



Research Degrees Handbook

For Doctoral (PhD and DrPH) and MPhil Students

2020-21

This Handbook is for research degree (PhD, DrPH and MPhil) students, supervisors, and staff who support them. It is based on regulations, policies and procedures agreed by relevant London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) committees. The handbook is aligned to the expectations contained within the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)

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1. WELCOME

Welcome to the new academic year at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, which is known as 'the School' or 'LSHTM' by its community of staff and students.

This handbook gives comprehensive information on the School's Research Degrees (RD) programmes for students, supervisors, and the staff who support them. It includes important information on policies and procedures, the support that RD students can expect to receive from supervisors and other staff, as well as facilities available for support at the School. It provides links to further information such as regulations, the code of practice for research degrees, and details on services and facilities.

The School has around 500 research degree students. Each student is a member of a Department within a Faculty. The School has three academic Faculties, each with 3-4 Departments. In addition, the School now also includes colleagues and students from units in [The Gambia](#) and [Uganda](#). Students can also be members of Academic Centres, which are School-wide networks focused on cross-cutting areas.

Faculties:

- Epidemiology and Public Health (EPH)
- Infectious and Tropical Diseases (ITD)
- Public Health and Policy (PHP)

Information about our Faculties can be found [here](#).

Academic Centres: A list of School Academic Centres can be found [here](#).

We want to ensure all RD students have opportunities for broader interactions including through:

- Inductions, undertaken at Department, Faculty and School levels to facilitate networking with other students and staff both close to their subject area and more widely;
- Research seminars and journal clubs, open to staff and research degree students from across the School;
- The Transferable Skills Programme;
- The Bloomsbury Postgraduate Skills Network

We encourage you to explore and take advantage of these opportunities, be active in groups linked to your studies, and engage with all other opportunities available to enhance your experience at the School. During COVID these activities continue but will be virtual, and participation is particularly important to integrate you into the research culture of the School. We hope that your experience as members of the research community at the School will shape life, your thinking, your CV, and your future.

We wish you well in your studies.

Professor Peter Piot
Director of LSHTM

2. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSR	Capacity Strengthening Research Degrees scheme
DRDC	Department Research Degrees Coordinator
DrPH	Doctor of Public Health degree
D-TSP	Doctoral Transferable Skills Programme
EPH	(Faculty of) Epidemiology and Public Health
FRDD	Faculty Research Degrees Director
FRDM	Faculty Research Degrees Manager
FT	Full-time
FTE	Full-time equivalent
IoS	Interruption of studies
ITD	(Faculty of) Infectious and Tropical Diseases
MPhil	Master of Philosophy degree
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy degree
PHP	(Faculty of) Public Health and Policy
PT	Part-time
RD	Research Degrees
RGIO	Research Governance & Integrity Office
SRDC	Senate Research Degrees Committee
TSP	Transferable Skills Programme

3. INTRODUCTION – WHERE TO FIND WHAT

This hand book is specific to research degree (RD) students. Issues which are common to all students are covered in more detail in the [Virtual Student Hub](#). This includes general policies and procedures, conduct and behaviour, information on facilities, courses, student advice and counselling, careers, library resources, IT services, and safety and security.

The handbook should be read in conjunction with the [Research Degree regulations](#) and the [Research degree code of practice](#). The handbook gives links to many other sources of information on the website.

The key place for information is the [Doctoral College site](#) on the LSHTM intranet. You can find this through the Virtual Student Hub (click on RD students)

4. ROLES AND PEOPLE

The School provides support for research degree students through key contacts. These include:

Faculty-level		
Supervisory Team	All students should have a supervisory team comprised of a first and second supervisor, and occasionally a third.	
Advisory Committee	Some students will have an advisory committee providing additional advice to support progress.	
Department Research Degrees Coordinators (DRDC)	Staff who oversee the progress of students in a department	
Faculty Research Degrees Managers (FRDM) and administrators	Staff who provide support at Faculty level. They are the first point of contact for general enquiries or administrative matters.	<p>EPH: Jenny Fleming (FRDM) and Lauren Dalton (administrator) Jenny.fleming@lshtm.ac.uk Lauren.dalton@lshtm.ac.uk</p> <p>ITD: Helen White (FRDM) Helen.white@lshtm.ac.uk</p> <p>PHP: Joanna Bending (FRDM) and Renee Olivel (administrator) php.rdadministrator@lshtm.ac.uk</p>
Faculty Research Degrees Directors (FRDD)	Academic staff who oversee all aspects of academic research degrees management in a Faculty.	<p>EPH: Suzanne Filteau and Punam Mangtani Suzanne.filteau@lshtm.ac.uk Punam.mangtani@lshtm.ac.uk</p> <p>ITD: Jayne Webster and Sam Alsford Jayne.webster@lshtm.ac.uk Sam.alsford@lshtm.ac.uk</p> <p>PHP: John Cairns John.cairns@lshtm.ac.uk</p>
DrPH Programme Director	Academic responsible for the Professional Doctorate in Public Health.	Nicki Thorogood Nicki.thorogood@lshtm.ac.uk
Key contacts at School level		
Head of the Doctoral College	Lead senior academic with overall responsibility for RD programmes.	Judith Glynn judith.glynn@lshtm.ac.uk
Pro-Director (Education)	Senior academic with overall leadership responsibility for the strategic development and oversight of all School education programmes including Master's, Doctoral degrees and short courses.	Craig.higgins@lshtm.ac.uk

Student & Academic Services	Teams in central services provide support for registration, fees, student advice & counselling, careers, and student records.	Careers Services webpage Registry webpage Student Advice and Counselling Services webpage Visa & Immigration Services webpage
Student Representatives	Students who liaise between School Management and the student body.	Each Department has Research Degree student reps (see section 15) Research degree students also sit on the Student Representative Council . (School-wide, MSc and RD students)

5. MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The School's Research Degrees (RD) programme is reviewed regularly to ensure high quality provision and enhancement to the environment for students. The RD Regulations, the RD Code of Practice and public information on the School website provide important information about governance, quality assurance and enhancement.

The Head of the Doctoral College is the academic responsible for research degree programmes and chairs the Senate Research Degrees Committee (SRDC). The SRDC reports to Senate which is the most senior academic committee of the School. Faculty Research Degree Committees, run by Faculty Research Degree Directors, monitor activity at a Faculty level, with the support of Departmental RD coordinators (DRDCs), the Faculty RD support staff, and student representatives.

Further information can be found in the [Research Degree regulations](#) and the [Research degree code of practice](#).

6. APPLICATIONS

Information on applying to the School can be found on the School's [website](#). Applications are monitored by each Faculty to ensure that students meet the entry requirements and that their research interests can be properly supported by the expertise of staff in faculties and departments.

7. REGISTRATION

The minimum and maximum periods of registration for research degrees are defined by the [Research Degree regulations](#).

Students can register to study part-time and must ensure they have adequate time to dedicate to their research degree, usually 2-2.5 days per week (full-time is 40 hours per week). Time allocated to study may vary over the course of a research degree, and should be negotiated between

students, employers (if applicable), and the supervisory team. RD students combining study with employment will be registered as part-time. They will be required to provide a letter from their employer confirming that time is available for them to study as well as continue to work.

Staff who want to register for research degrees will normally be registered part-time, with the exceptions of students who hold fellowships that require them to be staff, including Wellcome Trust, NIHR, or other training fellowships.

International students who require a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK cannot study part-time.

Students who want to change their registration status must first speak to their supervisor and their Faculty Research Degree Manager.

Students are normally expected to spend the initial and final parts of their degree at the School so they can fully engage with the academic research environment. Students will need to attend regular supervision meetings, training sessions and progress monitoring meetings. This is described in the [Attendance Policy](#) and in Section 9 of this handbook.

Students based in London normally spend the first 9-12 months of their degree at the School (often shorter for the DrPH), after which they may request Study Leave to conduct research away from LSHTM. This Study Leave must be approved by your supervisor team and Faculty staff. Students based overseas and students registered under the Capacity Strengthening Research Degrees (CSR D) scheme may have supervision and training/progress arranged differently. This should be discussed in the initial supervision meeting and in progress monitoring meetings with DRDCs (see Section 9).

Students who plan to spend more than one month away from the School, whether in the UK or abroad, for any reason connected to their studies must request to go on Study Leave. This includes all instances of fieldwork, pilot studies and meetings with collaborators. This also applies to overseas and CSR D students, and those based at other organisations within the UK, such as DrPH students undertaking their Organisation or Policy Analysis (OPA).

