UCL Academic Manual
2024-25

Chapter 5: Research Degrees Framework

Part D: Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Regulations

1 Admissions

1.1 Standard Qualifications for Admission

1. The normal minimum entrance qualifications for registration for the degree of Doctor of Public Administration is the award of a first or upper second class Honours degree, or equivalent overseas qualification, in an appropriate discipline.
2. Relevant postgraduate or policy experience may be acceptable where the first degree is a lower second-class Honours degree or equivalent overseas qualification.

1.2 Alternative Qualifications for Admission

1. Applicants possessing alternative qualifications may also be considered by UCL for registration.
   i) An applicant who possesses a degree or overseas qualification of equivalent standard obtained after a programme of study extending over three years or more in a university (or educational institution of university rank) in an appropriate subject and who, although they do not meet the normal entry standard defined in Section 1.1, but by evidence of their background and experience satisfy UCL as to their fitness to follow the programme. Where such an applicant cannot present evidence that they possess the necessary background and experience, they may be considered by UCL for registration, provided they meet appropriate qualifying conditions prescribed by UCL.
   ii) An applicant who possesses a qualification obtained by written examination other than those covered above, if UCL is satisfied that the candidate's general education, scholarship, training and experience are suitable for the programme which they wish to follow and that they are at least as well qualified as the candidates who are able to satisfy the entrance requirements in one of the ways prescribed above.
2. UCL may prescribe a qualifying examination for such an applicant prior to admission.

Further guidance

1. Departments wishing to admit such an applicant, as described in 1.2 above, must obtain written authorisation from the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee via Admissions in Student and Registry Services. An applicant for registration may also be required to pass a qualifying examination. Applicants are required to meet UCL's English Language Proficiency Requirements for Postgraduate Degrees.
2. The regulations and criteria for the Recognition of Prior Learning, including the types of prior learning that might be considered by UCL, are defined in Chapter 1: Student Recruitment and Admissions.

2   Registration

2.1   Dual Registration

1. A student is not permitted to be formally registered for one programme of study at UCL at the same time as being formally registered (or re-sitting examinations) for another programme of study at UCL or any other Higher Education Institution.

    Further guidance

1. Students can accept an offer of a place from UCL when they are still formally registered with another Higher Education Institution, or if they are re-sitting examinations. However, they may not formally register with UCL until they have completed their registration with another institution.

2.2   Initial Registration

1. Every student must complete enrolment as instructed within two weeks of the start of their research programme and must undertake to comply with the conditions of enrolment.
2. An applicant for registration is required to produce for inspection by UCL the original documentary evidence of their qualifications either before or at registration — i.e. the original diploma or certificate of the awarding body.

2.3   Exemption from Part of a Programme of Study

1. UCL may exempt from part of the programme of study of the DPA degree, research degree students who have commenced a programme of study for the DPA degree (or equivalent degree) of another university in the United Kingdom, provided that the programme of study followed at UCL is not less than one calendar year, or its equivalent in part-time study.

    Further guidance

1. Applications for exemption should be made at the point of admission and are considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. The regulations and criteria for the Recognition of Prior Learning, including the types of prior learning that might be considered by UCL, are defined in Chapter 1: Student Recruitment and Admissions.
3. Back-dated registration is not usually permitted by UCL. In exceptional circumstances however, requests for back-dating registration may be considered by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee via researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk subject to the following conditions:
    i)   The statement from the supervisor and/or the Head of Department gives strong academic reasons for the request and confirms in writing that the student has been undertaking relevant research since this date.
    ii)   There is evidence that the student has been fully supervised.
    iii) There is a good reason provided explaining why the student was not formally registered from the requested start date.
4. If the back-dating is granted, regardless of the time period requested, the student should be aware that he or she is liable for tuition fees from the date of retrospective registration and that the date for submission of the thesis will be calculated from this date.

2.4   Course of Study

2.4.1   General

1. All research degree students are required to pursue a course of study prescribed by UCL.
2. A programme of study may require attendance at lectures and coursework as prescribed by UCL. A candidate's registration on a UCL programme will be dependent upon their continued satisfactory progress as determined by UCL.
3. All research students are required to use the [Online Research Student Log](#).
4. For more information about the Research Student Log and other requirements see the [Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees](#).

