Programme Specification

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Research

Awarding Institution	University of Gibraltar
Teaching Location	Europa Point Campus, Gibraltar
Programme Title	PhD by Research (incorporating via Prior Publication)
Final Award	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Level of Qualification[1]	8
Mode of Delivery	FULL-TIME ⊠ PART-TIME ⊠

Minimum and Maximum Registration Period		Minimum registration	Maximum registration	Via Prior Publication
	Full-time	3 years	5 years	1 year
	Part-time	4 years	8 years	2 years

Recognition by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	None
Benchmarks	This Program has been designed with reference to the QAA Doctoral Characteristics, 2015
Entry Requirements	For direct entry to the degree applicants must: - hold a Master's degree awarded by a UK University or the University of Gibraltar - or an overseas Master's degree of equivalent standard – provided the Masters is in an appropriate cognate area and that it included research training and the completion of a research project; or - have a good honours degree (or equivalent) in an appropriate discipline and have research and/or professional experience at postgraduate level as evidenced in published work, written reports or other appropriate evidence of accomplishment. Where an applicant cannot satisfy these criteria or where they have been out of higher education for a lengthy period of time they can elect to, or be advised to apply for the PhD via progression from an MPhil. Any such applicants will normally hold a first or upper second-class honours degree from a recognised higher education institution. Applicants for the Prior Publication pathway must provide evidence of a body of work that in aggregate, is broadly comparable in quality and quantity to that expected to be embodied in a PhD thesis in the same discipline (see section 2).

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[1] UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

English Language Requirements	If English is not the student's first language they must have one of the following qualifications as evidence of English language skills: • IELTS: 6.5 with 5.5 minimum in each sub-test • Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE): Grade C • Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English (CAE): Grade B • Pearson Test of English (Academic): 60 with 51 in each component • IBT TOEFL: 90 with no subtest less than 17
Faculty/Department	This degree is managed by the University Research and Research Degrees Committee
Date of Initial Approval	12th January 2016
Date last reviewed	December 2019

Programme Outline

The PhD Programme at the University of Gibraltar, drawing on the principles and expectations of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, provides students with direct experience of a range of learning skills support and training to assist all students in developing essential competences in academic literacy and research methods, as well as opportunities to:

- develop originality and creativity in research;
- contribute to new ideas and knowledge in your discipline and make positive contributions to public life;
- acquire transferable skills for personal development;
- develop high-level writing and presentation skills;
- engage in methodological experimentation and master the use of specific research tools and techniques;
- to submit a successful thesis and to provide an academic defence of their work through oral examination (*viva voce*).

To that end a number of educational, discursive and experiential learning opportunities are in place to support doctoral candidates at The University of Gibraltar and they constitute the component parts of the course:

- Training programme: research methods and skills focussed modules
- Supervision: individualised support to promote personal, disciplinary and professional development
- The Formal Research Proposal
- Seminar Series: two seminars strands – i) invited speakers; ii) student-led – focussed on research methods, skills and practices in the field
- Annual Review: individualised record of personal achievement and development goals
- Confirmation of Candidature
- Biennial Summer Symposium
- Writing-Up: independent study period for the consolidation and realisation of the written thesis

The programme outline is shown below:

Milestones	Assessment and timeframe
Induction	Attendance
Epigeum – *'Research Skills Training'* Online Programme	Full completion of all modules within the student's first year
PhD Programme Seminar Series	80% attendance until successful completion and approval of students RD1, thereafter optional
Annual Reviews	Successful completion & approval annually
Supervisory Meeting Reports	All meetings are to be included in students' annual report
Formal Research Proposal and Approval Process (RD1)	Submission & approval expected within 12 months (full-time) 24 months (part-time)
Ethical Review	Must be approved by Ethics subcommittee and RRDC
Confirmation of Candidature (RD2)	Submission and approval expected within 24 months (full-time) 48 months (part-time)
Thesis Submission	Students must submit an online and printed copy of the thesis for each examiner to the office of Academic Programmes and Research on or before the last day of the maximum period of registration.

Examination (*Viva Voce*)	Examiners can make the following recommendations to the RRDC, that: a) the candidate be awarded the degree; b) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis; c) the candidate be permitted to resubmit for the degree and be re-examined with or without an oral examination; d) the candidate be awarded an MPhil; e) the candidate not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined. Note: see section 2 for alternative recommendations for PhD by Research via Prior Publication

Programme Aim/s

Specifically the programme aims to enable registered candidates to:

- produce a piece of original work based on independent study that can withstand the critical scrutiny of the academic discipline community; and
- that contributes specifically to the knowledge development of the respective academic field;
- enhance and extend their personal and professional capabilities.

Generally, the programme aims to develop and support a local community of scholars who can contribute to the scientific, social and cultural capital of Gibraltar.