If you do not maintain satisfactory engagement related to your registration, your registration status on your programme may be affected. Students may take annual leave of up to six weeks in addition to School closure days. This must be agreed with your first supervisor and Faculty staff.

Registration status will change as students move through the different stages of the degree, or if specific requests are made (e.g. to move from full-time to part-time study). Registry will contact you to inform you of changes to registration as you move through the milestones of your RD programme. The maximum periods of registration will be noted by Registry when reminding you about changes to your registration status. Fees due will vary according to your registration status. More information can be found on the School's Tuition Fees web pages [here](#).

8. SUPPORT SERVICES

In their Faculties, students will normally have access to the following.

Note that during COVID-19 access to the buildings and associated facilities are very limited for staff and students. Individuals who are finding it very difficult to work elsewhere may apply for access and these requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis:

- A workstation, desktop PC and storage
- Lab space for lab-based students
- Stationery related to research study needs
- Telephone use related to research
- Photocopying allowance
- Audio Visual support for equipment, scanning, printing etc.
- Conference attendance support.
- Supervisory visit for students undertaking field work for continuous periods of 6 months or more. This is not open to all students eg staff RD students, CSRD students, so please check with your Faculty Research Degrees Manager before making arrangements.

Your Faculty Research Degrees Manager (FRDM) will be able to help with these support arrangements.

Student Advice & Counselling Service

The [Student Advice & Counselling Service](#) (SA&CS) provides confidential and impartial advice and support to the School's London-based students, as well as guidance to applicants to the School. The primary aim of the service is to assist students in resolving practical and/or personal concerns, enabling them to concentrate on their studies and achieve their potential during their time at the School. The main areas of support are:

- Student disability support
- Guidance on accommodation options in London
- Financial hardship
- Guidance for international students about certain aspects of 'life in the UK' (e.g. opening a bank account, healthcare, council tax)
- One-to-one counselling

Student Disability Support

The [Student Advice team](#) within SA&CS can advise disabled students and their Faculty/Department on specific reasonable adjustments to studies and general disability support. This may include:

- Special arrangements for assessments
- Non-medical helper support, such as specialist one-to-one study skills tuition (for students with Specific Learning Difficulties) and mentoring support (for students with mental health conditions or autistic spectrum conditions)
- Library support
- IT support
- In-course support
- Advice on accessing Disabled Students' Allowances, for eligible students
- Advice for students who suspect they may have dyslexia/a Specific Learning Difficulty, including a screening service and referral on for a full diagnostic assessment, where indicated

Detailed information about disability support provision for students registered on face-to-face programmes of study can be found in the [Student Disability Handbook](#)

Counselling

A short-term counselling service is provided for students experiencing low mood, anxiety or stress, study-related or otherwise. Counselling provides an opportunity for students to discuss any difficulties that are affecting their emotional well-being. This might be following a difficult event, such as a bereavement, but many people also seek counselling due to feeling down, anxious or depressed without knowing exactly why.

A counsellor will not try to solve your problems for you, but will listen to you in an open and non-judgmental way, giving you a chance to understand your feelings and how they impact on your life.

Counselling sessions are limited to **a maximum of 6 sessions per student**, but students can also book in for a one-off session.

Further information about the Student Advice & Counselling Service and how to book an appointment can be found [here](#).

Please see Section 11 for details about support for students away from usual support networks during data collection.

9. SUPERVISION

Supervisory Team

A supervisory team consists of at least two supervisors, and occasionally a third.

First Supervisor – the first point of contact for administrative processes. Usually the main supervisor. The first supervisor must hold an academic contract with the School that (explicitly, or via the School's expectations for appointments to particular academic levels or roles) includes the role of research degree supervisor. Honorary and Visiting Academic staff will not normally be appointed as first supervisor.

Second Supervisor – the second point of contact for administrative processes. The second supervisor is likely to play a major role in supervision and is expected to provide additional support if the first supervisor has a planned or unexpected absence. (Unlike the first supervisor, the second supervisor does not have to be an LSHTM staff member, though most are.)

Experienced Supervisors – those who have supervised at least one research degree student through to successful completion - should normally be first supervisor for no more than three Research Degree students at any one time but can be members of up to six supervisory teams.

The supervision team must possess at least two successful research degree completions at doctoral level, at least one of which must be a UK doctorate. A third or subsequent supervisor may

be appointed to fulfil this requirement, if the first and second supervisors cannot jointly fulfil this requirement.

New Supervisors – Academics who have yet to supervise a student through to completion on a Research Degree should normally be first or second supervisor to no more than two Research Degree students at any one time. Before they start supervising students, staff are required to attend a staff development workshop on research degree student supervision and should have a mentor (who may be one of the other supervisors). It is expected that staff who have not supervised before, start by joining advisory committees and have experience as a second supervisor before being first supervisor.

Advisory Committee

A student may have an Advisory Committee comprising 2-3 members who extend the academic input and feedback provided by the supervisory team. For example, advisory committee members may be School or external academics with additional expertise specific to a student's line of enquiry, or non-academics with key industry, policy or civil society expertise that can benefit the research. Students and their supervisory teams are jointly responsible for identifying and approaching potential members of the advisory committee. We recommend that the committee should meet at least once before the MPhil/PhD upgrading or DrPH Review and once before final thesis submission, but the frequency and content of meetings should be decided by the students, supervisory team and committee.

For all students, including those from MRC Uganda or MRC Gambia, at least one member of the supervisory team should be London-based, to support the student during their time in London. This can be a member of the advisory committee.

RD Code of Practice

The School's [Research degree code of practice](#) details the responsibilities of students and supervisors and is in line with the [QAA Quality Code](#) expectations. Both staff and students need to approach the supervisor/student relationship with awareness and respect.

Supervisory meetings

These should be held regularly as agreed by students and supervisors. The objectives of the meetings should be agreed, so that all parties are clear about purpose and progress. A timeframe for submission and review of written work should be agreed. This allows students to have clear deadlines to work to and supervisors to support timely progression. PhD and DrPH students and supervisors will be working towards upgrading from MPhil to PhD or towards the DrPH review during the 1st year of registration (22 months for part-time students). Full-time students should meet monthly, and part-time students at least once every two months. All meetings must be recorded by the student and approved by supervisors on the Research Degree Records (RDR) system.

Guidance for Supervisors

The School expects supervisors to:

1. Meet with their students regularly (at minimum monthly for FT students and every two months for PT students). Meetings can be in person or via skype/phone, but *must* be recorded in RDR.
2. Help their students define their research question(s) and appropriate methods to answer these, help them plan their work, prepare for the upgrade/DrPH-review, read drafts of the thesis and prepare them for the viva.
3. Communicate clearly with students about what is expected of them and when they will receive feedback (guidance: within one week for short 1-5 pages documents, more for longer ones, e.g. chapters).
4. Check their students have necessary ethical and other approvals to conduct their research before ANY data are collected and/or analysed.
5. Plan for the upgrade/review, including arranging the upgrading/review panel (in conjunction with the DRDC), providing critical review of the draft document, and rehearsing the presentation.
6. Respond to any issues raised in progress monitoring.
7. Provide pastoral support and refer to student counselling, careers services or other services as necessary.
8. Flag opportunities for career development, including conferences, courses, publication and teaching opportunities.
9. Nominate examiners and arrange the viva (see [examiner guidelines](#))
10. In addition, supervisors of DrPH students are also expected to: support and advise during the Term 1 compulsory Taught Modules and their assessment, and help their students plan and carry out the appropriate research for their OPA (Research Study I)

[Key information for supervisors](#) is provided on the [doctoral college website](#)

Training

All new supervisors must take part in a 'New supervisor training' organised once a term by the TED team.

Experienced supervisors must take part in a short mandatory refresher training every three years. This provides key updates on changes to regulations and new resources and offers a forum to discuss ongoing challenges with your peer group, your FRDD, or the Head of the Doctoral College.

Change of supervisor

Supervision needs may change during a student's registration period. This can be due to a major shift in focus of the project, or if it is agreed that another member of staff can provide better support. If students have concerns or issues relating to their supervision, they must feel able to raise this with an appropriate member of staff. The initial step is for students to approach another member of their Supervisory Team to discuss any concerns. If the student feels unable to speak to another member of the Supervisory Team, they can approach their Departmental Research Degree Coordinator (DRDC), Faculty Research Degrees Manager (FRDM), Faculty Research Degrees Director (FRDD), or, for DrPH students, the DrPH Programme Director. If the student feels unable to approach these members of staff, they can also speak with the Head of the Doctoral College.

