



# Research Degrees Code of Practice

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# 1. Introduction & Scope

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This Code of Practice provides a framework of procedures and practices to support Research Degree (RD) students and their supervisors. It outlines the commitment made between the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM/the School) and RD students for the provision of programmes leading to the award of a research degree (such as DrPH, MPhil, PhD, or PhD by Prior Publication).

Compliance with the Code of Practice is mandatory. The Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the Research Degrees Regulations, the Research Degrees Handbook and with related policies and procedures approved by Senate or its delegated authority. In any issues of interpretation of the Code of Practice, the Research Degrees Regulations always take precedence. These three documents can be found [here](#).

The Code of Practice takes into account the recommendations of the Office for Students (OfS), the UK Quality Assurance Agency ([QAA](#)) and UK Research and Innovation ([UKRI](#)). It incorporates the precepts outlined in the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

The QAA is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the umbrella organisation for quality assurance bodies in the European Higher Education Area. The QAA UK Quality Code is compliant with the [guidelines](#) of the ENQA. UK Higher Education Providers are required by the OfS to comply with the Quality Code. The OfS monitors compliance through annual accountability returns from higher education providers.

# 2. Framework for Governance & Quality Assurance

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This section sets out the responsibilities for research degree programmes at LSHTM. It identifies the roles and committees involved in making decisions about research degree programmes and those responsible for assuring the quality of the provision to RD students and the academic standards of research degrees.

The Pro-Director (Education) is responsible for providing strategic leadership on postgraduate research programmes and all matters related to RD students. The Head of the Doctoral College is the Chair of the Senate Research Degrees Committee. The Head of the Doctoral College represents RD student-related matters at Senate. SLT is the academic senior leadership team and comprises the Director, Deputy Director & Provost, Chief Operating Officer, Secretary and Registrar, Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Pro-Director (Education) and Deans of Faculties. SLT advises the Head of the Doctoral College on the management of day-to-day business as well as the School's long-term future, and is responsible for the development and implementation of the School's Strategic Plan.

The Senate Research Degrees Committee is responsible for operational oversight of research degree activity, the quality of research degree programmes, and the examination of LSHTM RD students. It is comprised of Faculty Research Degrees Directors, DrPH Programme Director, Faculty Research Degrees Managers, RD Students Representatives and staff from the Division of Education.

There are three academic Faculties:

- [Epidemiology and Population Health \(EPH\)](#)
- [Infectious and Tropical Diseases \(ITD\)](#)
- [Public Health and Policy \(PHP\)](#)

There are also Departments within Faculties, and LSHTM MRC Units in The Gambia and Uganda. In addition, RD students may be affiliated to a number of cross-Faculty School Centres. The Head of the Doctoral College has cross-School responsibility for RD students and programmes, provides advice to academic staff and ensures that appropriate training to staff and students is provided.

Senate is the LSHTM committee responsible for the academic standards of awards and the approval of the Regulations for research degree programmes. The Senate Research Degrees Committee (SRDC) has delegated authority from Senate to approve academic policy relating to research degree students, their numbers and distribution by discipline, entrance qualifications and admissions, progression and completion rates, scholarships, complaints and withdrawal rates. SRDC also considers proposals for new research degree programmes, and reviews annually the Regulations for research degrees and this Code of Practice.

There are also Faculty Research Degrees Committees which monitor admissions, research project selection, assignment of supervisors, examiners' comments and annual progress through to submission of theses. These Committees are chaired by Faculty Research Degrees Directors.

At Faculty level, the Faculty Research Degrees Director (FRDD) is responsible for the quality of the RD students' experience, advising Department Research Degrees Coordinators (DRDCs), and for overseeing the implementation of School policies and regulations relating to research degrees. They are also responsible for day-to-day issues related to research degrees in their Faculty, including oversight of the examination process and ensuring that supervisor training is available and participation recorded. At Department level, DRDCs have particular responsibilities for progress monitoring and chairing the upgradings/reviews. FRDDs and DRDCs work closely together, within and across faculties. The DrPH programme also has a Programme Director who is responsible for the particular academic support needs of that programme. Faculty Research Degrees Managers (FRDMs) provide support for students and Faculty staff. The Faculty, Department and Programme roles for academic leadership of the research degree experience are complemented by Faculty-based administrative roles and School-wide services.

Research degree programmes that involve collaboration with other institutions or organisations, such as any Joint PhD programmes, are governed by any additional requirements set out in the agreements for such collaborative provision.