2.4.2   Doctor of Public Administration

1. The formal taught part of the DPA is comprised of the following elements:
    i)   6 core modules (90 credits).
    ii)   2 specialisation modules (30 credits before submission).
    iii)   Pilot study with 120 credits awarded upon successful completion of the MRes component (a research report of not less than 15,000 and no more than 25,000 words with oral examination).
    - Full-time candidates are expected to complete this project within 12-18 months, and in all circumstances must complete within 24 months.
    - Part-time candidates are expected to complete this project within 18-24 months, and in all circumstances must complete within 36 months.
    iv)   Candidates are also expected to undertake professional and transferable skills courses and research ethics training. Training for teaching (either in the form of a Prof Cert or similar) is optional.
2. Students must have passed modules to a minimum value of 240 credits in order to qualify for submission of the thesis.

2.5   Attendance Requirements

1. A programme must be pursued continuously except by special permission of UCL. Students must be in a position to meet all the requirements determined for their studies.
2. Students, whether full-time or part-time, are expected to centre their academic studies on UCL and their policy-oriented partner organisation. Students should ensure they are able to attend UCL in person for teaching and meetings as required by their supervisors.

2.6   Length of Programme

1. The length of the DPA is normally four calendar years of full-time study or six calendar years of part-time study.
2. Unless prior exemption from a part of the programme has been agreed, a student must be registered for at least two calendar years full time, or three calendar years part time before they will be allowed to submit their thesis for examination for the DPA degree.
3. Unless prior exemption from a part of the programme has been agreed, a student must be registered for at least four calendar years full time, or six calendar years part time, before they will be eligible to adopt Completing Research Status (see [Section 4](#)).
4. Students may not interrupt their period of registration without prior permission from UCL.

1. Requests to submit a thesis earlier than the minimum periods of registration specified in the regulation above may be considered by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee. Requests should be made in writing via researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk and should include a statement of support from the supervisor and/or Head of Department. The Research Degrees Committee will monitor the outcome of such requests by scrutiny of examiners' reports on the candidates' theses. Students and staff should note that early submission of a thesis will not be considered as an extenuating circumstance when deciding the outcome of the examination of a thesis.
2. Students who submit early would be liable for tuition fees up to the date of the submission of the thesis but would not be liable for tuition fees thereafter.

2.7 Annual Leave

1. Annual Leave entitlement for doctoral students should be in-line with staff entitlements. For a full-time student this equates to 41 days over the year including 27 days of Annual Leave, 8 Public and Statutory Holidays, and 6 Closure Days. For part-time students these entitlements should be pro-rata.
2. Students and supervisors should agree a way to record and monitor Annual Leave in-line with Departmental practises where appropriate.
3. Students should ensure their supervisors are aware of any Annual Leave planned in advance and ensure any required cover is put in place.
4. Where the programme includes any Taught or time-sensitive elements this should be taken into consideration when planning Annual Leave.
5. Funded Students must ensure they continue to meet their funder Terms & Conditions.
6. Students on a Student Visa must ensure they continue to meet their Visa requirements.

2.8 Interruption of Study

1. Interruption of study may be granted on the authorisation of the Director of Student Administration, on behalf of the Research Degrees Committee, provided that a statement of support from the Principal Supervisor and/or Head of Department/Division is received. If approved, the period of interruption of study granted will be initially not more than one calendar year and any further period of interruption of study will be considered one year at a time. UCL may, at its discretion, grant an interruption of study to a student on grounds of illness or other adequate reasons. The need to take up or pursue employment during the programme will not normally be considered grounds for interruption of studies.
2. Interruption of study for a period in excess of two calendar years may be granted by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee subject to the following conditions:
   i) The period requested will be considered on an annual basis and will not exceed five calendar years from the date when the period of interruption starts;
   ii) The date when the submission of the thesis falls due following resumption of study falls within ten years of the date of original registration;
   iii) Written assurances that the research will still be valid are provided by the supervisor and/or the Head of Department, with supporting documentation.
3. The Students website provides further detail on the Interruption of Study Procedure.

2.9 DPA Progression Point

1. Progression from the initial stage of the DPA degree to the final stage involves fulfilling academic requirements and a progression viva. This progression may be made not less than twelve months after initial registration for the DPA degree for full-time students, and not less than eighteen months after initial registration for the DPA degree for part-time students. A student who fails to achieve progression to the final DPA stage may, if all other conditions are met, be awarded an MRes degree as exit award.

2.10 Transfer Between DPA and MPhil/PhD

1. A student may, with the permission of UCL, transfer from the DPA degree to the MPhil/PhD degree, provided they have not entered for the examination of the DPA degree; or from the MPhil/PhD degree to the DPA degree provided they have not entered for the examination of an MPhil or PhD degree.
2. Students wishing to transfer from an MPhil/PhD to a DPA degree, or vice versa, should contact researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk.

