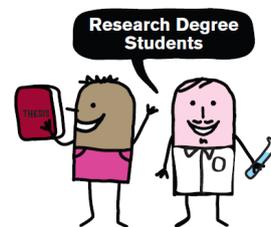


# Graduate School Office Supervisor Update



November Edition 3

## Regulation Amendment

### Retrospective Interruptions & Withdrawals

From 1 January 2014, research students will no longer be permitted to submit a retrospective interruption request backdated past 2 months; the same principle applies to students who wish to withdraw.

Faculties requested the Research Degrees Committee approve this regulation change to facilitate more accurate and coherent budget and student record management. Previously students were, in some instances, requesting 12 month retrospectively applied periods of interruption or withdrawal which then required an adjustment of tuition fees.

Applications for withdrawals or interruptions received before 1 January 2014 will be processed under the previous regulation.

## DSc Award

### Higher Doctorate Awarded

We are very pleased to announce that Academic Board accepted a recommendation to confer the higher doctorate award of 'DSc' to Professor Bernd Stahl from the School of Computer Science and Informatics in the Faculty of Technology.



Professor Bernd Stahl

The distinguished award is granted only in recognition of not just a distinctive, original and sustained scholarly contribution to the field of study but one that significantly advances the discipline.

Our warmest congratulations to Bernd.

## Regulation Amendment

### Use of Proof Readers

The regulation concerning the use of proof readers has been modified. Research students are permitted to use proof readers if prior approval from their supervisor has been sought. Regulation 14.3 has been developed to provide clearer guidance on acceptable practice:

The role of a proof reader of a thesis is to ensure that the meaning of the text is not misrepresented due to the quality and standard of the English used. A proof reader must not :

- Change the text of the thesis to clarify or develop an argument
- Reduce the length of the thesis
- Assist with academic referencing
- Correct factual information
- Translate the thesis into English
- A proof reader may correct spelling, grammar and punctuation accuracy

## QAA Review

### QAA Higher Education Review Visit

The University has received notification that the next Higher Education Review (HER) conducted by the QAA will take place in the summer of 2015, the exact dates are yet to be confirmed. More information on the HER is available on the QAA website:

[www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/higher-education-review](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/higher-education-review)

The QAA report on the last institutional audit carried out in 2009 can also be found on the website.

The Department of Academic Quality (DAQ) will take the institutional lead in preparing the University for the review and the GSO will continue to work closely with Faculties and DAQ regarding the research student element of the review.

## PhD Completion Rates

### Research Degree Qualification Rates (RDQR) Results

The University has received the results of the 2013 Research Degree Qualification Rates analysis from HEFCE. The 'RDQR' is the anticipated PhD completion rate for full-time UK/EU students based on the 2010-11 starting cohort, estimated using a predictive algorithm. For DMU, the completion rate of 76.5% was close to the benchmark figure of 78.1%.

Full details of data for all HEIs are available from the HEFCE web-site at:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2013/news82785.html>  
and <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2013/201317/#d.en.82794>

This data demonstrates substantial improvement compared to previous RDQR figures for DMU although it is recognised that there is still scope for further progress.

## Regulation Amendment

### Examination Outcomes

The Research Degrees Committee have approved two significant amendments to the regulations relating to examination outcomes for research students. The Committee found that the extent of revision requested by examiners under the category 'minor amendments' varied significantly from minor typographical errors to re-writing of chapters. The Committee considered sector policy and practice regarding terminology and associated timeframes for minor and major amendments and agreed to modify the University regulation 18.3d) defining minor amendments as:

Minor amendments are changes that do not alter the arguments or conclusions of the thesis. They include corrections of editorial, typographical and grammatical errors, as well as corrections to references and minor re-writing to clarify context or interpretation.

Normally, errors of presentation can be remedied by minor amendments unless they are judged as fundamentally and comprehensively impairing the argument of the thesis, which would require substantial re-writing or re-structuring. In such a case it is advisable to recommend major amendments as the final form of the thesis would differ substantially from its original form and would need reassessing as a whole. For example, the inclusion of new data, fieldwork or practice, new analysis or substantial new additions to literature would be major amendments.

The second regulation amendment concerns the timeframe given to students whose viva outcome is minor amendments. The previous regulation allowed a period not exceeding six months and this has now been reduced to **three** months from the notification of the result to the student from the Graduate School Office.

The amended text is included in the latest version of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Students which is available on the Graduate School Office web pages.

# Graduate School Update

## Graduate School Review

An internal review of the Graduate School took place on 1 November.

The review panel was chaired by Professor Andy Downton and consisted of representatives of:

- Executive Board
- Department of Academic Quality
- Senior Faculty Representatives
- Library and Learning Services
- Research Students

In addition, Professor Jerry Roberts, Assistant Pro Vice Chancellor Research from the University of Nottingham was the external panel member.

The context of the review was to assess the preparedness of the Graduate School for the next institutional audit of the QAA and to review the strategic direction of the Graduate School.

The panel met with various stakeholders of the research degree student experience including:

- Representatives of Academic Services and the Graduate School Office
- Director of the Graduate School
- Research Students
- Research Supervisors
- Faculty Heads of Research Students

The Panel made four main recommendations:

### **Recommendation 1**

Immediate priority to be given to the purchase of research student progress software in order to satisfy QAA research student monitoring requirements/audit.