When the student/supervisor relationship cannot be restored, the student and supervisory team can request a change of supervisor. A request to change supervisory arrangements must first be discussed with the Departmental Research Degrees Coordinator (DRDC), and approved by the FRDD. The DRDC and FRDD will need to take into account any sponsorship requirements before a decision is made.

It may not always be possible to change the supervisory arrangements where a student is funded on a studentship awarded through a research grant to a named supervisor. In exceptional circumstances, when good supervision cannot be restored and alternative supervisory arrangements may not be possible, a student may be advised to change research programmes (if possible) or withdraw from LSHTM.

Supervisor leaving LSHTM

If a supervisor leaves LSHTM, the supervisory team should discuss options with the student in advance of the supervisor's departure. There are three possible options:

- Identify a new supervisor with appropriate academic background and supervisory experience; this may be the original second supervisor.
- It may be possible for the supervisor who is leaving the School to continue to supervise the student at a distance but not as the first supervisor.
- It may be possible for the student to transfer to the supervisor's new institution.

The supervisory team, DRDC and FRDD are jointly responsible for helping the student to identify the best option.

Temporary absence of a supervisor (planned or unexpected)

If a first or second supervisor are to be absent for more than four weeks, s/he should make alternative arrangements for supervision from someone familiar with the student's research to support them during the period of absence. Supervisors are responsible for making such interim arrangements and informing the Faculty Research Degree Manager. Temporary supervisory arrangements should not normally exceed three months unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where such arrangements are likely to exceed three months, a new permanent supervisor should be appointed by the DRDC in discussion with the supervisory team and the FRDD.

If a supervisor is to be unexpectedly absent, (e.g. through illness) and the second supervisor is unable to provide adequate support, the DRDC and FRDD should make alternative arrangements for supervision from someone familiar with the student's research to support them during the period of absence. This person does not take the place of the supervisor but can offer support and guidance while the supervisor is away. If the temporary period of absence turns into a longer period of absence, then a more permanent arrangement may need to be implemented. The DRDC should discuss this with the Supervisory Team and the FRDD.

10. PROGRESS MONITORING AND MILESTONES AND UPGRADING / REVIEW

All research degree students undergo progress monitoring during their degree, in addition to supervisory and advisory committee meetings.

You will be reminded when a progress monitoring meeting is due. It is the student's responsibility to arrange a meeting with the relevant member of staff and record the content of progress monitoring meetings in RDR. The following timeline describes milestones for full-time and part-time PhD students.

Timeline of progress monitoring and milestones for PhD students

Time	Event(s)	Documentation
FT & PT: 1m	<p>Induction</p> <p>All students should receive a School-wide induction and a Faculty- specific induction</p> <p>Doctoral Transferable Skills Programme Block 1</p>	<p>Students must access the "ethics research approvals form" to discuss with supervisors.</p> <p>Student and supervisors complete the initial supervisor meeting form on RDR and discuss the D-TSP.</p>
FT & PT: 3m	<p>Progress monitoring 1</p> <p>Student and DRDC discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project title/area • Contact with supervisor • Training needs • Funding • Opportunities to teach • Any problems 	<p>Student and DRDC record meeting in RDR.</p>
FT: 6m PT: 6-12m	<p>Progress monitoring 2</p> <p>Student and DRDC discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether project has been identified 	<p>Student and DRDC record meeting in RDR, including funding details, project design and planned</p>

Time	Event(s)	Documentation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the student's understanding of the project design and background reading • progress with forming the Advisory Committee • whether funding is in place, and Plan B if not • Timetable for progress • Planned date of upgrading • Transferable Skills Programme training completed and required • Opportunities to teach • Any concerns 	<p>timetable to submission.</p> <p>Students fill out approvals for RD students form</p>
<p>FT: 6-9m PT: 6-18m</p>	<p>Pre-upgrade meeting</p> <p>Student and Advisory Committee meet to check all is on course for Upgrading. Further meetings with the Advisory Committee are organised as decided by the student, supervisory team and committee members.</p>	<p>Advisory committee provides recommendations on project design, upgrading document and presentation</p>
<p>FT: 7-11m PT: 7-22m</p>	<p>Upgrading</p> <p>Student presents Upgrading report (abstract, literature review, report of aims and timetable for research, data management plan, research tools and confirmation of funding).</p> <p>All upgrading requirements (including any resubmissions must be completed by 18 months (maximum) for FT students and 36 months (maximum) for PT students.</p>	<p>Upgrading panel meets and provides an Assessment Outcome Report.</p>
<p>FT: 24m PT: 24-48m</p>	<p>Progress monitoring 3</p> <p>Student and DRDC discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned timetable to submission • Any delays • Funding issues • Transferable Skills Programme courses required and completed • Opportunities to teach 	<p>Student and DRDC record progress monitoring in RDR, including planned timetable to submission and the D-TSP.</p>

Time	Event(s)	Documentation
FT: 36m PT: 72m	<p>Progress monitoring 4</p> <p>Student and DRDC discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any changes in plans for submission • Any concerns 	Student and DRDC record meeting in RDR, including planned timetable to submission, confirmation of selection of examiners and examination entry
FT: 36m PT: 72m	Submission of PhD thesis for normal registration period. Students who have not submitted are automatically moved to writing-up status by Registry.	Supervisor should submit nomination of examiners form 6 months ahead of the planned submission date for the thesis
FT: 48m PT: 96m	End of maximum registration period and final deadline for submission of PhD thesis to Registry.	Student must have submitted thesis.

MPhil to PhD Upgrading Guidance

All PhD students (except those on the joint PhD programme with Nagasaki) are first registered for an MPhil. The upgrading has two **main objectives**:

1. To provide students with feedback from examiners and the seminar audience in order to improve the design of their research. Much of the benefit of the upgrading process to students comes from presenting their ideas and plans to people who are not familiar with the project and obtaining input into the thesis from a range of different people.
2. To identify students who are struggling with progress and unlikely to complete a PhD successfully. Normally, it is beneficial for both the student and the School if such students withdraw within their first year of registration.

Timeframes are defined in the [Research Degree Regulations](#).

- Full-time students should normally upgrade between **7 and 11 months** after registration. The deadline for successfully completing all upgrade requirements, including any resubmission of the upgrade report, is 18 months.
- Part-time students should upgrade **no later than 22 months** after registration. The deadline for successfully completing all upgrade requirements, including any resubmission of the upgrade report, is 36 months.
- All students are entitled to two attempts at upgrading.
- Any variation to these timeframes requires approval from your Faculty no later than 9 (or 18 for part-time) months after registration.
- Early upgrading requests require approval by the Head of the Doctoral College.
- Registration may be terminated if timeframes are not adhered to.

Upgrading Preparation

Supervisors must ensure that the student prepares for the Upgrading. Dates for the Upgrading seminar need to be fixed well ahead of time to ensure that the appropriate people can attend. The Upgrading dates should be discussed with the DRDC, who will chair the Upgrading Panel.

It is the first supervisor's responsibility to:

- Check the availability of the DRDC *before* agreeing a date with the student and assessors
- Identify assessors and agree their suitability, including consideration of any conflicts of interest, with the Chair (DRDC)
- Fill the [upgrading checklist form](#)
- Inform the FRDM when the date is agreed
- Ensure that rooms are booked for the seminar and panel meeting
- Help prepare the student for the oral presentation
- Explain to the student what to expect from the Upgrading process
- Take notes and draft the Upgrading Assessment Outcome report

The Upgrading Assessment Panel should be small (in total, 4-5 members) but broad-based. The panel should be able to give an independent assessment of the student and project. It should include two independent assessors, at least one of these from outside the Department(s) in which the student and first supervisor are based. At least one assessor should be internal to LSHTM. Membership of the panel should be discussed and agreed with the DRDC, including consideration of any conflicts of interest. When selecting panel members, bear in mind that members of the Upgrading Panel cannot be examiners at the final examination.