3 Supervisory Arrangements

3.1 Supervisors: General

1. Each UCL student registered for the DPA degree shall have appointed one Principal and one Subsidiary Supervisor, who shall be members of staff of UCL or members of staff of an institution with an approved agreement with UCL. All supervisors must be approved by their Faculty Graduate Tutor before they undertake supervision of research students.
2. In the case of DPA programmes, each student will have a Policy Supervisor who will act as contact person with UCL on behalf of the policy-oriented partner organisation and who provides advice on policy relevance, but who does not formally make part of the supervisory team.

Further guidance

1. Principal and Subsidiary Supervisors shall be appointed by the appropriate departmental/divisional Postgraduate Committee, or its equivalent body.
2. Honorary members of staff may be appointed as either Principal or Subsidiary Supervisors. However, approval must be obtained from the appropriate Faculty Graduate Tutor on behalf of the Research Degrees Committee. The appointment of an honorary member of staff as a Principal or Subsidiary Supervisor will be subject to consideration of adequate research activity, including publications and grant income. Honorary members of staff appointed as Principal or Subsidiary Supervisors are also governed by eligibility requirements set out in Section 3.2 below.
3. Retired members of staff shall not normally be appointed as supervisors except by the specific agreement of the Research Degrees Committee. In instances where a member of staff serving as Principal Supervisor retires, continued supervision by the staff member is only permissible if explicitly agreed by all parties (the student, the supervisor and department), and this decision is recorded by the department. In addition, the following arrangements must also be put in place and reviewed annually by all parties to confirm they are working effectively:
   - The existing Subsidiary Supervisor shall be appointed as joint Principal Supervisor with the retired member of staff;

- A third supervisor shall be appointed to the supervisory team as Subsidiary Supervisor.
4. Supervisors can be appointed from institutions with an approved agreement with UCL. Such supervisors must have the status of honorary members of UCL staff. In all circumstances UCL has an expectation that these supervisors will undertake their role in accordance with the Doctoral School's Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees and within the framework of UCL's regulations for Research Degrees in the UCL Academic Manual.
5. For more information on the role of the supervisor see the Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees.

3.2 Supervisors: Eligibility

1. The list of UCL staff categories eligible to act as Principal and/or Subsidiary Supervisors can be found in Eligible Staff Categories for Supervising Research Students on the Chapter 5 webpage of the UCL Academic Manual.
2. UCL determines the eligibility of staff in these categories to supervise research degree students using the following criteria:
3. A Principal Supervisor for a DPA should normally:
   a) have satisfactorily completed any probationary period attached to his/her appointment;
   b) have expertise in the area of the proposed research;
   c) have had previous experience of at least one successful DPA, MPhil/PhD or EngD supervision within a supervisory team (defined as having taken a student all the way through to a research degree award).
4. A Subsidiary Supervisor for a DPA should normally:
   a) have expertise relevant to the area of proposed research;
   b) be familiar with the standards required for DPA, MPhil/PhD or EngD research.
5. A probationary member of academic staff may be appointed as Principal Supervisor if supervision is undertaken within the context of an experienced supervisory team comprising at least one demonstrably active researcher with experience of at least two successful supervisions.
6. A Research Associate may be invited to act as a Subsidiary Supervisor but must, in addition to the requirements specified for Subsidiary Supervisors:
   a) have a research contract lasting at least three years from the time the supervised student commences his/her programme of study;
   b) be able to provide evidence of good quality publications for which they have had a substantial degree of responsibility.

Further guidance

1. Principal Supervisors who are probationary members of staff must also have participated in an appropriate UCL supervisor's workshop.
2. Supervisors who have completed a probationary period but have not previously supervised a research student should also meet the requirements outlined above. New senior members of academic staff with experience of DPA, MPhil/PhD or EngD supervision at other institutions are expected to attend an appropriate UCL supervisor's workshop.

3.3 Number of Students per Supervisor

1. A supervisor, whether Principal or Subsidiary, may supervise up to the equivalent of six full-time research students at any one time.