### **Recommendation 2**

Active and distinctive marketing and recruitment processes and campaigns for PGR students are required with support from Faculties, Marketing and Recruitment and the International Office

### **Recommendation 3**

Explore the introduction of a fixed term contract for the role of Director of Graduate School

### **Recommendation 4**

Improve the level of embedment of research school culture in order to deliver a minimum level of research student support, mechanisms for which should be led by the Director of Graduate School and supported by Faculty Heads of Research Studies.

### **Recommendation 5**

Explore how careers support for PGR students (including more consistent availability of teaching development opportunities) can be further developed, for example by embedding in the PGR student development and review process.

### **Recommendation 6**

Review and put in place appropriate representation of PGR students on all relevant University and Faculty committees.

The recommendations will be progressed over the coming 12 months.

## Poster Competition

# Research Degree Students' Poster Competition and Research Open Day Call for poster entries!!!



Jessica Urwin—1st Prize Winner 2013



Rallou-Eleni Dadioti - 2nd Prize Winner 2013

Please encourage your research students to enter the Graduate School Office Poster Competition. Students need to register their interest in the competition with the GSO by **Friday 17th January 2014**. Students are invited to create a poster that will explain their research to a judging panel and audience who have no expertise in the subject area. This is an exciting opportunity to publicise the research, make useful contacts and showcase the research to a wider audience. The event will provide the opportunity to develop skills in the design and production of poster presentations and enhance student's networking skills. The poster competition event will be held on **Wednesday 9th April 2014**.

Quotes from last year's finalists:

*"Seeing all the DMU posters in one room made me realise what an amazing group of people and research topics we have here"*

*"The time spent producing my poster was a real investment and paid dividends to me when I started writing thesis chapters"*

*"The competition gave me the opportunity to communicate my research to a wider audience and was an exciting experience. The GSO gave me the necessary support and guidance to design an award winning poster. I must admit that the whole experience has helped me to improve my presentation skills and confidence level"*

For further information contact Nisha Cholera at [rtp@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:rtp@dmu.ac.uk) or 0116 207 8125 / 260 6309

### Introduction of Turnitin to review research degree theses

From January 2014, the University requires that all research degree theses are analysed using TurnitinUK when submitted for examination. To achieve this, a Blackboard shell entitled RESTTfRS Turnitin for Research Students' has been set up which appears in the module list of your homepage. It will be the responsibility of the Internal Examiner to check the similarity report generated following the thesis submission and act on this accordingly.

For those staff not already familiar with TurnitinUK, it is an academic plagiarism detector which highlights similarities of text within written text that could be regarded as a plagiarism offence. The program searches for identical text that has already been published in publically available sources, such as academic journals, books or documents available on the web. TurnitinUK produces a similarity report highlighting where the matched similarities are within the text and identifies the source to which they are matched.

Of course the overwhelming majority of our students do not copy text from other sources when creating their thesis and therefore we are happy to introduce this checking mechanism to demonstrate this fact to external examiners when a thesis is being formally examined. However, some students may not be familiar with TurnitinUK and how to interpret the similarity report. We have therefore created two links to the 'TurnitinUK program' within the Blackboard shell.

**'Thesis Submission'** is reserved for submission of the **completed research degree thesis**, which the student must upload once their printed thesis is submitted to the Graduate School Office for examination. In this case the similarity report should be examined by the Internal Examiner and will not be visible to the student. A User-Guide describes the procedure and the action the Internal Examiner should take after interpreting the report.

**'Chapter Test'** allows students to submit and upload any written document for analysis by TurnitinUK to generate a similarity report. This report will be visible to both the student and the supervisor(s). Each time a new report is submitted to Chapter Test by the student it *erases* the previous report. It would be helpful to your students to discuss the similarity report generated in each case with them in order to differentiate between simple coincidence for short sections of the student's text and previously published material, and the more serious issue of possible plagiarism involving substantial elements of the student's text. All research students receive guidance on the University policy on plagiarism through the Researcher Development Programme, but we are aware there may be some cultural variation in the interpretation of the original source material and perception of the importance of expressing that content in your own words. In this regard, the use of TurnitinUK to analyse documents prepared by the student throughout the research degree programme will be a helpful tool to ensure a clear understanding of this issue.

**The 'Turnitin for Research Students'** shell contains full instructions on how students should submit documents for analysis, links to sites explaining the TurnitinUK program and how to interpret the similarity report. CELT also run a course and have online resources on the use of TurnitinUK; for details please see <http://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/support-using-technology/dmu-core-elt/turnitin/turnitin-staff-guide/>

Although submission of final theses to TurnitinUK is not mandatory until January 2014, we are asking students submitting their thesis for examination between now and January to volunteer to test the system and give feedback. If one of your students comes into this category, please encourage them to participate in the trial and provide feedback. Likewise, if you are the Internal Examiner for a viva between now and January in which the student has volunteered to test the system, we will contact you to ask you to follow the procedure described in the User-Guide attached to this bulletin. We would be grateful for your feedback on the procedure to [onlinetraining@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:onlinetraining@dmu.ac.uk)