## The School's Research Degrees' Framework

The School's research degrees' framework comprises the following discrete elements:

- Supervision (including Advisory Committee)
- Research activity
- Researcher Development (including DrPH modules, a Transferable Skills Programme and a wide range of other personal and professional development opportunities)
- Progress Monitoring

### 3. Research Environment

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The School's academic research environment provides the intellectual context in which this framework operates and research degree studies are undertaken.

Faculties are responsible for providing RD students with a sufficiently supportive and active research environment. This includes ensuring that students have supervisory teams and the timeframes for completion of research degrees can be met. The Head of the Doctoral College will work with Faculty Research Degree Directors to ensure the provision and enhancement of an appropriate research environment for RD students.

### 4. Selection & Admission of RD students

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The Research Degrees Regulations specify the broad admissions requirements for research degrees, including the required level of competency in English. Faculties must adhere to the School's minimum entry requirements. Faculties may define specific admissions requirements for individual research degree programmes with the approval of the Senate Research Degrees Committee.

Admissions procedures for research degree programmes are also governed by LSHTM's general admissions policies which can be found [here](#).

Faculties are responsible for selecting applicants for admission to research degree programmes, with reference to the requirements outlined in the Senate Research Degrees Regulations. Decisions are recommended by Department Research Degree Coordinators and approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Director.

The Faculty Research Degrees Director will ensure that the topic identified is appropriate for a research degree, that the necessary research facilities and research training can be provided, and that appropriate supervision is in place in consultation with the Department Research Degrees Coordinator before recommending an offer.

Formal offers of admission can only be made by LSHTM's central Admissions department in the Registry.

## 5. Registration & Induction

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A student is required to register with LSHTM at the start of his/her research degree programme and to re-register for the research degree programme at the beginning of each subsequent academic year for the duration of their programme of studies (including during the period of writing-up) regardless of the mode of attendance and until their degree is awarded. Failure to re-register results in termination of registration.

RD students will be directed to review the Regulations for Research Degrees, changes that have been approved, and the Research Degrees Code of Practice at the point of (re)-registration.

**Students are automatically enrolled to the newest set of Research Degrees Regulations, Code of Practice and Handbook upon re-registration at the start of each academic year, unless they explicitly confirm otherwise to the Registry in writing within 28 days of electronic delivery of their annual registration form.**

There are School-level inductions for general information and more specific events at Faculty level. The School and Faculty inductions will cover:

- introduction to the overarching governance of research degree programmes at LSHTM;
- introduction to the Faculty and its activities and support for RD students;
- introduction to the general structure of research degree programmes and arrangements for progress monitoring;
- introduction to the support available from the Faculty Research Degrees Managers and administrators;
- introduction to research and professional/technical support services;
- details about opportunities and requirements for research and transferable skills development;
- expectations on attendance, hours of work and holiday arrangements;
- arrangements in the event of inadequate progress;
- health and safety procedures;
- advice on personal safety and security;
- who to contact in the event of a problem;
- introduction to policies and procedures on research integrity and ethics, plagiarism, assessment and research misconduct;
- advice on LSHTM services including central library and computing services, and support services such as Advice and Counselling, the Disability Service, and the Careers Service.

DrPH students will also receive a DrPH specific induction.

Students in each Faculty will also receive information on:

- introduction to the structure and research portfolio of the Faculty;
- wider academic opportunities (seminars, journal clubs, research networks) including opportunities for meeting other RD students and staff, and opportunities to present research to peers;
- teaching opportunities;
- skills training available within and outside the Faculty;
- mechanisms for providing feedback to the Faculty, including opportunities for representation on relevant committees;
- how to raise concerns and/or make a complaint within the Faculty.

It is LSHTM's responsibility to provide a Research Degrees Handbook for students and supervisors, and to review this each year to ensure that it reflects any changes in regulations or policies relating to research degrees

Students will have an initial meeting with their first supervisor as soon as possible following the beginning of their programme. It will be recorded on the Research Degree Record (RDR) which is an online tracking and monitoring tool allowing students and their supervisors to record progress. Further information can be found on the Intranet, under [Research Degree Record](#).

The student's initial meeting with their first supervisor will cover:

- the nature of the supervisory relationship and composition of the supervisory team, including responsibilities and expectations;
- a discussion on the research topic proposed, initial routes of enquiry and objectives; for the DrPH, this discussion will also typically include support during the first term as well as plans for RSI and RSII components;
- identification of initial training needs and formulation of a training plan;
- recording supervision meetings;
- how the student's progress will be monitored and assessed.

