

## 2.4 GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DOCTORATES AND MASTERS

- a) The degree of MA, MSc, LLM (by research), MPhil, or PhD may be conferred on graduates of this University or on those of other Universities or on such other persons as may be deemed acceptable by Senate. (In the case of the LLM the qualifying degree must be in Law or in a degree with a substantial Law component.)

Candidates must have:

- i. undertaken such research as approved by Senate for not less than the period prescribed below;
  - ii. fulfilled such other conditions as may be prescribed below;
  - iii. submitted the results of their research in a thesis satisfactory to the Examiners appointed by the University who at their discretion may further examine the candidate in any matters relating to the research and the thesis.
- b) A member of staff of the University may be registered on a programme of study as a candidate for a higher degree if he is a full-time member of the academic, library, administrative or other related staff of the University; research or analogous staff may be similarly registered on a programme of study. The normal regulations for higher degrees will apply in the case of such candidates.

### MA - MASTER OF ARTS

- c) The degree of Masters of Arts (MA) is available both as a research degree and as a taught degree. Candidates seeking the degree on the basis of research undertake one year of supervised research (two years if studying part-time) on a topic in an area for which the first degree would be the degree of Bachelor of Arts, at the end of which they submit a dissertation embodying the results of their research.

Candidates seeking the degree as a taught degree follow a prescribed curriculum and are assessed by examination, or by examination and dissertation. The degree is classified Pass, Merit, Distinction. (Grade descriptors for the research degree are provided in this section.)

Candidates for the degree of MA must already hold a good honours degree or the equivalent. The candidate, with the help of the supervisor, refines the proposal for the research, including developing a work plan and identifying requirements for support and resources and how these will be met.

Candidates submitting a successful (i.e. passing) thesis for the degree award of MA by Research must have demonstrated in their final written submission:

- i. Familiarity with, and systematic understanding of their chosen research subject, its primary and secondary sources and its principal authorities, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline or field of study;
- ii. Critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the judgements of such sources and authorities;
- iii. Dealing with their subject in a competent and scholarly manner that evidences

- (a) understanding of the methodologies and techniques applicable to their own research
- (b) an ability, when appropriate, to critique such methodologies and techniques, and to propose new hypotheses
- (c) originality in the application of knowledge to their specific research topic;
- iv. Their ability to conduct independent research in a self-directed, autonomous manner, exercising judgement and discrimination, and to communicate their findings clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- v. Presentation of their research in a coherent and organized manner, at a professional or equivalent level (e.g. by means of consistent adherence to an established style guide or scholarly house style).

## **MSc – MASTER OF SCIENCE**

- d) The degree of Master of Science (MSc) is available both as a research degree and as a taught degree. Candidates seeking the degree on the basis of research undertake one year of supervised research (two years if studying part-time) on a topic in an area for which the first degree would be the degree of Bachelor of Science, at the end of which they submit a thesis embodying the results of their research and normally have an oral examination. Candidates seeking the degree as a taught degree follow a prescribed curriculum and are assessed by examination, or by examination and dissertation. The degree is classified Pass, Merit, Distinction. (Grade descriptors for the research degree are provided in this section.)

Candidates for the degree of MSc must already hold a good honours degree or the equivalent. The candidate, with the help of the supervisor, refines the proposal for the research, including developing a work plan and identifying the requirements for support and resources and how these will be met.

Candidates submitting a successful (i.e. passing) thesis for the degree of MSc by Research must have demonstrated in their final written submission:

- i. Familiarity with, and understanding of the chosen research subject;
- ii. Critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the judgements of others in the field of study;
- iii. Analysis of research issues in the field of study, which is informed by current knowledge;
- iv. The formulation of a hypothesis to address a research issue;
- v. Understanding of the methodologies and techniques applicable to their own research;
- vi. The design and conduct of experiments that, if the chosen hypothesis were correct, would contribute to publications or conference presentations;
- vii. An ability to analyse data, to interpret it in relation to current understanding of the field, and to discuss its limitations;
- viii. An ability to conduct research independently in a self-directed, autonomous manner, and to communicate findings clearly;
- ix. The coherent and organized presentation of material at a near-professional or equivalent level (e.g. by means of consistent adherence to an established style guide).

