

Research Degrees: Guidance notes series

1. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND KEY PRINCIPLES

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INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. The University has the powers to award the research degrees of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) to registered students who successfully complete approved programmes of supervised research in accordance with the regulations of the University, which are governed by the UK Quality Code, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the University Generic Level Descriptors. Solent University's Academic Board has delegated responsibility for overseeing the University's research degree provision to Solent University Research Degrees Committee.
2. The Research Degrees Committee has oversight of the implementation of the research degree regulations of the University and associated policies and guidance, the promotion and enhancement of the quality of the doctoral student experience and monitors the effectiveness of doctoral supervision.

RESEARCH DEGREES: KEY PRINCIPLES

3. Programmes of research may be proposed in any field of study, subject to the requirement that the proposal is capable of leading to scholarly research, the University has the expertise and resources to adequately supervise the research and to its being capable of being assessed by appropriate examiners. The submission may be in the form of a final thesis or by published work, artefact or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it within its academic context. All proposed research programmes will be considered for research degree registration on their academic merits and without reference to the concerns or interests of any associated funding body.
4. Following an approved programme of supervised research, an MPhil is awarded to either:
 - a) A student who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners; or
 - b) A student who, having produced published work, artefact or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it critically within its academic context and demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented that material and defended the commentary by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.
5. Following an approved programme of supervised research, a PhD is awarded to either:
 - a) A student who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated a detailed understanding of research methods appropriate to the advanced academic enquiry in their discipline, has demonstrated an independent and original contribution to knowledge

through the presentation and defence of a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners;

or

- b) A student who, having produced published work, artefact or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it critically within its academic context and demonstrated a detailed understanding of research methods appropriate to the advanced academic enquiry in their discipline, has demonstrated an independent and original contribution to knowledge through the presentation and defence of that material by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

- 6. The majority of students wishing to gain a PhD qualification will register for the MPhil/PhD, where their initial registration will be for the MPhil award. At the appropriate point in their programme of study they will formally transfer from the MPhil award registration to the PhD award registration.

Rarely, applicants will be permitted onto a PhD direct registration. Only students who are able to demonstrate adequately to the relevant University scrutiny panel that they have substantial research skills at an appropriate level - such as another doctorate in a different area, a previous MPhil, or refereed publications in an area relevant to the topic - will be permitted onto a PhD registration directly.