Further guidance

1. The maximum number of students [head count], whether full- or part-time, that may be supervised by an individual as either Principal or Subsidiary Supervisor will be nine, using the following formula:

1 Part-Time student	0.5 for a Principal Supervisor
1 Full-Time student	0.5 for a Subsidiary Supervisor
1 Part-Time student	0.25 for a Subsidiary Supervisor

2. Where a supervisor exceeds the maximum number of students under his/her supervision, the supervisor's department must be able to demonstrate that there are mechanisms in place to ensure adequate contact with the student and appropriate support for the supervisor, such as a large supervisory team and/or a reduction in other workloads.
3. For example, an individual may act as Principal Supervisor to four full-time students and one part-time student while acting as Subsidiary Supervisor for two part-time students. This is the equivalent of five full-time students and is within the head count of nine students. Consideration should be given to the other duties of the member of staff concerned. Departments/divisions may wish to recommend an upper limit on the number of students supervised by a single member of staff that is lower than that set out above.
4. Part-time staff appointed as supervisors should supervise no more than six full-time research students on a pro-rata basis.

3.4 Declaration of Personal Interest

1. All members of staff are required to declare any personal relationships with any student they are asked to supervise, or are already supervising, in accordance with the UCL Personal Relationships Policy.

3.5 Transfer of Supervisor to another Institution

1. Where a Principal Supervisor transfers to another institution, students assigned to that supervisor shall be assigned to another Principal Supervisor – if they choose to remain registered at UCL – normally by the Departmental/Divisional Graduate Tutor. Should a student wish to continue to work under the supervisor who has transferred, he or she may consider applying to transfer registration to the supervisor's new institution, providing he or she is not in the final year of the programme.

4　Completing Research Status

4.1　General

1. All research students who have completed their approved period of registration may register as CRS students while they write up their theses. Transfer to CRS status is only permitted with the approval of a student's supervisor or other departmental authority.
2. CRS is permitted for a maximum period of one calendar year (full time) or two calendar years (part time). CRS registration cannot be interrupted; a student who is prevented from submitting a thesis for reasons beyond his or her control may apply for an extension, as detailed in 4.4 below.
3. A DPA student must be registered for at least four calendar years full time or six calendar years part time before he or she will be eligible to take up CRS status. A student who changes from full to part time during the approved period of registration must have been registered for a minimum of one year part time before being entitled to two years of part-time CRS status.
4. In addition to completing the approved period of registration, a student must meet the following conditions before being permitted to take up CRS status:
   a) Have passed modules to a minimum value of 240 credits;
   b) Be in a position to submit his or her thesis within 12 months (for full-time students) and 24 months (for part-time students);
   c) Have met any other departmental or divisional conditions.
5. Further guidance is available from the Completing Research Status webpages.

4.2　Completing Research Student Status (CRS): Entitlements

1. During the period of CRS registration, a student is entitled to have at least one draft of all or any part of his or her thesis read and commented on by his or her Principal Supervisor and/or Subsidiary Supervisor before submission.

Further guidance

1. Once enrolled, CRS students will continue to be able to use, or will be reissued with, a UCL identity card and be entitled to the use of all the general UCL facilities and services.
2. A CRS student in laboratory-based research may be admitted to a laboratory and be given use of UCL equipment where such admission and use will materially enhance the quality of the thesis or will expedite its completion. Such admission and use shall, however, be on the condition that this does not significantly interfere with the use of the laboratory or equipment in question by other students or staff of UCL or incur additional expense. The student's Principal Supervisor, with the approval of the Head of Department/Division, shall be responsible for making any arrangements necessary to comply with this condition. In the event that a CRS student is refused admission or use, they shall have the right of appeal to the Faculty Graduate Tutor who shall consult the student's supervisor and Head of Department/Division.
3. The student's department/division may, at its discretion, give any other supervisory assistance during the writing up period. CRS students will be expected to comply with all the duties and responsibilities of any other research student as set out in the Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees.

4.3 Submission of Thesis

1. A student must submit a thesis for examination before the end of his or her CRS period. A student will remain registered after the submission of his or her thesis until the award of the degree. He or she will be entitled to a UCL student identity card and will be able to use all the general UCL facilities and services while preparing for an oral examination or making minor revisions to a thesis.

4.4 Extensions to the Completing Research Period

1. A student who cannot submit a thesis for examination before the end of CRS due to circumstances outside his or her control may apply for an extension. The maximum period of extension is one year full time and two years part time.

Further guidance

1. Applications for extension to CRS must be made on [Portico]. Applications must be supported by a student's department and may be made on the grounds of illness of student or close relative, maternity leave, bereavement, responsibilities as a primary carer or academic circumstances out of the control of the student. Work commitments or any duties carried out for a department are not considered grounds for extension; submission of a thesis is expected to be a priority. Applications on the grounds of the illness or termination of employment of the Principal Supervisor may be considered but departments are expected to make arrangements for alternative supervision under such circumstances.