The following members must *always* be on the Upgrading Assessment Panel:

- Chair (DRDC), who gives final approval for the outcome
- First Independent Assessor: an academic within the same discipline or subject area who is external to the project
- Second Independent Assessor: an academic within the same discipline or subject area who is external to the project and to the student's department
- At least one supervisor: The first supervisor plays a role in providing informed advice on the feasibility of proposed implementation plans for the research project and preparing the formal record. The first supervisor (or the second supervisor if the first is absent) is responsible for taking notes and drafting the upgrade assessment outcome report.
- In addition, other members of the student's advisory committee may attend.
- In exceptional circumstances an application can be made to the FRDD to deviate from the standard Upgrade Assessment Panel composition

Supervisors

Supervisors and advisory committee members cannot act as upgrade assessors for their own students. However, their input, including comments on the viability of the research project plan, should inform the Upgrade Assessment Panel's decision.

Upgrading Report

Students may find it helpful to look at previous upgrading reports (ask your supervisors for examples). The upgrading report should be presented in font size 11 and be no more than 7,500 words, excluding references and appendices. It should contain the following:

- an abstract of no more than 300 words
- a brief literature review providing background to the research work
- a description of research aims and planned work. Any preliminary results should be summarised in this section, with details in an appendix, if applicable
- a timetable of the research proposed
- Confirmation that funding is available for data collection and/or analysis – if not, a viable 'Plan B' for timely successful completion without such funding
- a complete reference list, using a single referencing format
- The following appendices:
 - The 'approvals' form detailing plans for ethical and other approvals, available [here](#). NB: you are not expected to have already got ethics approval before upgrading – plans often change. You do, though, need ethics approval before collecting or analysing any data, including pilot data.
 - a [data management plan](#)
 - if applicable, research tools (e.g. questionnaire) or tables with preliminary data

The student is responsible for ensuring that copies of the upgrading report are distributed to panel members at least one week before the upgrading seminar. A hard copy in soft binding should be submitted to the supervisor and each member of the upgrading panel unless they are happy to have only an electronic copy. An electronic copy should be submitted to the FRDM for routine submission to Turnitin, the plagiarism detection software used by the School. There is a printing and binding service at Keppel Street. The charge code can be obtained from the Department Operating Office or FRDM.

The Upgrading Process

The Upgrading is normally composed of a formal, public seminar, followed by a closed meeting of the Upgrading Assessment Panel.

The Seminar

The presentation by the student should last a maximum of 45 minutes to allow time for questions. The seminar is open to all. Staff and doctoral students are encouraged to attend. Upgrading panel members must attend the seminar. They should allow other attendees to ask questions first, as they will also have an opportunity to ask questions during the closed session. It is important that the supervisor allows the student to answer the questions.

The Upgrading Assessment Panel will usually confer for a short while after the seminar, before inviting the student to join them for further questions and discussion and to present their feedback on the upgrading report and seminar. It is important that all members of the upgrading panel are in attendance for the entire process, which can take up to three hours. The Chair is encouraged to invite the student in to join the panel discussion as soon as possible.

The supervisor is responsible for taking notes and writing a draft of the Assessment Outcome Report. The Chair, in consultation with members of the Upgrading Assessment Panel, will:

- identify the outcome of the Upgrade Assessment
- approve a bullet-point summary of key actions
- give final approval for the Panel's decision and the Assessment Outcome Report
- ensure that the Panel has agreed a timetable for when they expect any revisions to be completed
- be responsible for circulating the Assessment Outcome Report (drafted by the Supervisor) to members of the assessment panel, the student, FRDD and FRDM **within two weeks** of the upgrading seminar/meeting

The outcome of the upgrading assessment will depend on answers to the following questions:

- Is the research feasible, and will it provide the scope necessary for the student to make an original, independent and significant contribution to the subject?
- Are the aims and objectives of the thesis and research questions clearly specified?
- Has the student demonstrated the necessary intellectual and technical capacities to undertake, analyse and write-up the research?
- Is the timetable realistic and achievable?
- Does the student have adequate funds to allow the fieldwork to be undertaken (if applicable)? If there is doubt, is there a viable 'Plan B' to enable timely successful completion of the research degree?
- Are the necessary arrangements in place for access to specialist advice on materials, and for training in transferable skills (if appropriate)?
- Has the student started the ethical approval process? (See further guidance [here](#))

Possible outcomes are:

- **Immediate approval:** Minimal or no changes required to the upgrading document. (Note that the panel may nevertheless suggest changes to the planned work).
- **Conditional approval** (Upgrading recommended after revisions and further review. Deadlines for the revisions should be agreed with the panel):
 - Address specific issues and revise document. Review by Supervisor
 - Address specific issues and revise documents. Review by Panel members
- **Not upgraded with opportunity for resubmission and reassessment** (Address issues and revise document for second and final Upgrade Assessment Panel meeting)
- **Not upgraded, no resubmission or reassessment.** (This outcome will not normally be chosen after a first submission and assessment. It must be used after an unsatisfactory second submission and assessment)
- **Write and submit thesis for MPhil**
- **Discuss withdrawal** from the Research Degrees programme

The assessors for a resubmission will normally but not necessarily be the same as those for the original submission. For resubmissions there is no public seminar.

Where upgrade is conditional upon revisions to the document, assessors should provide feedback **within a month** of receiving the revised document from the student. Supervisors are expected to meet with the student shortly after the Upgrade Assessment Panel meeting to explain the outcome, review the Upgrade Assessment Outcome Report, and plan how to proceed.

Note that if a student is given conditional approval after a first upgrading, but the revisions are unsatisfactory, they are allowed a second upgrading attempt (ie resubmission and reassessment)..

Once the upgrading has been approved (whether immediately or following conditions), the student should notify Registry using the [research degree amendment form](#).

Students who decide or are encouraged to withdraw after an unsuccessful upgrading should follow the advice in the [Interruption of Studies & Withdrawal Policy](#)

Appeals against the outcome of the upgrading procedure must be submitted in accordance with the School's [Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure \(Chapter 7 of the Academic manual\)](#).

Progress monitoring and milestones for Joint PhD Programme with University of Nagasaki

The procedures are very similar to those for other PhD students except that an assessor from Nagasaki who is external to the project will join (making three assessors in total). Note that students on this programme are initially registered for a PhD without a preliminary registration for an MPhil. The “upgrading” is called a “Qualifying examination” (QE). It is expected that the QE will usually take place at LSHTM. The QE dates should be fixed well ahead of time to ensure the Departmental Research Degree Coordinator, LSHTM and NU supervisors and the assessors can attend. Video conferencing can be used to ensure that the assessor and supervisor from Nagasaki can take part. Normally a member from the Joint Academic Committee will also join the panel (as observer).

The possible outcomes are the same as above, except that there is no option of submitting an MPhil (although transfer to MPhil could be considered).

Progress monitoring and milestones for DrPH students

The DrPH is a professional Doctorate in Public Health available in all of the School's three Faculties. Details of its structure and requirements can be found [here](#). Students complete two taught modules (please refer to the [Assessment Handbook](#) for details of the grading system and descriptors), normally followed by two additional components: Research Study I (RSI), a 15,000-word organisational or policy analysis, and Research Study II (RSII), a 60,000-word thesis.

Below is a timeline of Progress Monitoring and Milestones for DrPH students.

Time (months)	Events	Documentation
FT & PT: 1m	Induction and first formal meeting with first supervisor	Student and supervisor complete initial supervision form on RDR

Time (months)	Events	Documentation
FT & PT: 3-6m	<p>Progress monitoring 1</p> <p>Student and DRDC discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether core teaching modules have been completed • Further training needs • Funding for RSI and RSII • Whether planning for RSI and/or RSII are underway • Research plan outline • Plans for forming the Advisory Committee • Timetable for further progress monitoring • Any concerns 	<p>Student and DRDC record meeting in RDR, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core module grades • RSI and RSII project plans • Research design • Planned timetable towards DrPH review <p>Students must access the “ethics research approvals form” to discuss with supervisors.</p>
FT: 10m PT: 10-20m	<p>Progress monitoring 2</p> <p>Student and DRDC discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advisory committee • Plans for further training • Progress with RSI project • Progress with RSII and plans for DrPH review • Any concerns 	<p>Student and DRDC record meeting in RDR, including recommendations on project design, and DrPH review document and presentation</p>
FT: 12-14m PT: 12-28m	<p>Student meets with Advisory Committee for a Pre-DrPH Review Meeting to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study design and ethical approval • Funding • Plans for DrPH Review <p>Further meetings of the Advisory Committee should be decided by the student with the supervisory team and advisory committee members, depending on the needs of the student and RSI/RSII projects.</p> <p>RSI (the OPA project) submitted for formative review and feedback by internal assessors.</p>	<p>Student records meeting in RDR, including written recommendations regarding project design, review document and presentation</p> <p>Supervisors and student to select appropriate (School based) assessors and request their participation</p>

Time (months)	Events	Documentation
FT: 15-18m PT: 15-36m	Student submits and presents report to DrPH review panel	Panel writes a review outcome report to add to the DrPH Review Decision Report form Student submits RD Amendment Form
FT: 24-30m PT: 24-60m	Progress monitoring 3 Student and DRDC discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned timetable to submission Any delays Funding issues Training completed and required 	Student records meeting in RDR, including planned timetable to submission and D-TSP.
FT: 30m PT: 60m	Progress monitoring 4 Student and DRDC discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any changes that may delay submission Any concerns 	Student records meeting in RDR, including planned timetable to submission, selection of examiners and the examination entry form
FT: 36m PT: 72m	Submission of DrPH thesis for normal registration period. Students who have not submitted are automatically moved to writing-up status by Registry.	Supervisors should submit nomination of examiners form 6 months before intended submission date of thesis.
FT: 48m PT: 96m	End of maximum registration period and final deadline for submission of DrPH thesis to Registry.	Student must have submitted thesis.