## 6. Attendance & Academic Engagement

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Full-time students are expected to undertake a full study load of 40 hours per week.

The Research Degrees Regulations state that the workload of a part-time student is deemed to be 50% of that of a full-time student. It is recognised that the time a part-time student may spend on their studies may vary through the course of the programme. Part-time students should reach an agreement with their supervisors at the start of their registration as to the proportion of time they will spend on their research degree programme to enable them to submit within the prescribed period. Any arrangement agreed should not compromise submission within the prescribed period.

Requests from students to transfer between full-time and part-time status are approved by the Supervisor, the Department Research Degrees Coordinator and the Faculty Research Degrees Director.

All students should agree their holiday periods with their first supervisor. For full-time students, the annual leave (holiday) entitlement is six weeks' in addition to School closure days (which include Public Holidays). Holiday entitlement is pro rata for part-time students (50%). Students working in collaboration with non-academic partners are expected to bear in mind their obligations to those partners in planning annual leave. Unexplained and persistent absences must be reported to the Department Research Degrees Coordinator and Faculty Research Degrees Director via normal progress reporting procedures.

The School has a [Student Attendance Policy](#) which provides detailed information on attendance for research degree students.

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In cases of illness or injury, the student should inform their supervisor(s). On the eighth day of the student's sickness (including non-working days) the student may be asked to supply a doctor's certificate or other corroborating evidence to explain their absence. Students on Tier 4 visas should check the procedures in the [Student Attendance Policy](#) and the latest guidelines. Students on specific studentships should check with the scholarships office whether they should let their funder know. Staff who are also RD students should follow the policy for staff, and let their supervisor(s) know. Where a student is expected to be absent for more than one month the student should consider applying to interrupt their studies.

If a student is experiencing difficulties in his/her attendance, or submission of their work does not meet the Faculty requirements, this should be discussed with the supervisory team, the Department Research Degree Coordinator and the Faculty Research Degrees Director if appropriate, to see what support might be offered to the student to resolve any study difficulties. If a student consistently misses supervision meetings or other Faculty activities that they are expected to attend and/or does not submit work or misses deadlines as agreed with their supervisory team, then a student's registration with LSHTM may be reviewed by the Faculty. LSHTM may terminate the registration of a student who fails to meet the progression requirements for the research studies programme or where his/her general attendance or submission of work and/or completion of required activities fails to meet the stated requirements. The Termination of Studies Policy can be found [here](#).

International RD students holding a Tier 4 Student visa sponsored by LSHTM may be at risk of having their visa curtailed if they do not engage regularly and consistently with their research studies programme. The Student Immigration & Compliance Officer provides support to international RD students on immigration matters. Further information on attendance for students with Tier 4 visas can be found [here](#).

## 7. Supervision

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The Faculty Research Degrees Director is responsible for establishing supervision arrangements for each student that conform to this Code, and may be required to report on these arrangements to the Faculty and Senate Research Degrees Committee. Specific information about the roles and responsibilities of supervisors are available in the [Research Degrees Handbook](#).

### **The Supervisory Team**

Each RD student will have a first and a second supervisor. The division of roles and responsibilities between members of the supervisory team should be set out at the start of the research programme.

The [Research Degrees Handbook](#) provides guidance on this and on managing any changes to supervisory arrangements.

### **Supervision meetings and recording interactions**

Supervision is defined as a sustained conversation between supervisor(s) and a RD student about the student's research and training. The nature of different disciplines means that supervisory practice will take a variety of forms. Supervision may include for example, one-to-one meetings,

telephone conversations or video-link/skype meetings. Opportunities are also made available for research students and supervisors to meet informally. Research group meetings, lab meetings and email conversations are not supervision meetings. The [Student Attendance Policy](#) provides more detail about supervision and engagement with supervisors.

There should be a minimum of ten supervisory meetings per academic year for full-time students (pro rata for part-time students) held at regular intervals up to submission of the thesis or portfolio for examination. This is broadly equivalent to at least one meeting per month for full-time students and at least one meeting every two months for part-time students, taking into account holiday periods. Supervision meetings may be held with any member of the supervisory team. Meetings should normally take place in person but may take place via other means if all participants are in agreement.

Keeping a record of supervision meetings is key to successful supervision. Under the requirements of the UK Quality Assurance Agency, and for international RD students, UK Visas and Immigration, LSHTM must also be able to demonstrate that students are receiving sufficient supervision and that they are engaged in their studies. To fulfil both of these responsibilities, students and supervisors must use the Research Degree Record (RDR) to create a written record of all supervisory meetings and any leave away from the School, whether for research or other purposes. It is the responsibility of both students and supervisors that supervision meetings are recorded in RDR.