4.5 Submission of a Thesis after the end of CRS

1. A student who submits late will be liable for a Submission Extension Fee.
2. A student who does not submit a thesis before the end of his or her CRS registration will cease to be registered as a student at the end of this CRS period. He or she will not be entitled to access to UCL facilities and services and will not be entitled to supervisory advice. In addition, any student who wishes to submit after the end of his or her CRS registration will require permission to do so; this must be supported by a student's supervisor or other departmental authority. If granted, the student will be permitted to submit but will not be re-registered unless his or her department require this.

Further guidance

1. All students who submit after the end of their CRS registration will pay a fee equivalent to the part-time home fee current at the time (see [Submission Extension Fees for Research Students]). This fee will come into effect the day after the end of their CRS registration and will increment after three months, six months and nine months. For submission at any time over nine months after the end of CRS, the fee will be equivalent to 12 months home part-time fees current in the year of submission.

4.6 Resubmission of a Thesis

1. A student whose thesis is referred by his or her examiners for substantial revision within 18 months will remain registered as a submitted student on the basis of [4.3 above], provided the original submission was not after the expiry of a period of CRS status. He or she will have access to UCL facilities and will be entitled to have at least one draft of his or her

thesis read and commented on by his or her Principal Supervisor and/or Subsidiary Supervisor before re-submission. If a student's revisions require more supervision or further access to UCL laboratories or other facilities, he or she may be required to re-register as a fee-paying student for the period of this supervision or access.

2. A student who is required to re-submit must re-enter for the examination by completing the Examination Entry Form available on [Portico](#) (see [Research Degree Examination Entry webpages)](#).

5 Assessment

5.1 Assessment of Taught Elements

1. Assessments qualifying a candidate for submission of a thesis shall take place within the period of the overall programme and shall be by written examinations or coursework, as prescribed for each individual course or module.
2. All such assessments will be overseen by an examiner external to UCL.
3. A candidate failing any assessments (whether by written examinations or coursework) will be permitted to re-enter the examinations for the course or module in question on one occasion only.
4. The award of the degree shall be dependent on the thesis, which a candidate may not submit until he/she has successfully completed all the other elements of the programme, and on the final oral examination.
5. Modules for the taught part of the programme will be assessed by the methods and at the dates indicated for the module in question.

5.2 Requirements of a Thesis

5.2.1 Theses: General

1. The greater proportion of the work submitted in a thesis must have been undertaken after the registration of the student for the DPA degree.
2. The work in the thesis submitted by a student must be their own work and the submission of a thesis for examination will be regarded as a declaration of that fact.
3. A student will not be permitted to submit a thesis that has been submitted for examination for a degree, or comparable award, of this or any other university or institution. However, students may incorporate into a thesis previously examined fieldwork which they have already submitted for a degree or comparable award of this, or any other university or institution. In such a case this must be indicated on the Examination Entry Form and the incorporated fieldwork must be clearly identified as such in the thesis submitted for examination.
4. Students may submit the results of work done in conjunction with their supervisor and/or with fellow research workers provided that their own contribution in the investigation is clearly stated and a statement of confirmation is certified by the supervisor.
5. The decision of a student to submit a thesis should be made in consultation with the student's supervisor(s). The decision to submit a thesis in any particular form rests with the student alone.

Further guidance

1. An allowance may be made in the case of a student who has transferred from another institution (see Section 2.3 Exemption from Part of a Programme of Study).
2. Students should also include in each copy of their thesis a signed declaration that the work presented is their own. This may be inserted between the title page and the contents page of the thesis in the following terms:

'I, [Student's full name], confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.'