DrPH Review

All students registered for the DrPH are required to undergo a DrPH Review after commencing the RSII element of their degree. The Review follows the same format as the MPhil to PhD upgrading process.

The purpose of the DrPH review is to provide feedback on the student's research plans for the DrPH thesis (RSII). Assessed work related to the DrPH core modules will have been considered separately by the DrPH Exam Board, and the RSI will have received formative review and feedback by internal assessors.

The DrPH review typically takes place once a detailed research protocol and literature review have been completed, but before the main data collection/analysis phase for RSII. The timing of the DrPH review for both full and part-time students will be agreed during progress monitoring. Students may not begin their fieldwork (other than feasibility or pilot studies) or other forms of primary data collection until after their DrPH review unless there are exceptional circumstances to be discussed with the Supervisory Team and FRDD.

The first supervisor has responsibility to ensure the student prepares for the Review process. The Supervisor should liaise with the DRDC when selecting the DrPH review panel and date for the review. The supervisor should ensure that the student and members of the DrPH review panel understand the nature of a DrPH research project, including how it differs from a PhD research project, and refer them to the [programme guidance](#).

The DrPH review report will usually require four weeks to prepare in advance of the DrPH review meeting. It should be presented in font size 11 and be no more than 7,500 words (maximum), excluding references and appendices. It should include:

- an abstract of no more than 300 words
- a literature review providing background to the research
- a description of the research aims and planned work. Any preliminary results should be summarised in this section with details in an appendix, if applicable a timetable of the research
- a complete reference list
- confirmation that funding is available for fieldwork – if there is any doubt a viable ‘Plan B’ which will allow timely successful completion, should be included
- Appendices including:
 - a data management plan
 - approvals form. NB: you are not expected to have already got ethics approval before the review – plans often change. You do, though, need ethics approval before collecting or analysing any data, including pilot data.
 - if applicable, research tools or tables with preliminary data

The student is responsible for sending an electronic version of the document to the relevant FRDM for routine submission to Turnitin, the plagiarism detection software used by the School. The student is also responsible for checking whether the supervisor and review panel members require a hard copy to be delivered to them in addition to the electronic copy of the Review document. If so, the student is responsible for ensuring that a hard copy in soft binding is printed, bound and distributed to the supervisors and panel members as requested. There is a printing and binding service available at Keppel Street. The charge code can be obtained from the FRDM.

The DrPH review process aims to provide students with feedback from both examiners and the seminar audience to refine their research. The seminar, post-seminar discussion and the DrPH review, taken together, therefore need to:

- Demonstrate that the student can find, evaluate, assimilate and present relevant literature in a scholarly manner
- Present the research plans clearly, with enough detail that the examiners can be reassured that the proposed study is viable, ethical and should lead to the timely, successful completion of the doctorate

The DrPH Review Panel should be small (in total, 4-5 members) but broad-based. The panel should be able to give an independent assessment of the student and project. It should include two independent assessors, at least one of these from outside the Department(s) in which the student and first supervisor are based. At least one assessor should be internal to LSHTM. When selecting panel members, bear in mind that members of the Review Panel cannot be examiners at the final examination.

Membership of the panel should be discussed and agreed with the DRDC, including consideration of any conflicts of interest, See the [checklist for supervisors for DrPH reviews](#)

The panel should include:

- The Chair (DRDC), who will approve a bullet-point summary of key actions, give final approval for the DrPH Review Outcome Report and is responsible for circulating the Review outcome report to members of the DrPH Review panel, the student and the FRDD.
- First Independent Assessor: an academic within the same discipline or subject area who is external to the project.
- Second Independent Assessor: an academic within the same discipline or subject area who is external to the project and external to the student's department.

In addition, attendees should include:

- Supervisor(s) is responsible for taking notes and drafting the DrPH Review outcome report. The supervisor is not an examiner. However, their input, including comments on the viability of the research project plan, can inform the Review Panel's decision – they may participate in discussions at the invitation of the Chair.
- In addition, members of the student's Advisory Committee may attend.

The DrPH Review seminar is normally composed of a public seminar presentation by the student (up to an hour, including questions), followed by a closed meeting of the DrPH review panel. Members of the research department to which the student is attached are expected to attend the seminar. It is important that all members of the upgrading panel are in attendance for the entire upgrading process, which can take up to three hours.

The DrPH review panel confer for a short while after the seminar and then invite the student to join them for further discussion and questioning, and to present their feedback on the DrPH review document and seminar. This is an important opportunity to get constructive feedback on the proposed research, including its feasibility and quality. The discussion involves the student, and the Supervisor by Chair's invitation. Issues relating to supervision should be raised on a separate occasion with the DRDC and/or the FRDD.

The decision of the DrPH Review Panel about whether the student should be allowed to proceed to data collection/fieldwork/laboratory work is based on the seminar presentation, the DrPH Review document, and the discussion that follows. The panel considers the following questions:

- Is the research feasible, and will it provide the scope necessary for the student to make an original, independent contribution to the subject?
- Is the scope of the research reasonable, given the limited duration of the research and the length of the DrPH thesis?
- Are the aims and objectives of the thesis clearly specified?
- Has the student demonstrated the necessary intellectual and technical capacities to undertake, analyse and write-up the research?
- Is the timetable realistic and achievable?
- Does the student have adequate funds to allow the fieldwork to be undertaken (if applicable)? In the case of doubts, has a Viable 'Plan B' been identified?
- Are the necessary arrangements in place for access to specialist advice on materials, and

for training in transferable skills (if appropriate)?

The outcome decisions of the Review Panel can include:

- **Immediate approval:** Minimal or no changes required.
- **Conditional approval** (progressing recommended after revisions and further review):
 - Address specific issues and revise document. Review by Supervisor
 - Address specific issues and revise documents. Review by Panel members
- **Not immediate progression with opportunity for resubmission and reassessment** (Address issues and revise document for second and final Review Panel meeting)
- **Not able to progress, no resubmission or reassessment.** (This outcome will not normally be chosen after a first submission and assessment. It must be used after an unsatisfactory second submission and assessment)
- **Discuss withdrawal** from the DrPH and award of alternative degree (PGCert)

The Chair in consultation with the Review Panel should agree the decision and a bullet-point summary of key actions before the Review meeting ends. The Panel should give a timetable for when they expect any revisions to have been completed.

A Review outcome report is drafted by the Supervisor which is then passed to the Chair of the Panel to attach to the DrPH Review Decision Report form. The Review outcome report summarises the Panel's conclusions, recommendations and actions, and may include suggestions for transferable skills training such as presentation skills. The Chair then circulates the Review outcome report to the rest of the Review Panel for approval. The Chair has final say on the contents of the report. Once approved, the Chair then circulates a copy of the report with the DrPH Review Decision Report form to the student, the DRDC, FRDD and FRDM.

Where approval is conditional upon revisions to the document, assessors should provide feedback **within a month** of receiving the revised document from the student. Supervisors are expected to meet with the student shortly after the Review to explain the decisions of the Review Panel, discuss the Review outcome report and identify next steps.

Note that if a student is given conditional approval after a first Review, but the revisions are unsatisfactory, they are allowed a second attempt (ie resubmission and reassessment).

The assessors for a resubmission will normally but not necessarily be the same as those for the original submission. For resubmissions there is no public seminar.

When the DrPH review is complete and approved the student should then complete the [Research Degrees Amendment form](#).

