

Key Changes to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2026/27

Links within the regulations to other information have been updated as necessary.

Regulation Updated	What has changed
7 Avoiding potential conflicts of interest	Amended to clarify the authority of the College Postgraduate Committee to determine appropriate mitigation where potential conflict of interest is identified, including rejecting nominations of Examiners, or – by exception – substituting previously-appointed Examiners. This is consistent with the authority of the College under Regulation 3. A link to Doctoral College guidance about managing potential conflict of interest has also been added.
10 Reasonable adjustments	10.1 has been amended to clarify that adjustments will <i>in most cases</i> be determined in advance by the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS). The new 10.2 explains that there may be urgent or serious situations where there is a need to apply adjustments for a student with an imminent assessment, before a student can meet DLSS. A link is provided to guidance on the DLSS web pages about Implementing Adjustments in Urgent Cases. This amendment has arisen from work in response to the Bristol (Abrahart) case, and is designed to ensure that the University meets its anticipatory duty to provide reasonable adjustments to students with disabilities. 10.7 previously suggested that students were required to provide medical evidence to receive support from DLSS with temporary injuries or impairment. This has been removed, as it is not generally required by DLSS. This should be of benefit to students, as it removes a barrier to seeking support from DLSS in these circumstances.
12 Language of assessment: Gaelic	Amended to reflect new Scottish Languages Act 2025. Legal Services have confirmed that the new legislation does not affect the University's position regarding assessment of work submitted in Gaelic.
13.3 Progression review	Amended to clarify that part-time students (like full-time students) undergo a review each year. This reflects existing expectations.

14.4 Annual progression review recommendation	Amended to state that a student who has a Schedule of Adjustments in place which allows additional time to prepare for or undertake assessment will be offered more than three months to complete a repeat progression review, in accordance with the terms of their Schedule of Adjustments. This reflects existing practice, and supports the University in meeting its obligations to disabled students under the Equality Act 2010.
21.1 Oral examination	Amended to state that approval from the relevant College is required where the oral examination will be held more than three months after submission of the thesis. This change seeks to prevent situations where there is a significant delay in the scheduling of an oral examination for a student. Such a delay can be detrimental to students, both in terms of their likelihood of performing to the best of their ability in the oral examination, and in preventing them from pursuing the next stage in their careers.
22 PhD by Research and other Doctorates: examiner recommendation 22.3 22.4	This clause has been deleted, since it was covered within 22.1. Amended to clarify that students whose outcome is a full submission for an MPhil under 22(h) will be expected to adhere to the standard MPhil word limit. This is appropriate because, unlike the award of MPhil under 22(f) or 22(g), the student is given a substantial period of up to 12 months to revise the thesis, so it is reasonable to expect them to meet the standard requirements for the MPhil.
24.5 MPhil: examiner recommendation	Deleted as now covered in 22.4.
36.3 Committee recommendation	Deleted the reference to students being asked to accept or decline an alternative award, where this is offered following an oral examination. There have been isolated cases where a student has not responded to contact about an alternative award, where it was unclear what steps should be taken.

	In the event that a student were to initially decline an alternative award, there is a risk that they may subsequently change their position and request that an award be made, possibly after a number of years. This would be challenging to respond to, depending upon the nature of records retained. Where an alternative award is offered which is lower than the student's intended award, this can be an unwelcome decision for students. However, students would retain the discretion not to include reference to any award they have received on their CV or in other relevant contexts.
44 Final version of the thesis	Amended to state that a student who does not submit their final electronic thesis within one month of the approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award will be excluded from study with no award being issued. There have been rare cases involving students failing to submit the final version of their thesis for a considerable period of time. Such cases are difficult and time-consuming for staff to monitor. Communicating a deadline for submission will help to reduce the likelihood of significant delays in submission. In the event that a student is unable to submit the final version of their thesis within this period due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. ill health), the College may allow an extension to support this. Where a student is excluded, having failed to submit the final version of their thesis, but subsequently contacts the University seeking to submit this, the College has the authority to reinstate them to do so, under Postgraduate Degree Regulation 45.
50.5 MSc by Research degrees: requirements for award 52.3 MSc by Research degrees: distinction 53.2 MSc by Research degrees: merit	Added an additional clause to clarify that, for MSc by Research programmes overseen by a Board of Examiners within a School (usually those containing a proportion of taught credit), the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to the operation of borderlines apply to decisions regarding award and classification.