5.2.2   Requirements of a DPA Thesis

1. A thesis for the award of a DPA degree shall be examined in accordance with the criteria prescribed by UCL and the thesis shall demonstrate that it:
   a) is genuinely the work of the candidate;
   b) shows a student's capacity to pursue original research in the field of study based on a good understanding of the research techniques and concepts appropriate to the discipline;
   c) embodies the results of a research programme which may reasonably be expected of a student after four years of full-time study or six years of part-time study, formulated and carried out by the student in consultation with the supervisors;
   d) consists of a student's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree;
   e) represents a distinct and significant contribution to the subject, whether through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, or the revision of older views;
   f) shows the exercise of critical judgement with regard to both a student's own work and that of other scholars in the field;
   g) is an integrated whole and presents a coherent argument;
   h) gives a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describes the method of research and its findings, includes discussion on those findings and indicates in what respects they appear to the student to advance the study of the subject; and, in so doing, demonstrates a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study, (a student being able to place the thesis in a wider context), objectivity and the capacity for judgement in complex situations and autonomous work in that field.
   i) is satisfactory in its literary and/or technical presentation and structure with a full bibliography and references;
   j) takes due account of previously published work on the subject;
   k) makes clear the sources from which information has been derived, the extent to which the work of others has been used, and the areas which are claimed as original;
   l) contains an element which might, after any necessary revision, merit publication in a medium appropriate to the discipline (for example as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals);
   m) shows a student's ability to design and implement an independent research project.
2. A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of a thesis, either by a student alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of a thesis but may be adapted to form an integral part of a thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of a thesis. Publications derived from the work in a thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of a thesis.

5.2.3   Language of a Thesis

1. All theses must be written in English.
2. In all cases, the oral examination of a thesis would normally be conducted in English.

5.2.4   Word Length of a Thesis

1. The required word length for a DPA thesis is 60,000 – 100,000 words, comprising an overarching analysis component of 40,000 - 60,000 words and a portfolio of policy problems tackled in a policy placement of 20,000 - 40,000 words.
2. The maximum word length includes footnotes, tables and figures but excludes bibliography, appendices and supporting data.

Further guidance

1. Where the above prescribes the maximum allowable length for DPA theses, this is not necessarily the preferred length. In many instances supervisors may wish to recommend a shorter length. Students should consult their supervisors on the usual length of theses in their subject area or topic.
2. The signature of the student and the Principal Supervisor on the Examination Entry Form to the DPA examinations (see the Research Degree Examination Entry webpages) shall be taken as confirmation that the thesis submitted is within the required word limit
3. 'Supporting data' refers largely to raw data which is not essential to the argument of the thesis. Appendices are not in the word count and should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish. Examiners are not required to read beyond the maximum word limits. Where the thesis itself is an edition of a text or texts, normally in the field of literature, the above word limits may not apply.

5.2.5   Format of a Thesis

1. The thesis should be submitted in the format determined by UCL at the time of submission. Further information and guidance is available on the Thesis Formatting webpages and on the Research Degree Examination Entry webpages.

5.2.6   Approval of a Thesis Title

1. A student must have the title of his/her thesis approved by his/her Principal Supervisor.
2. The approved title is submitted to UCL on the Examination Entry Form submitted to researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk.

5.2.7   Availability of a Thesis

1. After the examination has been completed and before the degree is awarded, successful students must submit one electronic copy to UCL, via the Research Publications Service (RPS), for lodging in the UCL library.
2. A soft-bound copy of the thesis may also be submitted to the UCL Library, if desired. This may include artefacts related to non-traditional formats of a thesis. Further information and guidance is available on the Thesis Formatting webpages.
3. The process of final thesis submission, both the electronic and optional hard copy, is managed by the Open Access Team.
4. A student may apply to UCL at the time of registration or thereafter, for restriction of access to their thesis and/or the abstract of their thesis on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting. In very exceptional circumstances, if the thesis includes material that is significant for national security, subject to approval of UCL, copies of the thesis placed in the public domain, with the agreement of the graduate concerned, may have certain parts excised from them. Applications to restrict access to a thesis should be made via the Library.

5.3   Examination Entry

5.3.1   Examination Entry Form

1. Before the thesis is submitted for examination, an Examination Entry Form must be submitted to UCL.
    i)   The Examination Entry Form may not be submitted earlier than six months before the completion of the prescribed programme and must be submitted not later than four months before the submission of the thesis. For the entry form and more information, see the Research Degree Examination Entry webpages.
    ii)   A student is required to submit to his/her supervisor a short description of the content of the thesis in about 300 words, the short description must be submitted to the Registry with the Examiner Nomination Forms, to assist in the appointment of suitable examiners (see the Chapter 5 webpage for more details).

5.3.2   Thesis Submission

1. Prior to examination, candidates are required to submit their e-thesis to UCL for dispatch to their examiners. Further information and guidance is available on the Thesis Formatting webpages.
2. After the examination and before the award is made, candidates entering for a UCL award are required deposit one e-thesis in the UCL Institutional Repository.