Appeals against the outcome of the upgrading procedure must be submitted in accordance with the School's Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure available in the Academic Manual Chapter 7.

Timeline of progress monitoring and milestones for MPhil Students

Time (months)	Events	Documentation
FT & PT: 1m	<p>Induction</p> <p>All students should receive a School-wide induction and a Faculty- specific induction</p>	<p>Students must access the “ethics research approvals form” to discuss with supervisors. Student and supervisors complete the initial supervisor meeting form on RDR.</p>
FT & PT: 3m	<p>Progress monitoring 1</p> <p>Student and DRDC discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project title/area • Contact with supervisor • Training needs • Funding • Any problems 	<p>Student and DRDC record meeting in RDR.</p>
FT: 6m PT: 6m	<p>Progress monitoring 2</p> <p>Student and DRDC discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether project has been identified and work started • the student’s understanding of the project design and background reading • progress with forming the Advisory Committee • whether funding is in place, and Plan B if not • Timetable for progress • Planned date of upgrading • Transferable Skills Programme training completed and required • Any concerns 	<p>Student and DRDC record meeting in RDR, including funding details, project design and planned timetable to submission.</p> <p>Students fill out ethics approvals checklist.</p>
FT: 10-11m PT: 20-22m	<p>Student submits and presents report to review panel</p>	<p>Panel writes a review outcome report including suggestions for transferable/presentation skills training and the quality of the work</p>

Time (months)	Events	Documentation
FT: 12m PT: 24m24m	Meeting with DRDC to check the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned timetable to submission (24m years for FT student; 48m for PT students) Any delays Funding Training completed and required 	Student and DRDC record meeting in RDR, including planned timetable to submission.
PT: 24m FT: 48m	Submission of MPhil thesis to Registry for normal registration period. Students who have not submitted are automatically moved to writing-up status by Registry.	
FT: 36m PT: 72m	End of maximum registration period and final deadline for submission of MPhil thesis to Registry.	Supervisors should have nominated examiners.

MPhil Review Guidance

The MPhil Review seminar should take place 8-11 months (by 18 months part-time) after registration. This is not an upgrading process and no decisions regarding change of registration are made at the MPhil Review. A review report should be submitted to the Review panel one week before the Review Seminar. It should be presented in font size 11 and be of a maximum of 7500 words, excluding references and appendices. It should include:

- a very brief literature review providing background to the research work
- a description of research aims and planned work
- a timetable of the research proposed
- Confirmation that funding is available for data collection and/or analysis – if not, a viable ‘Plan B’ for timely successful completion without such funding
- a complete reference list, using a single referencing format
- The following appendices:
 - research approvals form detailing plans for ethical approval and others if relevant. NB: you are not expected to have already got ethics approval before the review – plans often change. You do, though, need ethics approval before collecting or analysing any data, including pilot data.
 - if applicable, research tools (e.g. questionnaire)

A hard copy in soft binding should be made for the Supervisor, each member of the panel and the student (unless panel members are happy to have only electronic copies). The student is responsible for ensuring that copies are printed, bound and distributed to the panel members. There is a printing and binding service at Keppel Street. The charge code can be obtained from the

Department Operating Officer or FRDM. An electronic version should be sent to the relevant FRDM for routine submission to Turnitin. The Review Panel will provide detailed feedback, which may include suggestions for transferable skills training such as presentation skills in addition to a discussion of the quality of work.

11. DATA COLLECTION

Planning for data collection

Many students will undertake their research away from the School. Students must read the [Travel](#) webpages and request Research Study Leave before departing. Students must also maintain contact with their supervisory team when they are collecting data. The communication method should be agreed between the student and supervisory team, but may include face-to-face contact, email, or voice calls. Contact should remain monthly for FT students, and at least once every two months for PT students.

Frequent communication is also important for lab-based students, who will be required to meet with their supervisors and collaborators on a regular basis. Data will also usually be reviewed regularly in a larger forum, such as lab meetings. It is important to work to a plan with agreed deadlines to ensure sufficient data of appropriate quality are generated to support successful submission of the thesis within the permitted time.

Wellbeing and research study leave

We encourage any student due to be away from usual support networks for a prolonged time, and who may need additional support, to contact the [Student Counselling Service](#) before they leave. The Student Counselling Service can arrange for a confidential chat about how any difficulties might be managed. An informal and confidential meeting with one of the student counsellors can help you to identify triggers which might mean you cope less well than usual, as well as look for potential strategies to prevent this happening, or actions you can take if you find that you are struggling.

Ethics Approvals and Breaches

Soon after registering (or soon after completion of the term 1 taught modules for DrPH students) students should discuss the [research approvals form](#) with their supervisory team. **Almost all research degree students' projects must be reviewed by LSHTM's Ethics Committee. Do not collect new data or analyse existing data prior to obtaining a favourable opinion from the relevant Ethics Committees.** Note that you will need specific ethics approval for your work even if the project you are working with already had ethics approval. Please read the [research ethics web pages](#) and contact the research ethics team on ethics@lshtm.ac.uk if you have any questions or doubts.

An overview of the approvals process for various types of projects can be found [here](#). Students doing fieldwork abroad will normally also need to obtain ethical clearance in the country concerned. Final approval by the LSHTM Ethics Committee is dependent on local approval being obtained.

Whilst every effort must be made to ensure that appropriate ethical approvals are in place for each student's project, circumstances may arise where ethics protocol is breached. Such a breach may be relatively minor (e.g. a small amount of additional data collected after the expiry of the ethical approval) or very serious (e.g. failure to seek ethics approval where this is subsequently found to have been necessary, or substantial change to the study design or method).

The School's response will depend on the nature of the breach and the point at which it is identified. All cases of breach should be discussed with your supervisory team and referred to the chair of the ethics committee for advice. Any data collected without ethics approval will normally be inadmissible in the thesis.

If students are found to have collected data without seeking ethical approval or have changed their study design so that it no longer complies with the ethics approval given, they will be considered to have committed a serious offence. This should be investigated through the Student Disciplinary procedures and may lead to the student being deregistered or failing the degree.

Data management and protection

Data produced during a research degree should be managed appropriately, ensuring that it is stored, organised and documented in a manner that allows it to be understood and used for the intended purpose, in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation, as described [here](#).

Ethical and information security obligations must be considered, taking into account the guidance provided in the [Good Research Practice Policy](#) and the [School's Data Protection policy](#). The School's IT Services should be consulted if there is a need to store large data collections on the School network.

12. REVIEWING WRITTEN WORK

A student and supervisory team should agree on the timing of submission and review of written work. Supervisors will normally ask to see outlines of plans and chapters, as well as specific sections of work. Most students and supervisors find it helpful to have clear deadlines to schedule time to write and review work. Students should expect supervisors to take at least a week to provide feedback on short documents, and longer for more substantial sections of your thesis.

Supervisors will normally provide written feedback on the scientific, organisational or presentational aspects of your work rather than edit or proofread.

13. THESIS AND THESIS SUBMISSION

It is a good idea for students to look at examples of existing theses as early as possible.

Examples of PhD, and MPhil theses and DrPH OPAs (RSI) and theses (RSII) can be found in the Library.

DrPH students following the 2018 regulations will be submitting a portfolio that includes both RSI and RSII, and the assessment feedback sheet for RSI. In all other respects their final portfolio submission is the same as for the old DrPH regs/ PhD thesis submissions.

A thesis must be written in English and comply with the requirement of the Research Degrees Regulations (Section 1). It must be your own account of the investigations you have conducted and how your study has advanced a specific body of knowledge. You may include work conducted collaboratively with others (including your supervisor), but roles must be clearly defined and acknowledged.

Relevant [forms and procedures](#) are listed on the website.

Word count – the maximum word limit for each type of thesis is stated in the [programme specification](#). Any words that precede the introductory chapter are excluded from the word count, as are appendices and experiment protocols. Tables, boxes, figures, footnotes, endnotes and references are included. Tables cannot be converted to images to reduce the word count and will normally count as 250 words if they are included.

References – a full reference list is required.

Appendices – these can be questionnaires, qualitative topic guides, or other research instruments. Only material that examiners need for reference should be included.

Binding and layout – to limit costs to students we no longer require traditional hard-bound theses. Please see the website for [detailed information on layout and requirements](#).

