

# Research Degree Regulations Schedule C

The structure of research degree routes at Edge Hill University

**01 October 2023 – 30 September 2024**



Edge Hill  
University

# Research Degree Regulations Schedule C

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## 1. The general structure of Edge Hill research degrees

All Edge Hill research degrees (MRes, PhD by the conventional route, and the professional doctorate)<sup>1</sup> have the following components:

- a research project;
- non-modular research training;
- learning and skills needs analysis;
- a programme of related studies to address learning and skills needs;
- supervision through which the PGR experience will be tailored to the needs of the individual.

Each research degree has a different specific structure, but each has those five core components. In addition, there are, of course, differences in level (MRes is level seven, and PhD and professional doctorate are level eight), in the length of the thesis or dissertation, and in the length of the research proposal required after the first few months of registration.<sup>2</sup> The specific form that the five basic components listed above take in each research degree is described below, along with programme learning outcomes and additional information relating to each research degree route:

## 2. Masters by Research (*MRes; LLM*)

- Research proposal (5,000 words, no viva)
- Research project (dissertation or approved equivalent up to 30,000 words and viva)
- Core postgraduate researcher development sessions (classroom-based sessions tailored to the needs of individual PGRs in supervisory tutorials)<sup>3</sup>
- Methodological development sessions (classroom-based sessions tailored to the needs of individual PGRs in supervisory tutorials)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The PhD by publication does not involve completion of a programme of research while registered with the University, but is, rather, a route to an award, and as such it cannot have the structure of a research degree. Candidates never have the registered status of PGRs and only become candidates on submission, so they do not complete a programme of research while registered with the University, and, as a consequence, do not require a programme of postgraduate researcher development sessions and do not receive supervision, although they do have a mentor.

<sup>2</sup> The assessment criteria for all three proposals are the same. All proposals are assessed at level seven.

<sup>3</sup> The core postgraduate researcher development programme is a series of sessions designed to introduce PGRs to some considerations that while not generic, because they apply in different ways in different cases, are of relevance to all research.

<sup>4</sup> The methodological development programme is a programme of structured discussion sessions from which any individual PGR must attend six sessions but may attend more if that is felt necessary

- Learning and skills needs analysis at the beginning of the programme of research
- A programme of related studies designed to address identified needs.<sup>5</sup>

### **Masters by Research route learning outcomes**

On successful completion of the MRes PGRs will, in relation to the particular area of study, independently, be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of research methodology appropriate to the field of study;
- design a research project of appropriate scope and level;
- critically investigate a focused topic through the completing of the research project the PGR has designed, and
- present a dissertation, and defend that dissertation, by oral examination (or approved alternative), to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners.

### **3. Professional doctorate (*DESM(Amb)*, (*Pol*) or (*FRS*); *EdD*)**

- Research proposal (up to 15,000 words and viva)
- Research project (thesis or approved equivalent up to 80,000 words and viva)<sup>6</sup>
- Core postgraduate researcher development sessions (classroom-based sessions tailored to the needs of individual PGRs in supervisory tutorials)
- Methodological development sessions (classroom-based sessions tailored to the needs of individual PGRs in supervisory tutorials)
- Subject specific training (classroom-based methods, theory and

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or desirable. PGRs can attend any sessions and should take supervisory advice on which would be most appropriate. As with the core programme, the sessions introduce topics to allow tailored consideration of those topics in supervisory tutorials. Supervisors are provided with information about what has been addressed in the sessions.

<sup>5</sup> The programme of related studies could include attendance at some sessions on taught M level programmes offered by the department in which the PGR is based for supervisory purposes, or perhaps even other departments, attendance at departmental research seminars covering appropriate topics, research training sessions offered by departments or faculties, and the University's Researcher Development Programme sessions. The key point about the programme of related studies is that it is designed in each case to meet the needs of the individual PGR as identified by needs analysis.

<sup>6</sup> This is the length of the professional doctorate thesis as defined by the Research Degree Regulations, however, when proposing the intake of individual cohorts, teams propose figures for the length of the dissertation based on disciplinary conventions. The emergency services management cohorts produce a dissertation of 55,000 words and EdD cohorts produce a thesis of 60,000 words.

general subject knowledge sessions tailored to the needs of individual PGRs in supervisory tutorials). The primary focus of these sessions is on matters related to research in the relevant discipline or subject area, not knowledge of the relevant profession.

- Learning and skills needs analysis at the beginning of each year of the programme of research
- A programme of related studies designed to address identified needs

The University's general academic and research degree regulations apply unless the specific professional doctorate information below defines otherwise.

Graduates are awarded the pre-nominal title of 'Doctor', wear the same academic dress as PhD graduates, but the post-nominal abbreviation must contain the name of the subject discipline (eg EdD; DMus; DClinPsy; EngD; DBA; DArch; DCrimJ; DPharm; DSocSci; ThD). The title and post-nominal abbreviation will be agreed at approval of the intake of a cohort. New titles and abbreviations must additionally be approved by Academic Board and reflected in the University's general academic regulations.