Full-time RD students should record a minimum of ten supervision meeting reports per academic year in RDR. Part-time students should enter a minimum of five reports per academic year in RDR. The RDR system will send electronic reminders to do this. Reports should also be recorded during a period of making corrections to the thesis identified by the examiners. Failure to record supervisions in line with the recommendations in the Code may be taken as evidence of lack of engagement with studies when reviewing a student's academic progress.

## 8. Supervisors' Responsibilities & Guidelines

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### School Guidelines for Supervisors

Specific information about the roles and responsibilities of supervisors are available in the Research Degrees Handbook available [here](#), and below. Information of particular relevance to supervisors is highlighted in the [supervisors' page of the Doctoral College website](#)

Supervisors are required to:

- Assess the academic capabilities of RD applicants through review of the application documents and then through telephone, web-mediated conversation or personal contact with promising applicants, before reaching a final decision to supervise. A DRDC will interview the candidate to ensure suitability and to clarify issues such as residency requirements. Final decisions will be ratified by the FRDD.
- Attend the induction for new RD supervisors before taking on their first LSHTM RD student. Supervisors who have not yet supervised a student to timely submission and successful completion, and experienced supervisors who have not yet gained this level of experience in the UK should have a mentor; they are also encouraged to gain experience as a member of an Advisory Committee or co-supervisor before becoming a first supervisor.

- Attend a staff development workshop for experienced supervisors every three years. Please note that some funding agencies may have additional guidelines or requirements for supervision that must also be met.
- Keep up to date with School, and where relevant external, regulations, policies and procedures relating to research degree students and supervision.
- Be available to meet new students on their first day or arrange for an alternative department member to be available. Supervisors should in any case arrange a meeting with new students within their first week.
- Make alternative arrangements for supervision from someone familiar with the student's research to look after the student if a Supervisor is to be absent for more than four weeks. This person does not take the place of the supervisor but can offer support and guidance while the Supervisor is away. The Supervisor is responsible for making such interim arrangements with the agreement of the DRDC.
- Ensure that they establish expectations of doctoral training, supervision and project ownership at the start of the research degree (there is an [expectations checklist](#) available to help with this that supervisors are encouraged to discuss with their supervisors.).
- Ensure that they have regular meetings (monthly for FT students) with a student to ensure progress. Supervisory meetings should be recorded and agreed on RDR.
- Ensure that they provide students with clear guidance on when feedback on work can be expected and respond to students' concerns about lack of timely feedback by providing clear timelines.
- Agree on a balanced Research Degree training programme which supports timely submission of the thesis/portfolio and includes wider researcher development in line with the [UK Vitae Framework](#) and expectations of UKRI.
- Facilitate/encourage research discussions within research team/Department/Faculty, participation in external meetings/conferences, and publications. Although there will be variation across disciplines and between students doing laboratory or other types of research, it is expected that doctoral students will have actively participated at national and/or international meetings during the course of their study and submitted at least two works for publication within six months of completion.

The supervisory team must be able to commit sufficient time to the supervision of the research student. Each supervisor must be able to commit sufficient time to his/her declared and agreed annual contribution to overall supervision workload.

Conflicts of interest that may diminish the likelihood of high quality research degree supervision, or otherwise threaten the timely and successful completion of the research degree, should be avoided. If avoidance is impossible, mitigation must be identified before the supervision team can be approved. Conflicts of interest may lie between a supervisor and student, between supervisors, or between a supervisor and another key stakeholder for the research degree study. Potential conflicts of interest include, for example:

- Personal relationships
- Line management relationships
- Project/study management relationships
- Financial relationships

If a supervisor holds a fixed term contract with the School that will expire before the student's anticipated date of completion this should be noted and contingency plans considered.