Thesis style – The basic outline is the same for the PhD and DrPH RSII. Some years ago, LSHTM moved from the traditional “book style” to allow the inclusion of published papers (sometimes called “research paper style”). Importantly, a thesis can be a combination of the two styles. There is no need to specify a style in advance. The option to include research papers means that sections that might otherwise be chapters can now be written as stand-alone research papers and incorporated in that way. This saves unnecessary rewriting of material that has already been published, and encourages timely publication of findings. See [FAQs on thesis style](#).

Book style thesis – this is a single narrative which usually follows a structure such as:

- Title
- Abstract
- Acknowledgments
- Table of contents
- Table of abbreviations
- Glossary
- Introduction (setting out the background and what the thesis covers)
- Literature review
- Research question
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

- References
- Appendices

Note that the structure may be different from this – eg with different sections each with their own methods results and discussion

Research Paper style thesis – this is for work that was published or prepared for publication during the student’s registration period. While the thesis can be in ‘research paper’ style, it must meet the general requirements of the book-style thesis, including an introduction and a general discussion to make a coherent whole. Each research paper section must be accompanied by a Research paper cover sheet signed by your supervisors, available [here](#).

A possible example structure for a Research Paper style thesis is:

- Title
- Abstract
- Acknowledgments
- Table of contents
- Table of abbreviations
- Glossary
- Introduction (setting out the background and what the thesis covers)
- Literature review (which may be a published paper)
- Research question
- Methods (often including more detail than in the published papers)
- Research paper 1 (published)
- Research paper 2 (published)
- Research paper 3 – draft paper
- General discussion
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendices

As above, a combination of styles is possible, with, for example, a research paper as one chapter of an otherwise “book style” thesis. When including published papers there is no need to reformat them for the thesis (subject to copyright agreement from the journal).

It is fine to include draft papers.

PhD by Prior Publication (only available to staff) – The thesis for a PhD by Prior Publication is a portfolio that should include three elements:

- (a) A 15,000 words (max) analytic commentary outlining:
 - the overarching objective(s) of the research presented in papers contained in the portfolio
 - a coherent argument linking these papers
 - the original contribution to knowledge that the papers have made in a defined area of research, with reference to existing literature
- (b) A minimum of four interconnected, peer-reviewed, published research papers written in English. Papers should be in the public domain and traceable in bibliographic or other public databases. For multi-authored papers, the student is expected to be the first author or to clearly define the importance of their academic contribution.

- (c) A statement describing the student's contribution to each paper, signed by the student and counter-signed by the lead co-author and/or Principal Investigator.

A possible example structure for a PhD by Prior Publication is:

- Title
- Abstract
- Acknowledgments
- Table of contents
- Table of abbreviations
- Glossary
- Analytic commentary
- Research paper 1
- Research paper 2
- Research paper 3
- Research paper 4
- Proforma describing student's contributions
- References
- Appendices

Thesis/ DrPH portfolio submission - The thesis or DrPH portfolio must be submitted after the minimum and before the maximum period of registration. These can be found in the Research Degree Regulations (Regulation 1). A student will need to submit two hard copies and one electronic copy of the thesis/portfolio to the Assessments team in Registry. The examination entry form must be sent to your Faculty 3-4 months before submission. The first supervisor is required to submit the Nomination of Examiners form 6 months in advance of submission. See the [website](#) for further information on thesis/portfolio submission.

Proofreading and Editing – Students are responsible for proofreading and editing their theses/portfolios, and strongly encouraged to do this themselves. If a student arranges for proofreading or editing to be done by a third party, they should follow the School policy on third party copy editing and proofreading. It can be found in the [Academic Writing Handbook](#).

Oral Examination (Viva Voce) – all students are expected to attend the viva in London. In exceptional circumstances, the viva can be arranged to take place in an alternative location or via video conferencing. It is the supervisor's responsibility to request these alternative arrangements in advance. A student will usually have a mock viva to know what to expect. There are resources available on the intranet [here](#) and in the library. A student needs to take a copy of the thesis/portfolio to the viva. You will be expected to defend your approach and interpretations, and to answer questions on your area of research.

Examination Results – the [Research Degree Regulations \(Academic Manual Chapter 9\)](#) detail the possible outcomes of the viva. Students are normally told the outcome of the examination by the examiners immediately after the viva. You will usually be officially informed of the outcome within six weeks of the viva, when you will receive a copy of the Examiners' Report.

Thesis/portfolio revisions – if, as an outcome of the viva, you are required to make revisions you will have three months to make *minor* revisions or six or eighteen months to make *major* revisions

from date of the official notification of the outcome, after which you will need to resubmit your thesis/portfolio.

Final Thesis/portfolio - once your final (revised) thesis/portfolio is approved, you should proofread it again before submission to the Assessments team in the Registry for inclusion in LSHTM Research Online. More information can be found about E-Thesis submissions at the following links:

- [PhD](#)
- [DrPH](#)

Degree Award – your certificate will usually be available within three months of formal notification of your award.

Appeals –students who wish to appeal an outcome must follow the [Academic Appeals Policy \(Academic Manual Chapter 7\)](#).

Assessment Misconduct – any activity that compromises the integrity of your research or assessment will be considered under the [Assessment Irregularity Policy \(Academic Manual Chapter 7\)](#). This includes plagiarism, cheating and failure to follow correct progression and examination procedures.

Copyright – the copyright of your thesis belongs to you. If your research was conducted as part of a contract with an external sponsor, the ownership of copyright will be subject to those contract terms.

Intellectual property – LSHTM will assess any invention, product or process created as part of your research. When registering with the School, you agreed terms related to IP, copyright and access. More information can be found [here](#).

Data Protection – the School and all of its staff and students are subject to the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). LSHTM's [Data Protection Policy](#) provides further detail on this.

14. YOUR DEVELOPMENT: SKILLS

All students are encouraged to allow time for development and training activities to enhance employability skills and the ability to conduct independent research. Training is available for a wide range of transferable skills and more focussed technical skills. See the [website](#) for details.

Doctoral Transferable Skills Programme (D-TSP) – All Research Degree students are expected to take part in the [Doctoral Transferable Skills Programme](#). This includes sessions in each term. Some are available online, and many run more than once per year.

The courses cover:

- Writing, publishing and dissemination
- Library – literature searching and data management

- Ethics and research integrity
- Personal skills and essential information
- Qualitative research methods
- Computer programmes
- Funding

Details are available on [Moodle](#). And you will also find links to the booking forms there.

Go to the [booking system](#) for dates and to see what is currently available to book.

We strongly recommend that you take some sessions ("Block 1") in your first term of study.

Block 1 sessions include:

- Ethics
- Research information and literature searching skills
- Endnote
- Mendeley
- Introduction to teaching
- Improving your assertiveness
- Using conceptual frameworks for research
- Time management

Some students on Research Council Doctoral Training Programmes (DTPs) have their own, similar set of transferable skills courses and are not required to attend the D-TSP. Students who are not able to attend their yearly D-TSP training one term can attend the following term. Students who are able to demonstrate that they have attended equivalent training elsewhere and have support from their supervisory team may choose not to attend some of the D-TSP.

[Bloomsbury Postgraduate Skills Network \(BPSN\)](#) allows you to access free workshops offered by the other University of London Colleges. These cover a wide variety of topics and are well evaluated. They are advertised at the beginning of each term and fill up so visit the website and sign up early.

The [Vitae website](#) is specifically designed to promote professional development for researchers. Its Researcher Development Framework is a useful way to explore skills and identify ways to enhance them. The 'Professional Development' and 'Doing Research' sections are recommended. For students who are new to project management, the 'Planning your research project' and 'Managing Yourself' sections are also recommended.

[Academic English](#) webpages offer support for students whose first language is not English. LSHTM offers a free weekly programme of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes for students whose first language is not English. This is a series of topic-based group workshops presented by a specialist tutor in teaching English for Academic Purposes and runs during term time. See the [website](#) for details .

[Study Skills](#) pages describe and give links to other academic support that is available to all students. This includes **basic maths** support

MSc modules - Students may want to develop or update their knowledge in specific subject areas. There are a number of Masters modules available. Places on the London-based courses are limited. A student should discuss whether they would benefit from taking MSc modules with their supervisory team. RD students are allowed to take a maximum of four modules (free) per academic year. Students also have access to the material from any MSc modules via Moodle. This includes material for some distance learning modules which are particularly well suited to independent learning. Courses are accessed using your School network ID and password from a web browser by navigating to <https://ble.lshtm.ac.uk/> . Then click on 'London Staff & Students' (in the top line) and select 'Access to Moodle courses (Staff/Research Degree students ONLY)'. Then select courses you would like to add to get access to. See the [website](#) for further details and how to apply to register for modules.

