

Research Degrees: Guidance notes series

1. KEY PRINCIPLES AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

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RESEARCH DEGREES: KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Programmes of research may be proposed in any field of study, subject to the requirement that the proposed programme is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment by 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.

2. 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 an 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 within its academic context, has presented that material and defended the commentary by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

3. 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 resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and demonstrated an 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 within its academic context resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

4. The majority of students wishing to gain a PhD qualification will do so via transfer from MPhil registration. Rarely, applicants will be permitted onto PhD direct registration. Only students who are able to demonstrate adequately to the University Research Degrees Committee 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.

5. The award of research degrees is operated through a long-established agreement with Nottingham Trent University (NTU), which has research degree awarding powers. Southampton Solent University's Academic Board has delegated operational responsibility for overseeing the University Research Degree provision to Southampton Solent University Research Degrees Committee.

6. The Research Degrees Committee has three primary elements to its remit: to act on behalf of Academic Board as the guardian of standards and of the regulatory framework for research students, to serve as the equivalent of an 'examination/progression board' for research degree students, and to promote and enhance the quality of their experience. It uses a slightly amended form of the Nottingham Trent University (NTU) regulations.