## 9. Students' Responsibilities

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Students will:

- Work diligently on the programme of research and aim to complete the programme and submit the thesis within the agreed time frame.
- Take overall responsibility for their research and the work produced.
- Carry out research in compliance with LSHTM and Faculty/Institute [health and safety policies](#).
- Take a pro-active role in discussing with the supervisory team the type of guidance and comment that is most helpful at different points in the progress of the research.
- Agree a schedule of meetings with the supervisory team, the DRDC and attend these.
- Full-time students must submit a minimum of ten supervisory meeting reports on RDR per academic year. Part-time students must submit a minimum of five reports per academic year. Reports should cover topics discussed at supervisory meetings and include any relevant training undertaken/courses attended.
- Submit written material as required to a timetable agreed between the supervisor and student for comment and discussion, and respond honestly and constructively to comments and suggestions (although this does not alter the student's overall responsibility for the work).
- Attend any programme(s) of researcher development and research skills training, taught classes and research seminars as agreed with the supervisory team, or required by the School/Institute and the student's funding body.
- Record evidence of engagement with research and skills training.
- Conform to all LSHTM policies on research integrity, and associated processes, including submitting an application for ethical approval for their research, and requests for amendments to ethical approval if the study changes. More information is available on the [research and governance and integrity](#) page.
- Inform the supervisory team of any problems or difficulties when they arise.
- Submit reports for assessment and other work to inform decisions about their progress as required.
- Register as a student of LSHTM at the beginning of the programme of study, and re-register subsequently at the start of each academic year until the degree is awarded.
- Monitor the @lshtm.ac.uk email address issued to them at initial registration to ensure they are receiving all formal communications from LSHTM. Official emails relating to periods of re-registration, progression or status transfers will only be sent to this address.
- Respect and adhere to the [LSHTM Student Charter](#) by behaving honestly and with integrity at all times.

## 10. Responsibilities of Faculty & Department Research Degrees Staff

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The Head of the Doctoral College delegates responsibility for matters related to doctoral students to the Faculty Research Degrees Directors (FRDDs). The FRDDs' duties are outlined below.

## Faculty Research Degree Directors (FRDD)

- Oversee and monitor RD provision within the Faculty/Department.
- Oversee the admissions process for research degrees and ensure that applicants are admitted for a research degree only where suitable supervision and research resources are available.
- FRDDs are responsible for all RD students with primary registration in their Faculty/Department. In cases of co-supervision across Faculty, the FRDD in the student's home department/faculty approves decisions.
- Ensure that an appropriate first and second supervisor or supervisory team is in place for each student.
- Ensure that all staff appointed as supervisors are appropriately trained for their role.
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- Attend appropriate Faculty and School committees, for example the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and the Senate Research Degrees Committee, and disseminate information back to Faculty/Department.
- Carry out an annual review of research degree programmes for their Faculty/Department, including a review of the proportion of post-upgrade RD students with ethical and other required approvals.
- Oversee the monitoring of students' progress in accordance with the Research Degree Regulations and the Code of Practice.
- Liaise with the Faculty Research Degree Committee with regard to interruptions of study, extensions of thesis submission dates and withdrawal and termination of registration from LSHTM, reporting to Senate Research Degrees Committee as necessary.
- Approve formal progress and status reviews on behalf of the Faculty.
- Develop and review Faculty policy regarding student feedback.
- Receive and deal with complaints and problems, whether these are relayed by a Departmental Research Degree Coordinator or made directly to them by a student.
- Ensure suitable alternative supervision arrangements in the case of breakdown of relations between a supervisor and the student or where a change of supervisor is desirable. In case of absence or the departure of the first or second supervisor, ensure that adequate arrangements are made for the student's continuing supervision.
- Ensure that appropriate student feedback mechanisms are in place within the Faculty, for example research student representation on committees and encourage engagement with, and review results of, student surveys.
- Ensure that each Faculty has, as a minimum, at least one research student Representative to attend committees.
- Oversee and monitor research training and skills development.
- Oversee and encourage student engagement with research training programmes, and all other research and professional development training.
- Liaise with Faculty Taught Programme Directors to ensure that all students receive appropriate training before commencing any teaching.
- Encourage students to record training and research activities via a Personal Development Plan or other mechanism.

The DrPH Programme Director oversees all aspects of research degree provision for DrPH students:

- Oversee and monitor provision of the DrPH

- Oversee the admissions process for the DrPH to ensure that suitable supervision and research resources are available.
- Attend the Senate Research Degrees Committee, chair DrPH Programme Committee and disseminate information back to Faculties and Departments.
- Oversee the monitoring of student progress in accordance with the Research Degree Regulations and the Code of Practice.
- Liaise with the Faculty Research Degree Committee with regard to interruptions of study, extensions of thesis/portfolio submission dates and withdrawal and termination of registration from LSHTM, reporting to Senate Research Degrees Committee as necessary.
- Ensure suitable alternative supervision arrangements in the case of breakdown of relations between a supervisor and the student or where a change of supervisor is desirable. In case of absence or the departure of the first or second supervisor, ensure that adequate arrangements are made for the student's continuing supervision.