Short Courses Programme – there are a number of options in this programme. As short courses are intensive, you may need to take a break from your research programme to take a short course. Again, your supervisor will be able to advise you. A fee is charged for these programmes. Note that most of them are versions of what is also available as MSc modules.

GIS and mapping training – [2-day course](#) that runs several times a year for a small fee.

Computer Training and Services – support for specialist and general IT packages and software is available from the [IT Portal pages](#). General support is provided by the [IT Helpdesk](#). Online training via [Moodle](#) is available on a variety of software and applications including Access, Endnote, Excel, GGraphPad PRISM, Nvivo, Powerpoint, STATA, Web design, Word.

Statistics Helpdesk - the [RD Stats Help Desk](#) is run by research students for research students to provide additional help for your statistics and programming queries. Please read the information on the website before sending a query to the PhDStatsHelpDesk@lshtm.ac.uk

R users group - The [R users](#) group is an informal group for R users across the School to share and discuss coding in R. It meets roughly once a month. Subscribe to the mailing list to receive updates.

Library – the wide range of services and training provided by the [library](#) are described in the [Library page on the Doctoral College website](#). These include training in literature searching (available through the transferable skills programme); one-to-one training on systematic reviews; reviews of search strategies; advice on data management and open access publishing; advice on funding for publication.

LinkedIn learning - LSHTM has a subscription to [Linked In Learning](#) so you can access a very large number of courses for free. If you find particularly useful courses please let your colleagues and the Doctoral College (Judith.glynn@lshtm.ac.uk) know so we can circulate the information.

15. YOUR DEVELOPMENT: NETWORKS

There are many opportunities to interact with other researchers and students.

Departments – You all belong to a Department, which contains academics and other students working in disciplines and on subjects similar to yours. Get to know them and make the most of this opportunity by attending Departmental meetings, functions and seminars.

Centres and interest groups - As well as belonging to a department and faculty, we encourage you to join an academic centre. A list of School Academic Centres can be found [here](#). They cover a wide range of topics and have active Research Degree student involvement. As well as the centres there are **interest groups**, such as [STIRIG](#) (sexually transmitted infections interest group); [CHIL](#) (Centre for Health Economics in London); [R users Group](#); and some with a regional focus (e.g. Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Tanzania, India).

The "[Kritikos](#)" [Social Science Discussion Group](#) is an informal discussion group for qualitative researchers, staff and RD students, to share and discuss ideas, meet others working in related fields and learn from one another's expertise, in a supportive environment.

MS Teams – We strongly encourage you to join the Research Degree student MS Teams group. This is like a sophisticated whatsapp group that allows you to link easily to your fellow students, and follow/participate in threads of conversation that are of interest to you.

[The Events Diary](#) and the weekly email newsletter the Chariot contain information about the wide range of seminars, lectures and research meetings open to LSHTM students. Make the most of your time at LSHTM and attend some of these. Look out for **Inaugural Lectures** (lectures given by those who have become full professors) and the **Global Health Lecture series** on Monday evenings during term, covering a wide range of topics; as well as research seminars. Many lectures are live streamed and recorded.

LSHTM week - Held in mid-September each year. A major networking event for staff and RD students with a wide range of seminars and activities. In September 2019 a "Dragon's Den"-style event was won by a PhD student, allowing him to take his PhD research to the next stage.

Poster Day – this is an annual event where students present their research in progress on a poster. All students are expected to do this at least once during their programme. Each Faculty awards prizes to the best posters, and there is also a "People's Prize" to allow you to vote for your favourite poster. There is a 'presenting a research poster' session in the Transferable Skills Programme which you are strongly recommended to take.

Upgrading/Review Seminars – this milestone in the RD journey is an opportunity to present to the LSHTM community and receive feedback. You are encouraged to attend other such seminars across the School, to get experience before doing your own, and to support your peers.

Final Year Seminar – students are strongly encouraged to present a seminar before their viva. It is very helpful viva preparation, as it will generate a range of questions and give you practice in formulating answers. And it allows you to show staff and students what you have achieved. Your supervisor can help you arrange this.

External Conferences – these provide an invaluable opportunity to network with the wider research community in your area and for you to present to an external audience. Some funding is available at Faculty/Department level to support this.

Event Organisation –students are encouraged to organise social activities and research events. Students can discuss ideas with their Faculty Research Degrees Committee and the Student Representative Council.

Student Reps – each Department has one or more research student representatives. See [Key contacts](#) on the website to see who they are. They attend Faculty research degree committees (once per term), along with various School-level committees where issues relevant to research degree students are discussed. All are invited to attend the Cross-Faculty Research Degree Forum which meets with the Head of Doctoral College at least once per term. These are key roles facilitating a two-way flow of information and helping the School improve its provision for Research Degree students. Student reps organise social events for the students across the year, some events are managed by the reps, and some can be instigated by other students with input from the student reps. These events give students an opportunity to meet other students. Every Research Degree student is encouraged to stand as a student representative, and to organise and attend social events for their fellow students. The student reps run a [RD student newsletter](#) which is full of information on events of various types.

Student profiles – please complete your [student profile](#), giving you a presence on the LSHTM website, and making it easier for others to find you.

16. PUBLISHING

Many journals charge for publishing, particularly for open access, and some funders insist on open access publication.

LSHTM Library manages the Charity Open Access Fund (COAF) and UKRI Block Grant, to help pay open access fees for research projects funded by the UKRI and the Charity Open Access Fund partners (including Wellcome Trust, British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK). If you are funded by these bodies you can apply to the Library to fund gold open access from these funds, and they will confirm eligibility and availability of funding. Funds should always be available for Wellcome Trust for original research articles. Other students should check whether their supervisors have access to any suitable funding.

Some journals have waiver schemes available to those without other funding, especially authors from low income countries (see the [library website](#) and <https://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/4645488/>

In all cases it is essential to find out the situation before submitting an article.

17. TEACHING AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Teaching opportunities - there may be opportunities for paid teaching at the School. These are dependent on the needs of the Faculties and support required for taught courses. Students who wish to teach will need to undertake relevant training via the [Talent & Educational Development programme](#) and/or the D-TSP and should contact their Faculty Taught Programme Director to find out what is available. The Taught Programme Directors are Anne Tholen and Krystyna Makowiecka (for EPH), Hannah Babad (for PHP) and Nick Dorrell (for ITD). The move to on-line teaching during COVID-19 has increased opportunities to be involved.

Training for Teaching - Training for teaching is included in the [D-Transferable Skills Programme](#) and should be done before you do any teaching. Research students can also attend the Talent & Educational Development programme workshops on 'small group teaching' and/or 'distance learning tutoring'. You will usually be encouraged to shadow an experienced teacher in your first session.

STEM Ambassadors Scheme – this is a national scheme coordinated by Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Network. Some students act as role models and provide lessons/extra-curricular activities for school age pupils.

Public Engagement - Public Engagement training is available both within LSHTM and externally. We have a Small Grant Scheme that offers up to £1000 for a Public Engagement activity. The scheme is open for applications from February to May each year, with grants being awarded in early July. More information about the Scheme, and what help, support and advice that we can offer around Public Engagement can be found [here](#).

There is also [Cheltenham Science Festival](#), which is open to researchers at RD level and higher and aims to find and nurture scientists with a flair for communicating to public audiences. Heats run usually November to February around the UK.

18. USEFUL READING

The best preparation is to talk to other students and attend upgrading and pre-viva seminars so you know what to expect.

Guides to Research Degrees

- Petre M, Rugg P. The unwritten rules of PhD research. 2nd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2010.
- Phillips EM, Pugh DS. How to Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and their Supervisors. 6th ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2015.
- Kearns H & Gardiner M. The Seven Secrets of Highly Successful Research Students. <https://www.ithinkwell.com.au/bookshop/the-seven-secrets>. (see also other books and articles on their website)

Writing guides

- Bailey S. Academic writing: a handbook for international students. 4th ed. London, New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Goodson P. Becoming an academic writer. Los Angeles: Sage, 2013.
- Borga A. How to prepare a manuscript for international journals. Elsevier [blog](#) [2014].
- Murray R. Writing for Academic Journals. 2nd edition Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2009.
- Oliver P. Writing Your Thesis. 3rd ed. London: Sage, 2014.

The Viva

- Murray, R. How to survive your viva: defending a thesis in an oral examination. 3rd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press; 2015.

- Smith P. The PhD viva: how to prepare for your oral examination. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.