Programme Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme the student will be able to:

1. Knowledge & Understanding	• Plan, manage and deliver a project based on justifiable methodological processes that recognise, evaluate and minimise any sociological and/or environmental risks; • Understand the centrality of professional standards, ethics and research integrity in the conduct of projects; • Understand the necessity for the purposefulness of research undertakings; • Recognise the need to establish and develop professional relationships based on sensitivity to diversity, equality and cultural sensibilities.
B. Intellectual Skills	• Access and discover, evaluate and manage, conserve and communicate an ever-increasing volume of knowledge from a range of various and competing sources; • Think critically about knowledge and problems to create new knowledge and propose innovative insights and solutions; • Support, collaborate with, and lead others in research practice
C. Practical Skills	• Exercise professional standards, ethics and research integrity in the conduct of projects;
D. Transferable Skills	• Network and communicate to influence practice and policy, and to inform diverse audiences.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

The learning and teaching strategy of the degree is essentially embedded in the Course Structure which is designed around the characteristics of doctoral degrees described by the QAA (2015) and Chapter B11 of the QAA Quality Code 2013. The framework of the degree is intended to enable a candidate to be able to demonstrate the generic expectations of doctoral level study (as detailed in the QAA Level 8 descriptors) and the Course Learning Outcomes (as in 14a & 14b above).

In accordance with normal assessment and examination regimes in the UK the research degree at the University of Gibraltar is assessed and examined through the submission of a thesis and an oral defence of the thesis through a *viva voce*.

The assessment of the written work and oral examination is conducted by three examiners (1 internal and 2 external). In cases where the candidate is also a member of staff of the University, the examination must be conducted by three external examiners and no internal examiner. A final recommendation for the award of the degree is made to the University Research and Research Degrees Committee, which makes the final recommendation decision.

The research degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is not graded or classified in any way and is awarded on a pass/fail basis only)

Programme content and structure

There are no modules associated with this programme of study but two formal progression points and annual reviews which approve, withhold or withdraw progression rights.

Variation/s to the Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes

None

Award level and intermediate Awards (exit points)

Award	Credit level (FHEQ)
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	8
Master's Degree (MPhil)	7

Career and Study Opportunities

The programme also provides pathways and opportunities for further study. These could include post-doctoral positions.

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1. Programme Map (full-time) an indicative timeframe

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2
Induction	PhD Programme Seminar Series (mandatory)	PhD Programme Seminar Series	Confirmation of Candidature (RD2)	PhD Programme Seminar Series	Thesis Submission
Online Epigeum Course – Research Skills	Formal Research Project (RD1)		Annual Review incl. supervisory meeting reports		Viva Voce Examination
PhD Programme Seminar Series	Ethics Application		Biennial Summer School		
	Annual Review incl. supervisory meeting reports				

KEY: ☐ COMPULSORY MODULE ☐ OPTIONAL MODULE

2. PhD by Research via Prior Publication

External applicants and members of University staff beyond the probationary period may submit a portfolio of their published works, for consideration for the award of a PhD, under this same programme.

Any person who wishes to follow this pathway must:

- Be sponsored by a member of University Academic faculty related to their chosen discipline who already possesses a PhD;
- Be supported by the Director of Academic Programmes and Research (or suitable nominee in the case of a conflict of interest);
- Submit a body of work for consideration that in aggregate, is broadly comparable in quality and quantity to that expected to be embodied in a PhD thesis in the same discipline;
- Preface the submission by an overarching chapter which explains the unifying themes that run through the research, and places the works in the context of existing work in the field and the applicant's research career.

The University's Research and Research Degrees Committee (RRDC) will consider applications initially. The Director of Academic Programmes and Research will appoint a member of academic staff or research associate to act as primary Supervisor, as well as an external specialist secondary supervisor. Students will be encouraged to undertake relevant Epigeum modules and attend PhD seminars, although these will not be compulsory.

The PhD by prior publication pathway is expected to take up to one year full-time, and two years part-time.

Pathway details:
Student works with supervisors to submit initial RD1 to RRDC for approval. The completed RD1 will provide a detailed breakdown of the proposed work.
Overarching chapter developed in consultation with appointed supervisors.
Confirmation of Candidature undertaken at appropriate point where student presents work to date to a panel.
The RRDC will receive an initial submission, which will include a report from the C of C panel. The RRDC, will then determine whether there is a *prima facie* case for examination of the portfolio for the degree of PhD. The RRDC may convene a special subcommittee for this purpose. If approved, final submission of the portfolio and examination arrangements will be made under the same regulations as for a PhD thesis, except that the joint recommendations of the examiners will be limited to the following:

a) the candidate be awarded the degree;
b) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to amendments being made to the overarching chapter;
c) the candidate be permitted to resubmit for the degree and be re-examined with or without an oral examination;
d) the candidate be awarded an MPhil;

e) the material submitted in the portfolio falls short of the requirements, and that the candidate not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined.

In the case of recommendation b), the candidate must be provided with written guidelines on the additional material required and/or corrections to be made to the introductory section. In the case of recommendation e), the candidate will be informed that no further submission of this work will be accepted for consideration for the award of PhD.

Details of the work submitted:
The bound portfolio of works must be prefaced by the overarching chapter.
The overarching chapter should be approximately 10,000 words in length.
In cases where the applicant and other person(s) jointly authored works that form part of the submission, the overarching chapter should describe in detail the roles played by those joint authors, including percentage estimates of the applicant's input into each jointly authored work.