Further guidance

1. A candidate for the DPA degree is required to bring to the oral examination a copy of his/her thesis which is identical to the copies submitted to researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk. Further information and forms are available on the Research Degree Examination Entry webpages and on the Thesis Formatting webpages.

5.3.3   Dispatch of Theses to Examiners

1. A thesis will be sent, via researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk, to both examiners at least four weeks in advance of an oral examination.
2. Examiners will normally use an electronic copy of the thesis, but an Examiner may request the student provide a hardcopy, if required. Further information and guidance is available on the Thesis Formatting webpages.
3. Direct submission of theses to examiners by students, supervisors or departments/ divisions is not permitted.

Further guidance

1. All theses will be submitted to UCL via researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk. Theses will be sent to both examiners by UCL Student Records. Supervisors and students should note that theses will only be sent to examiners who have been formally appointed by UCL and only after the Examination Entry Form has been submitted in accordance with the Examination Entry Guidelines on the Research Degree Examination Entry webpages.
2. Supervisors and students for examination should ensure that all examination entry requirements have been met in good time before a planned oral examination takes place.
3. Oral Examinations cannot proceed if the requirements for the examination entry, including the formal appointment of examiners, have not taken place in accordance with UCL regulations. The outcome of any examination conducted in such an instance would be void.

5.3.4   Reasonable Adjustments

1. Under the Equality Act 2010, UCL is required to make Reasonable Adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure that disabled students are not put at a substantial disadvantage. UCL can also provide Reasonable Adjustments for students who might not consider themselves to have a 'disability' but who nevertheless would benefit from additional support with their studies due to an ongoing medical or mental health condition. For further information about Reasonable Adjustments, and how to apply, please see Chapter 2, Section 3: Reasonable Adjustments for Disabilities and Long-Term Conditions.

5.4   Appointment of Examiners

5.4.1   The Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees

1. Two examiners will be appointed for each candidate in accordance with the UCL Procedures for the Appointment of Examiners (see the Chapter 5 webpage for more details). One of the examiners shall be external to UCL; the other shall normally be a member of staff of UCL.

    Further guidance

1. For each student, two examiners shall be appointed by the UCL Research Degrees Committee on the recommendation of the appropriate Departmental and Faculty Postgraduate Committees or equivalent bodies. Two external examiners may be appointed in lieu of an internal examiner if, on grounds of academic expertise or other reasons, a suitable individual within UCL cannot be nominated.
2. An examiner shall not have acted as either Principal or Subsidiary Supervisor of the thesis to be examined, nor have been involved in any way with the candidate or project to be examined, including the DPA progression point.
3. In the case of a student who is a member of staff of UCL, no examiner may be appointed who is internal to UCL if they are from the same department as the student or supervisor(s). However, where nobody else is available with sufficient expertise an examiner from the same department may be appointed if a Viva chair is used.
4. It is desirable that no examiner, either internal or external, should be appointed on more than three consecutive occasions for the same supervisor. Generally, supervisors and departments are asked to avoid repeatedly nominating the same person as an examiner, or nominating each other to act for the other's student, within a short time frame.
    a) External Examiners:
        Normally, an individual external examiner should not be appointed more than once during a given year by members of the same UCL department.
    b) Internal Examiners:
        Normally, an individual internal examiner should not be appointed more than five times during a given three year period by members of the same UCL department.
5. Further guidelines on the appointment of examiners and nomination forms are available on the Chapter 5 webpage.

5.4.2   The Appointment of Additional Examiners

1. Exceptionally a third examiner, who must be external to UCL, may be appointed with the approval of UCL.

i) Exceptionally a third examiner may be appointed with the approval of the UCL Research Degrees Committee. A third examiner will be appointed in cases where, between them, the two examiners do not feel they have a sufficient level of expertise to examine the thesis.

ii) A third examiner may also be appointed where there is a dispute between two examiners about the result of an examination which they cannot resolve between themselves.

iii) In accordance with UCL regulations, the third examiner must be external to UCL.

iv) The third examiner will, however, be nominated and appointed through usual UCL procedures and using the Examiner Nomination Form on the Chapter 5 webpage.

5.5 Conduct of the Research Degree Examination

1. The examiners shall prepare independent preliminary reports on the thesis, conduct an oral examination and submit a final, joint report to UCL.

2. The candidate's supervisor shall be invited, unless the candidate indicates otherwise on his/her entry form, to attend the oral examination as an observer. The oral examination will otherwise be conducted in private.

3. The oral examination should be held at UCL or held remotely and the agreed configuration noted on the Examination Entry Form.