## **LLM - MASTER OF LAWS**

- e) The degree of Master of Laws (LLM) is available both as a research degree and as a taught degree. Candidates seeking the degree on the basis of research undertake one year of supervised research on a topic relating to law (two years if they are studying part-time) at the end of which they submit a thesis embodying the results of their research. (Grade descriptors for the research degree are provided in this section.) Candidates seeking the degree as a taught degree

follow a prescribed curriculum and are assessed by examination or by examination and dissertation.

Candidates for the degree of LLM must already hold a good honours degree or the equivalent in law or with a substantial law component. The candidate, with the help of the supervisor, refines the proposal for the research, including developing a work plan and identifying the requirements for support and resources and how these will be met.

The subject should be dealt with in a competent and scholarly manner. Candidates who are awarded the degree of LLM will have demonstrated their ability to conduct independent research using a range of primary and/or secondary sources and to present this in an organized, coherent, and scholarly manner.

This thesis:

- i. Must demonstrate familiarity with, and an understanding of the subject, its principal sources and authorities.
- ii. It should display critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the opinions of others.

## **MPhil - MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

- f) The degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) is a degree that is awarded on the basis of a thesis embodying the results of supervised research. Despite the name of the degree, it may be awarded in any subject or discipline.

Candidates for the degree must already hold a good honours degree or equivalent. The candidate, with the help of the supervisor, refines the proposal for the research, including developing a work plan and identifying the requirements for support and resources and how these will be met.

Candidates spend a period of two years full-time or four years part-time undertaking supervised research, at the end of which they submit a thesis embodying the results of that research.

This thesis:

- i. Must demonstrate familiarity with, and an understanding of the subject, its principal sources and authorities.
- ii. Should display critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the judgements of others.
- iii. Must advance understanding in the field or area of study concerned, for example through a contribution to knowledge or by means of a commentary on existing knowledge.
- iv. The subject should be dealt with in a competent and scholarly manner.

The candidate must show, by means of the thesis or in the oral examination, that he or she appreciates the relationship of his or her special work to a wider field of knowledge.

## **PhD - DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

- g) This degree may be obtained in one of two ways: through a period of supervised research and the submission of a thesis, or through the submission of a portfolio of published work. The standard required for the award of the degree is the same in both cases. The degree awarded by the University of Buckingham is known as a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) regardless of the field of study concerned.

### **Supervised research:**

Candidates seeking the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of a thesis embodying the results of supervised research must already hold a good honours degree or the equivalent. The candidate, with the help of the supervisor, refines the proposal for the research, including developing a work plan and identifying the requirements for support and resources and how these will be met.

Students are registered initially for the degree of PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), although their status is probationary until the first Annual Review has taken place normally between 12 and 18 months from first registration. Probationary status ends once the student has demonstrated through the submission of draft written work that he or she has the ability to conduct research at the advanced level required for the award of the degree, through the normal procedures for Annual Reviews and Upgrades

The period of study required for the award of a PhD is three years full-time or six years part-time. At the end of this period (or earlier in exceptional cases), the candidate submits a thesis embodying the results of the research.

This thesis:

- i. Must demonstrate familiarity with, and an understanding of the subject, its principal sources and authorities.
- ii. Should display critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the opinions of others.
- iii. Must also embody a significant and original contribution to the knowledge of the discipline either by the discovery of new knowledge, or by the exercise of a new and independent critical approach, for example through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, or the revision of older views.
- iv. A thesis should therefore contain matter worthy of publication, although it need not be submitted in a form which is suitable for immediate publication.