternate award, including submission of a satisfactory research project/dissertation.

## 8. THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The Professional Doctorate is awarded to a student who following the completion of the taught component of the award, has presented and defended a thesis, by oral examination, to the satisfaction of the examiners.
- 8.2 Learning Outcomes for the Award of Professional Doctorate:
- Substantial critical investigation and evaluation of a topic or set of related topics resulting in an independent and original contribution to practice and understanding in the field to which the topic belongs, and which is expressed in a work of publishable quality;
  - Originality is demonstrated through the discovery of new facts or methodologies, through subjecting known facts or methodologies to new insights derived from investigation, and/or through the revision, confirmation or adaptation of existing theories or methodologies to the new circumstances described in the thesis;
  - Evidence of systematic, thorough, current and detailed knowledge of the specific subject area of the research as well as the general context in which that subject area is located;
  - Evidence of knowledge of an appropriate range of research methodologies and a critical evaluation of their merits;
  - Evidence of an ability to develop new hypotheses or research questions that have the capacity to extend the frontier of knowledge of the discipline;
  - Evidence of an ability to design, plan and implement a research programme to test, explore and evaluate these hypotheses or questions;
  - Evidence of an ability to analyse critically one's own findings and those of others.

### 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. (See the Research Student Handbook, Appendix 5: Submission of the Thesis)
- 8.4 The text of the thesis should normally not exceed the following maximum length indicated below. This word limit includes endnotes, footnotes and bibliography (except where specified otherwise below) but excludes essential ancillary data.

Course	Word Count
Professional Doctorate in Biomedical Science	25,000
Professional Doctorate in Education Professional Doctorate in Health and Wellbeing Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology	40,000*

*\*The word limit applies to the body of the thesis but excludes the reference list / bibliography, notes and appendices.*

*(Essential ancillary data should not normally exceed 20% of the length of the thesis. Where such data exceeds 20% of the length of the thesis, the consent of the examiners will be sought.)*

- 8.5 Research Students are required to submit their thesis for examination within the registration periods set out in 5.18 and 5.19.
- 8.6 A student must have successfully completed all taught modules and placement hours before the submission of the Doctoral thesis/portfolio.
- 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.

## Examination

- 8.13 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.
- 8.14 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.
- 8.15 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.
- 8.16 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.
- 8.17 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. Following the oral examination, the Examiners will be asked to make one of the following recommendations:
- 8.17.1) Pass
  - 8.17.2) Pass, subject to minor corrections, in accordance with 8.18
  - 8.17.3) Re-submit and/or be re-examined orally for the degree originally submitted, in accordance with 8.19
  - 8.17.4) Fail. The Student has no further opportunity for submission.
- 8.18 If the thesis is awarded a Pass subject to minor correction 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.

- 8.19 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
- 8.20 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:
- 8.20.1) Pass
  - 8.20.2) Pass, subject to minor corrections to be completed within 4 weeks
  - 8.20.3) Fail. There is no further opportunity for submission.
- 8.21 Where Examiners are unable to reach an agreed recommendation, the Dean of Research may:
- 8.21.1) accept a majority recommendation;
  - 8.21.2) accept the recommendation of the external Examiner; or
  - 8.21.3) require the appointment of an additional Examiner.
- 8.22 In the case of 8.21.3 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.
- 8.23 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 8.17 above.
- 8.24 All Examiners' recommendations are subject to confirmation by the Research Awards Sub-Committee and, as appropriate, the Professional Doctorate Progression and Award Board.

## 9. APPEALS

- 9.1 During the taught phase of the award the University Regulations & Procedure for Academic Appeals (<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/current-students/conduct-and-appeals/academic-appeals/>) is in place to enable students to appeal against the decisions of an Assessment Board, for example where a grade has been recorded incorrectly or there has been or an error in the application of the University regulations in a decision regarding progression, completion or conferment. This process can also be used to appeal against the outcome of an Extenuating Circumstances claim.
- 9.2 The appeals procedure for the research phase of the award is outlined below.
- 9.3 Prior to the submission of the thesis for examination, a student may appeal against any recommendation not to progress to examination stage.
- 9.4 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.

- 9.5 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.
- 9.6 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 student may apply for a leave of absence, where they declare that they are not undertaking their studies 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 Students on a Tier 4 visa taking Leave of absence will be required to return to their home country.

### Leave of Absence during the Taught Phase

- 11.6 Where a student takes a Leave of Absence during a University academic year before completing a module, any summative assessment submitted will be carried forward and will contribute to the student's assessment result for that module when the student returns from Leave of Absence, provided the same assessment requirements remain.
- 11.7 Where a student takes a Leave of Absence and has not passed any summative assessment, the student will be required to recommence the module without penalty.
- 11.8 If a student takes a Leave of Absence because of extenuating circumstances, when they return to study they will deem themselves fit to study and the circumstances which affected their ability to study previously will not be considered a valid cause of poor performance again. The University will, however, exceptionally consider sudden or unexpected worsening of a disability and / or medical condition for a student registered with the University's Disability Advisory Team and where medical evidence is provided to confirm the condition.

- 11.9 When a student is studying taught modules only then periods of Leave of Absence should fit into the start and end dates of a module
- 11.10 If a student is studying both taught modules and towards their thesis, then the period of Leave of Absence is determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the course leader. It is not possible to be on Leave of Absence for part of a course.
- 11.12 Students who are studying for a course that may be accredited or recognised by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) should be aware that they may have additional requirements or responsibilities relating to their attendance students are advised to check their course materials or contact their Student Centre prior to submitting a Leave of Absence request.

#### Leave of Absence during the Research Phase

- 11.13 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
- 11.14 A leave of absence will be granted in month-long blocks, and then added to the registration period.
- 11.15 Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively.
- 11.16 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 7.
- 13.2 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 learning objectives of the programme.
- 13.3 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.
- 13.4 Research submitted for consideration for a Postgraduate Diploma (by Research) cannot subsequently be employed by the candidate towards an MPhil or PhD.

### **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 Award Board.