### **Department Research Degrees Coordinators (DRDC)**

DRDCs are asked to:

- Monitor students' progress at the prescribed intervals, and receive reports from supervisors and self-assessment reports from students
- Chair upgrading/review panels and complete the upgrading/review report (after gaining agreement of panel members)
- Admissions: review applications, find appropriate supervisors, interview students and make admission decisions.
- Attend Faculty Research Degrees Committee
- Take part in Induction/Welcome and other Departmental or Faculty events for RD students

## **11. Progression & Review**

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The first supervisor is responsible for regular reviews of student progress and will inform the student, Department Research Degrees Coordinator and Faculty Research Degrees Director if progress is unsatisfactory. In addition to regular supervision, the DRDC will conduct formal progress reviews at the prescribed intervals.

The Research Degrees Regulations outline the parameters for each of the progression points and outcomes. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Research Degrees Director to ensure that students' progression is assessed in accordance with the Regulations and published procedures.

Upgrading/Review is a formal process that permits a student to continue to the next stage of their research studies programme (see Regulations for permitted timing and final deadlines). An upgrade/review panel is set up to discuss and review progress with the student. The panel must include at least two people who are independent examiners as well as an independent chair (usually DRDC). Decisions on progression must be taken by members of the panel who are independent of the supervisory team. If a PhD student fails to upgrade/satisfactorily pass the review before the final deadline, s/he may continue working towards a Master's level research degree (MPhil as appropriate to their programme of study) or may be advised to withdraw their registration. The School has an [Academic Appeals Policy](#) & Procedure to enable students to appeal against assessment/progression decisions.

Faculties also put in place arrangements for the regular monitoring and assessment of student progress which are managed by the DRDC.

Additional progression points for students on Professional Doctorate programmes (DrPH programme) are outlined in the [programme specification](#).

The outcomes of formal progress reviews will be reported to the Faculty Research Degrees Managers so that the student's central record may be updated appropriately.

## 12. Transfer to Writing-up Status

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Students are automatically transferred to writing up status after 3 years full-time and 6 years part-time study.

## 13. Termination of Registration

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The [Research Degrees Regulations](#) (Academic Manual Chapter 9) and the [Termination of Studies Policy](#) (Academic Manual Chapter 7) outline the reasons for which a student's registration may be terminated. Faculties may recommend that a student's registration be terminated on the grounds of insufficient academic progress. This recommendation may follow a formal process but may also be made at other points during the programme of study. Such a recommendation should only be made after the student has been advised in writing that they are at risk of termination unless specified objectives are met within a clear timeframe.

Recommendations for termination of registration on the grounds of insufficient academic progress must be approved by the Departmental Research Degrees Coordinator and Faculty Research Degrees Director, and must be communicated to the Faculty Research Degrees Manager.

The formal procedures for termination of registration, and for appeals against decisions to terminate a student's registration, are outlined in the [Research Degree Regulations](#) and related policies/procedures available [here](#).

## 14. Interruption & Withdrawal from Study

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Interruptions may be requested at any point throughout the period of study and throughout the period of writing up. More than one application may be submitted during the research degree programme. The Department Research Degrees Coordinator is responsible for receiving and considering student requests for interruption of studies before approval by Faculty Research Degrees Director.

During an interruption of study, a student remains registered on their programme of study but ceases to be an enrolled student of LSHTM. This has consequences for student status, funding, and immigration status for international students. Depending on the reason for the interruption, studentship funding may be suspended during this period depending on sponsor agreements. Interruptions to the programme of study may be permitted in accordance with the Research

Degrees Regulations and approved policy for a number of reasons such as illness, personal and family reasons, pregnancy or pregnancy related illness, paternity leave, adoption leave, financial difficulties. The rules and procedures for interruptions of study are set out in the [Academic Manual Chapter 7](#).

Students may only interrupt for a minimum of one month at a time. Students are permitted to interrupt their research degree programme for up to one year in the first instance. The maximum permitted period of interruption is normally two years in total. Applications that exceed the maximum total period of interruption will only be granted with the approval of the Head of the Doctoral College who will provide reports to the Senate Research Degrees Committee.

Note that interruptions due to pregnancy/maternity leave, paternity leave or adoption are discussed in the [Parental Leave Policy](#).

Students are liable for payment of tuition fees up to the date that they withdraw or interrupt their studies. Students are liable for payment of tuition fees from the date they resume their programme. For further guidance regarding fee liability is in the [Tuition Fee Policy](#).