4. Where no configuration can be agreed the oral examination should be held at UCL by default.

5. Where the oral examination is held remotely it is recommended that the supervisor or other designated contact in the student's department is available at the time of, and after, the viva to provide technical and emotional support if needed.

Further guidance

1. The examiners shall prepare independent preliminary reports on the thesis to assist in conducting the oral examination. Copies of the preliminary reports for DPA students should be submitted to researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk together with the final, joint report. The preliminary and joint reports will be released to students.

2. Examiner report forms and procedural information are available from the Chapter 5 webpage.

3. Each final, joint report by the examiners shall indicate whether the thesis meets the requirements specified in Section 5.1 as appropriate and shall include a statement on the examiners' judgement of the student's performance. Examiners have the right to make comments in confidence to UCL in a separate report. Such comments should not be concerned with the performance of the student but may cover matters which they wish to draw to the attention of UCL.

4. All matters relating to the examination must be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of material contained in a student's thesis until such time as any restrictions on access to the thesis, which have been granted by UCL, have been removed.

5. The supervisor who attends the oral examination does not have the right to participate in the examination of the candidate but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners. Otherwise the oral examination shall be held in private.

6. UCL may exceptionally agree that the examination be conducted outside London if there are circumstances which make this expedient. Applications to hold an oral examination outside of London should be made in writing to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee via researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk.

7. For further guidance on the conduct of an oral examination, students and staff should also refer to the UCL Doctoral School's [Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees](#).

5.6   Outcomes of the Oral Examination

1. Students for a DPA degree must submit a thesis and be examined orally. The following options are open to examiners in determining the result of an examination for the DPA degree:

    a) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 5.1) and the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the student has satisfied them in the examination and the student has passed the research component of the award.

    b) If the thesis otherwise satisfies the criteria (set out in 5.1) but requires minor amendments, and if the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the student to make, within three months, amendments specified by them. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners, or one of their numbers nominated by them, for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.

    c) If the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present their thesis in a revised form within 18 months. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of their thesis, a student who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form. Examiners may refer a thesis for the DPA degree for 18 months for re-submission in a revised form, on one occasion only.

    d) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 5.1), but the student fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 18 months.

    e) If, after completion of the examination for the DPA degree, the examiners determine that a student has not reached the standard required for the award of the degree nor for the re-presentation of the thesis in a revised form for that degree, DPA candidates may be awarded an MRes degree, based on the completed MRes component, at the discretion of the DPA Board of Examiners.

    e) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 5.1), but the student fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 18 months.

    f) If, after completion of the examination for the DPA degree, the examiners determine that a student has not reached the standard required for the award of the degree nor for the re-presentation of the thesis in a revised form for that degree, DPA candidates may be awarded an MRes degree, based on the completed MRes component, at the discretion of the DPA Board of Examiners.

    g) The examiners may determine that the student has not satisfied them in the examination and no award will be made.

    h) The examiners shall not, save in very exceptional circumstances, make any of the above decisions without submitting the student to an oral examination on at least one occasion.

2. In the case of a thesis for the DPA that is referred for 18 months, if the examiners determine that a student has not reached the standard required for the award of the degree, DPA candidates may be awarded an MRes degree, based on the completed MRes component, at the discretion of the DPA Board of Examiners.

Further guidance

1. Staff and students should also refer to the Doctoral School's [Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees](#) for further guidance on the examination of research degree students.

5.7   Research Misconduct

1. All cases of suspected research misconduct, including plagiarism, shall be investigated in accordance with the regulations set out in the [Chapter 5, Part A, Section 5.6: Research Misconduct](#) and with the [UCL Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research](#).

5.8 Appeals

1. Where a decision in relation to the assessment, outcomes or progression (including Upgrade) of a student or the award of a UCL qualification is contested by the student and one or more of the grounds for appeal in the Academic Appeals Procedure can be evidenced, the decision can be appealed via the Academic Appeals Procedure within the timeframes set out in that procedure. Disagreeing with the academic judgement of Examiners is not valid grounds for an appeal.

5.9 Graduation Ceremonies

1. UCL will organise Graduation Ceremonies and publish an annual deadline for ticket applications (see the [UCL Graduation Ceremonies](#) website).
2. It is mandatory for all UCL graduates to wear academic robes to the graduation ceremonies. It is the responsibility of students to obtain the appropriate robes from UCL's suppliers. For further information see the [Graduation: Academic Robes web pages](#).