Central to the professional doctorate is the requirement that PGRs' research be focussed upon the development of professional practice. Candidates must therefore normally have direct access to the world of work,<sup>7</sup> and also preferably be employed in their chosen profession (the focus of their doctoral study) at enrolment. In cases where access to the appropriate place of work and associated data is questionable, interview panels and the Graduate School must carefully consider whether, if registered, the candidate will have access to the appropriate data. As most professional doctorate PGRs will be in work, the route is only available in part-time mode.

Were a PGR to leave the profession during their research, it may still prove possible to demonstrate that professional practice can be improved, and access to the appropriate data set may still be available. The Graduate School Board of Studies will determine whether withdrawal or termination of registration is necessary in each of such cases.

The need for candidates to attend postgraduate researcher development and training, yet remain in work throughout the period of registration, means that the professional doctorate is not generally appropriate for overseas candidates.

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<sup>7</sup> Access to the data set is the key matter that needs to be guaranteed.

### Professional doctorate route learning outcomes

On successful completion of the professional doctorate PGRs will, in relation to the particular area of study, independently, be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of research methodology appropriate to the profession;
- design a research project of appropriate scope and level;
- critically investigate and evaluate a focused topic through completion of the research project the PGR has designed;
- make a significant and original contribution to knowledge directly applicable within a profession;
- make that contribution to knowledge independently, and
- present a thesis, and defend that thesis, by oral examination (or approved alternative), to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners.

### 4. Doctor of Philosophy (*PhD*)

- Research proposal (up to 15,000 words and viva)
- Research project (thesis or approved equivalent up to 80,000 words)
- Core postgraduate researcher development sessions (classroom-based sessions tailored to the needs of individual PGRs in supervisory tutorials)
- Additional postgraduate researcher development sessions (a short programme of additional sessions for PGRs nearing completion. The sessions focus on developing PGRs for careers in academia or research-related employment elsewhere. The classroom-based sessions will be tailored to the needs of individual PGRs in supervisory tutorials)
- Learning and skills needs analysis at the beginning of each year of the programme of research
- A programme of related studies designed to address identified needs.<sup>8</sup>

### PhD route learning outcomes

On successful completion of the PhD PGRs will, in relation to the particular

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<sup>8</sup> Some PGRs registered on the PhD may find certain methodological training sessions useful as contributions to a programme of related studies. Those sessions are not mandatory for those registered for a PhD, but they can attend them if they wish.

area of study, independently, be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of research methodology appropriate to the field of study;
- design a research project of appropriate scope and level;
- critically investigate and evaluate a focused topic through completion of the research project that the PGR has designed;
- make a significant and original contribution to knowledge;
- make that contribution to knowledge independently, and
- present a thesis, and defend that thesis, by oral examination (or approved alternative), to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners

## 5. Mapping of Research Degree Criteria and Learning Outcomes to FHEQ Level Descriptors and Degree Characteristics

### *Masters by Research (MRes/LLM)*

Award criterion	Learning outcome	FHEQ level descriptor			Degree characteristic
<i>The Masters by Research (MRes/LLM) will be awarded on the basis of a PGR having:</i>	<i>On successful completion of the MRes PGRs will, in relation to the particular area of study, independently, be able to:</i>	<i>FHEQ Level 7 descriptor</i> <i>Research Masters degrees are awarded to students who demonstrate/will be able to/have:</i>			The following characteristics are often associated with research master's programmes.
Completed an approved programme of research training	Demonstrate an understanding of research methodology appropriate to the field of study	A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship	Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.	The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations  - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.	They include research methods training, which may be provided through 'taught' content modules
Demonstrated an understanding of research methodology appropriate to the field of study			Evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.		
Designed an appropriate research project	Design a research project of appropriate scope and level	Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.	Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level		The student conducts a research project through independent study.



Award criterion	Learning outcome	FHEQ level descriptor			Degree characteristic
<i>The Masters by Research (MRes/LLM) will be awarded on the basis of a PGR having:</i>	<i>On successful completion of the MRes PGRs will, in relation to the particular area of study, independently, be able to:</i>	<i>FHEQ Level 7 descriptor</i> <i>Research Masters degrees are awarded to students who demonstrate/will be able to/have:</i>			The following characteristics are often associated with research master's programmes.
Critically investigated a focused topic in completing that research project	Critically investigate a focused topic through the completing of the research project the PGR has designed	A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice	Conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline	Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences	
Demonstrated an understanding of the concepts relevant to the research project					
Presented a dissertation, and defended that dissertation, by oral examination (or approved alternative), to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners.	Present a dissertation, and defend that dissertation, by oral examination (or approved alternative), to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners.	n/a			Assessment is specific to the individual and usually requires a dissertation or thesis, or other output, such as an artefact, performance or musical composition.  The thesis is commonly defended in an oral examination