Students may continue to work personally on their research during interruptions of study and have access to the library with limited borrowing rights and their IT account and School email. Any arrangements for contact between a student and their supervisory team during a period of interruption should be agreed in advance of the period of interruption, for example to keep in touch and to plan the return to study. During a period of interruption students should not have access to laboratories or carry out fieldwork.

Interruptions cannot usually be applied retrospectively. Students may have their registration terminated if they do not resume studies at the end of the approved period of interruption or are absent from their studies without requesting an interruption of study or an extension to an approved period of interruption in line with the Interruption and Withdrawal Policy. Student Advice and Counselling can provide advice on interrupting study and returning to study. Their contact details are available [here](#).

## 15. Extension of Registration

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The Faculty Research Degrees Director is responsible for receiving and considering student requests for extension of study beyond the maximum registration period and extension of assessment deadlines in line with the [Research Degrees Extensions Policy & Procedure](#).

## 16. Student Advice and Counselling

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Student Advice and Counselling offer a range of services for students including support for all students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties, mental health issues and other personal difficulties at LSHTM. Further information can be found [here](#).

The team offers advice, guidance and support in the following areas:

- finding out if you have a specific learning difficulty like dyslexia

- applying for funding through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- arranging DSA assessments of need
- accessing loaned equipment (e.g. digital recorders)
- specialist one-to-one "study skills" tuition
- ensuring access to course materials in alternative formats (e.g. Braille)
- providing educational support workers (e.g. note-takers, readers, library assistants)
- mentoring support for students with mental health issues and conditions on the autistic spectrum
- advice about planning research and writing the thesis in the expected duration of the programme, including preparation for the viva
- advice on arrangements in examinations

Student Advice and Counselling can advise students and their Faculty/Department on reasonable adjustments to studies. Students supported by Student Support Services can expect to access the following reasonable adjustments:

- recommendations on examination arrangements
- library concessions, e.g. extended loans
- being allowed to make audio recordings of lectures
- advocacy when making requests to schools and faculties

Any agreed reasonable adjustments are provided throughout the study period including during the writing-up period.

## 17. Research Training & Skills Development

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All students will have access to training in appropriate research methods and relevant researcher development skills provided by their Faculty, the Library and the [transferable skills programme](#). Many students attend MSc modules. The School also participates in the [Bloomsbury Postgraduate Skills Network](#). The individual programme of research training will be discussed at the student's initial meeting with the supervisory team, and reviewed regularly during the course of the programme, particularly at progress monitoring meetings. For more details see the [skills training and courses](#) page of the Doctoral College website.

Students are encouraged to record evidence of engagement with research and skills training and development activities on RDR.

Students may be given the opportunity to contribute to teaching through lecturing, seminars, demonstrating practical classes, project supervision, marking and taking tutorials according to the teaching practices in the Faculty/Institutes for which the teaching is being undertaken. All students must receive appropriate training before commencing any teaching.

Any teaching undertaken by the student must be agreed by their supervisor(s) and must be in line with the terms and conditions of a student's funding and immigration status if appropriate.

## 18. Paid Work

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All full-time students are expected to undertake a full week of study of at least 40 hours on their research degree programme and pro rata for part-time students. Students may undertake paid teaching or demonstrating work with the approval of their supervisor. For full-time students, it is recommended that this is normally no more than six hours per week averaged over the year, including preparation and marking. The work must be supported by appropriate training. Students in receipt of scholarship funding must comply with any conditions concerning paid work set by their funding body.

In considering paid work outside LSHTM, full-time students should bear in mind the need to work full-time on their research. Paid work should not delay or interfere with research training and the timely submission of the thesis. If a student wishes to take-up full-time work for personal and financial reasons, they should discuss with their supervisor making an application to interrupt their studies.

International students studying in the UK on a Tier 4 Student visa may take up limited paid work. Advice is available from the Student [Immigration & Compliance Officer](#).

## 19. Research Integrity

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Students must comply with LSHTM policies on research integrity and ethical review of research. Students and supervisors will familiarise themselves with the LSHTM's policies on research integrity and associated procedures for the ethical review of research. Students must complete the [‘approvals for research’](#) form with their supervisor and discuss it with their DRDC prior to upgrading/review. They are also responsible for obtaining ethical approval prior to data collection, as described [here](#). The [Good Research Practice Policy](#) gives detailed guidance to staff and students.

