Faculty of Medical Sciences Graduate School

Transition from MRes to PhD study for 1+3 integrated MRes/PhD programmes: guidelines for students and supervisors

Note: These guidelines are written in the context of integrated MRes/PhD studies but the principles equally apply to 1+2 integrated MRes/MD studies, except noting that MD studies are normally 2 years.

1. Students recruited to 1+3 integrated MRes/PhD programmes are required to study for the MRes in year 1 of their studies. Progress will be reviewed during the programme, after 6 months, to confirm, or not, progression onto PhD studies. The Progress Review panel will comprise the Dean of Postgraduate Studies (or nominee), the Director of PhD Studies (or nominee), the MRes Degree Programme Director (or nominee) and the main supervisor of the PhD programme. The Progress Review Panel will recommend satisfactory progress and continuation to PhD studies, dependent upon:

   - Satisfactory progress during the MRes, as evidenced by: passing of all taught modules, normally at first attempt and normally at merit level;
   - A favourable report on progress from the supervisory team, including input from the supervisor of the research project;
   - Proficiency in English (equivalent to at least at IELTS 6.5, with a minimum of 6.5 in each subsection).

2. The MRes studies are normally complete at the end of July/beginning of August, thus allowing students to move into their PhD studies immediately following submission of the MRes dissertation (with holiday allowed according to the policy of the Faculty of Medical Sciences Graduate School for PhD students; see [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/staff/supervisor/documents/PGRHolidayPolicy.pdf]).

   - Students on integrated 1+3 (MRes + PhD) programmes MUST submit the PhD thesis within four years of registration; thus, timely progress onto the PhD component is essential.

3. Confirmation of transfer to PhD studies and formal registration for PhD studies will be finalised following the outcome of the MRes examination process. The start of PhD studies does not remove the condition of achieving a Merit in the MRes to proceed to registration for formal PhD studies.

   - A condition of candidates on integrated MRes/PhD programmes of study is that they achieve at least a Merit in their MRes to proceed to PhD registration.

4. Students are required to submit a PhD project approval form (see [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/ProjectApproval.doc]) and a new Learning Agreement (see [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/learningagreement.pdf]) within fifteen months of initial registration (effectively by the end of December of Year 2).

   - The project outline provided to the Graduate School at the beginning of the MRes course covers only the MRes research project; the same applies to the Learning Agreement provided at the beginning of the MRes research project.

5. For the purpose of project approval, the PhD project title may be same as the title of the MRes research project. The title of the final thesis is agreed only on submission of the form “Application for approval of title of thesis and appointment of examiners” (see [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/ApprovalofTitleandExaminersPhDMPhilAug08.doc]), and this should be different from the title of the MRes project.

   - Note that the same material may not be examined as a component of the both the MRes and PhD degrees. The content of the PhD thesis must be different from (but may build on) the content of the MRes dissertation.

6. Following formal registration for PhD studies, annual progress reviews will be as for a three year PhD project. For the first annual review of progress, it is acceptable for students to include in the literature review text included in the MRes research project dissertation; this practice will not be viewed as self-plagiarism. However, it should be noted that, in such an instance, the same text may NOT be used in the PhD thesis (since that same material may not be examined as a component of both the MRes and PhD degrees).