*Professional Doctorate DESM (Amb), (Pol) or (FRS); EdD*

Award criterion	Learning outcome	FHEQ Level 8 descriptor			Degree characteristic
<i>The Professional Doctorate will be awarded on the basis of a PGR having:</i>	<i>On successful completion of the Professional Doctorate PGRs will, in relation to the particular area of practice, independently, be able to:</i>	<i>Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who demonstrate/will be able to/have:</i>			<i>Characteristics often associated with professional doctorate awards are as follows:</i>
Completed an approved programme of discipline-specific and research training	Demonstrate an understanding of research methodology appropriate to the profession	A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.	Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.	The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.	Professional and practice-based doctorates usually contain taught elements with significant lecture and seminar content, but final award of the doctorate is based on a supervised research project, projects or portfolio.
Demonstrated an understanding of research methodology appropriate to the profession and the research project					
Designed an appropriate research project	Design a research project of appropriate scope and level	The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems			Research projects in professional doctorates are normally located within the candidate's profession or practice. In practice-based or practitioner doctorates the candidate's output involves practice-related materials.
Critically investigated and evaluated a focused topic in completing that research project	Critically investigate and evaluate a focused topic through completion of the research project the PGR has designed	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.	Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences		
Demonstrated an advanced understanding of the concepts relevant to the profession and the research project					

Award criterion	Learning outcome	FHEQ Level 8 descriptor	Degree characteristic
<i>The Professional Doctorate will be awarded on the basis of a PGR having:</i>	<i>On successful completion of the Professional Doctorate PGRs will, in relation to the particular area of practice, independently, be able to:</i>	<i>Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who demonstrate/will be able to/have:</i>	<i>Characteristics often associated with professional doctorate awards are as follows:</i>
Made a significant and original contribution to knowledge directly applicable within the profession and the research project	Make a significant and original contribution to knowledge directly applicable within a profession	The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication	Completion of the degree normally leads to professional and/or organisational change that is often direct rather than achieved through the implementation of subsequent research findings.
Made that contribution to knowledge independently	Make that contribution to knowledge independently		
Presented a thesis, and defended that thesis, by oral examination (or approved alternative), to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners.	Present a thesis, and defend that thesis, by oral examination (or approved alternative), to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners.		In the final assessment, candidates are assessed on their thesis, portfolio, artefact or composition (the latter two normally, and the portfolio sometimes, are accompanied by a critical commentary on the work), and by an oral examination. A minimum of two examiners are usually present at the oral examination, usually one internal and a minimum of one external to the higher education provider.

### Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Award criterion	Learning outcome	FHEQ Level 8 descriptor			Degree characteristic
<i>The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) will be awarded on the basis of a PGR having:</i>	<i>On successful completion of the PhD PGRs will, in relation to the particular area of study, independently, be able to:</i>	<i>Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who demonstrate/will be able to/have:</i>			<i>Characteristics often associated with subject specialist doctorates awards are as follows:</i>
Completed an approved programme of research training	Demonstrate an understanding of research methodology appropriate to the field of study.	A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.	Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.	The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.	Candidates follow structured programmes that include both research and generic skills training.
Demonstrated an understanding of research methodology appropriate to the field of study					
Designed an appropriate research project	Design a research project of appropriate scope and level	The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems			Programmes are based largely on a supervised research project, during which the candidate is registered by a higher education provider. All doctoral candidates are required to make an original contribution to knowledge by conducting an independent research project; the form this takes usually depends on the candidate's academic subject and the degree-awarding body's regulations.
Critically investigated and evaluated a focused topic in completing that research project	Critically investigate and evaluate a focused topic through completion of the research project that the PGR has designed.	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.	Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences		
Demonstrated an advanced understanding of the concepts relevant to the research project					

Award criterion	Learning outcome	FHEQ Level 8 descriptor	Degree characteristic
<i>The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) will be awarded on the basis of a PGR having:</i>	<i>On successful completion of the PhD PGRs will, in relation to the particular area of study, independently, be able to:</i>	<i>Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who demonstrate/will be able to/have:</i>	<i>Characteristics often associated with subject specialist doctorates awards are as follows:</i>
Made a significant and original contribution to knowledge	Make a significant and original contribution to knowledge.	The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication	
Made that contribution to knowledge independently	Make that contribution to knowledge independently		
Presented a thesis, and defended that thesis, by oral examination (or approved alternative), to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners.	Present a thesis, and defend that thesis, by oral examination (or approved alternative), to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners.		In the final assessment, candidates are assessed on their thesis, portfolio, artefact or composition (the latter two normally, and the portfolio sometimes, are accompanied by a critical commentary on the work), and by an oral examination. A minimum of two examiners are usually present at the oral examination, usually one internal and a minimum of one external to the higher education provider.

## Endmatter

Information	Ownership/Review
Title	Research Degree Regulations, Schedule C
Policy Owner	Dr Leon Culbertson, Dean of the Graduate School
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