## 20. Intellectual Property

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Students and supervisors must adhere to the LSHTM [Intellectual Property Policy](#). They must ensure that they implement and adhere to this policy throughout their research and in any interactions, whether in person or through electronic media, with parties external to LSHTM.

## 21. Collaborative Arrangements

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LSHTM has a number of collaborative research degree programmes, such as doctoral training programmes, the Capacity Strengthening Research Degrees Scheme (CSRDC), and a Joint PhD programme with the University of Nagasaki. The specific requirements and opportunities of each programme is described separately.

## 22. Feedback Mechanisms

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The School welcomes feedback from doctoral students and offers several routes to provide this, for example local and national feedback surveys; student representation on committees at School, Faculty and lower levels; student participation in working groups; engagement with the Student Representative Council (SRC) and individual ad-hoc feedback. Students must be advised during the induction period of the mechanisms for providing feedback to the School/Faculty, including opportunities for representation on relevant committees via Student Representatives.

## 23. Examinations

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The Senate Research Degrees Committee is responsible for overseeing process and conduct of the examination of research degrees. The Senate Research Degree Committee will approve external examiners and monitor issues arising from reports from research degree examiners and recommend appropriate actions.

## 24. Complaints & Appeals

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Students are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have about their research studies with their supervisory team, Department Research Degrees Coordinator, Faculty Research Degrees Director, DrPH Programme Director or Faculty Research Degrees Manager in the first instance. If a student has a problem regarding their supervision or other research support or LSHTM services they should address their concerns to their supervisor first and keep a clear record of this. If the situation is not resolved or concerns remain regarding supervision then students are expected to raise their concerns with their Department Research Degrees Coordinator or Faculty Research Degrees Director. Raising concerns promptly will provide staff with the opportunity to address these matters, and to reduce the impact on students as much as possible. Students should try informal resolution of concerns where possible. Many problems can be solved informally, without the need for a formal complaint.

If, for any reason, a student feels uncomfortable talking to their supervisory team, Departmental Research Degrees Coordinator and Faculty Research Degrees Director they can contact the DrPH Programme Director and/or Head of Doctoral College.

The [Student Complaints Procedure](#) provides guidance on raising concerns or complaints about both academic and non-academic services provided by LSHTM. Students who wish to make a complaint about any aspect of their research programme should refer to the recommended procedure.

Students who wish to appeal against the outcome of the recommendation of examiners or the outcome of a progression review should refer to the [Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure](#), Chapter 7 of the Academic Manual, which outlines the procedures to be followed. Students are advised to talk to their supervisor, DRDC in their department or FRDD before submitting an appeal. Please note that an appeal against the academic judgment of the examiners is not valid grounds for an appeal.

A formal concern about the conduct of another student (for example bullying, harassment and discrimination) would be investigated under the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#), Chapter 7 of the Academic Manual

## 25. Key Contacts

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### **Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health (EPH)**

Research Degrees Directors: Suzanne Filteau ([Suzanne.filteau@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Suzanne.filteau@lshtm.ac.uk))  
Punam Mangtani ([Punam.mangtani@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Punam.mangtani@lshtm.ac.uk))  
Research Degrees Manager: Jenny Fleming ([Jenny.fleming@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Jenny.fleming@lshtm.ac.uk))

### **Faculty of Infectious and Tropical Diseases (ITD)**

Research Degrees Directors: Jayne Webster ([Jayne.webster@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Jayne.webster@lshtm.ac.uk))  
Sam Alford ([Sam.Alsford@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Sam.Alsford@lshtm.ac.uk))  
Research Degrees Manager: Helen White ([Helen.white@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.white@lshtm.ac.uk))

### **Faculty of Public Health and Policy (PHP)**

Research Degrees Director: John Cairns ([John.cairns@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:John.cairns@lshtm.ac.uk))  
Research Degrees Manager: Joanna Bending ([Joanna.bending@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Joanna.bending@lshtm.ac.uk))

### **DrPH contacts (all faculties)**

DrPH Programme Director: Nicki Thorogood ([Nicki.Thorogood@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Nicki.Thorogood@lshtm.ac.uk))  
DrPH Administrator: Anne-Marie Sue-Patt ([Anne-Marie.Sue-Patt@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Anne-Marie.Sue-Patt@lshtm.ac.uk))

**Head of Doctoral College:** Judith Glynn ([Judith.glynn@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Judith.glynn@lshtm.ac.uk))  
**Pro-Director of Education:** Craig Higgins ([Craig.Higgins@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Craig.Higgins@lshtm.ac.uk))