Procedure for the Approval of New Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes

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1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 This procedure should be followed when seeking approval for a new postgraduate research (PGR) degree leading to a named award of the University.[1]

1.2 Those proposing a new collaborative award e.g. a Joint, Dual or Split-Site PhD programme should refer to the Collaborative Postgraduate Doctoral Research Programme Policy.

1.3 This procedure may be supplemented by Faculty specific guidance as appropriate and may need to be adapted depending upon the nature of the proposed new degree e.g. some sections may not be appropriate for all degree types.

1.4 Where a new postgraduate research degree includes a taught credited element and / or taught exit award, the Faculty Teaching and Learning Officer (EDPPP) should be notified and consulted at the earliest opportunity.

1.5 The procedure should be read alongside the New PGR Programme Approval Form.

2. New Postgraduate Degree Approval Process - Overview

2.1 There are two stages in the process for approving a new postgraduate research degree:

- The approval in principle of the degree in principle via completion and endorsement of part 1 of the New PGR Programme Approval Form.
- The development and approval of the detailed structure and content of the degree programme via completion of part 2 of the same form.

3. Part 1 - Approval in Principle

3.1 Those proposing the new postgraduate research degree are required to complete part 1 of the form in full giving consideration to each of the points of below:

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[1] The PhD is a University award and it would not be necessary or appropriate for each new PhD subject to be approved. This procedure is designed for other types of new research degree e.g. awards under the professional doctorate title, variations of research master's programmes and PhD awards that involve an alternative or distinct method of research presentation.

- **Programme Outline**
  - Including (where applicable) title, description, entry award, exit award, start date, intake number / intake points, home School / Faculty, mode of attendance, duration, taught units, fieldwork requirements, fee information, funding source, external partners, ATAS requirements etc.
- **Market Demand and Academic/Strategic Rationale**
  - Including consideration of any similar pre-existing degrees, rationale in the context of the UoM strategic plan and demonstration of existing demand for the programme.
- **Required Resources and Staffing**
  - Including (where applicable) the university library, teaching and learning, information systems, eLearning, staffing and space.

3.2. Proposers are also required to nominate an external advisor. The external advisor will be a subject specialist who will provide feedback on the academic coherence of the new degree during part 2 of the approval process (see section 5).

3.3 Proposers should consult with their Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research) during completion of part 1.

3.4 Part 1 must be approved at School level (either through committee or by Chair's action) and signed by the Head of School and the School Director of Teaching and Learning (if applicable).[2]

3.5 If the proposal involves contribution from other Schools, a note of their approval must also be included with the submission.

3.6 If approved by the relevant School the proposer should then forward the form to the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy for consideration by the appropriate Faculty committee (the degree proposer or their representative/s should normally be present at the meeting of this committee in order to answer any queries).

3.7 The Faculty committee will decide either to give approval in principle for the degree proposal, or to refuse approval in principle on the grounds of strategic or resource issues. In the latter case, the School will be given feedback and informed whether a revised proposal can be resubmitted.

3.8 If approved, the proposer may then wish to submit the form to the Research Degrees and Researcher Development Team for input/comment from the the Associate Vice-President for Postgraduate Research and the Manchester Doctoral College Strategy Group (MDCSG) prior to completing part 2.

4. Part 2 – Approval of Degree Content

4.1 Those proposing the new postgraduate research degree are required to complete part 2 of the form in full giving consideration to each of the points of below:

- Details of any revisions made to part 1 of the form since approval (including reasoning and tracked changes if applicable).

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[2] The exact role of the relevant Teaching and Learning approver may differ slightly across Faculties.

- A [PGR postgraduate degree specification](#) is required for the new degree. There should also be [course unit specifications](#) for all taught course units.

- Information on teaching, learning and assessment methods for taught units and a statement of how these methods meet the needs of PGRs with disabilities. Details of placement learning should also be included (if applicable).

- Information about subject specific and generic skills training and how this will be managed.

- Information about personal development planning and how this will be managed.

- Details of how the progress of PGRs will be monitored throughout the degree, with information about key milestones that PGRs will be required to achieve in order to progress to the next stage of their research.

- Details about the supervision arrangements and confirmation that all PGRs will have access to a Tutor/Adviser.

- Comments from the external adviser. Evidence of feedback from the external adviser, plus the response from the School where appropriate, must be included with the submission to demonstrate that they have taken part in this process.

- Nomination of external examiners for any taught elements / exit awards (where applicable).

4.2 Once completed part 2 must be again be approved at School level (either through committee or by Chair's action) and signed by the Head of School and School Director of Teaching and Learning (if applicable).

4.3 If the proposal involves contribution from other schools, a note of their approval must also be included with the submission.

4.4 Programmes with a taught element and/or taught exit award will require additional approval from the Faculty Associate Dean – Teaching and Learning.

4.5 If approved by the relevant School the proposer should then forward the form to the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy for consideration by the appropriate Faculty committee (the degree proposer or their representative/s should normally be present at the meeting of this committee in order to answer any queries).

4.6 If the submission is then approved at Faculty, it should be forwarded to Research Degrees and Researcher Development who can prepare the paper for consideration and approval by Manchester Doctoral College Strategy Group (MDCSG).

4.7 Following approval at MDCSG and the completion of any agreed amendments the form will be signed by the Associate Vice-President for Postgraduate Research and the Research Degrees and Research Development team will confirm via email to all parties that the degree has been approved and prepare a summary statement for Senate.

4.8 If the submission is not approved by the Faculty committee or MDCSG, then the proposal may be amended and resubmitted to the relevant committee. Clear feedback will be provided to the proposer on the actions necessary and the timeframe for resubmission.

5. External Advisor

5.1 Comments from at least one external adviser are normally required as part of the approval of the detailed content of a degree.

5.2 The external adviser should be nominated by the proposer and approved by the Faculty at the approval in principle stage.

5.3 The external adviser should be a senior academic at another higher education institution although there may be cases where it is also appropriate to use an external adviser from industry.[3]

5.4 The degree proposer will ask the External Advisor to provide feedback on the academic coherence of the new degree during the drafting of part 2 of the submission

5.5 An external adviser should make reference to:

- the appropriateness of the degree aims, learning outcomes and content in relation to relevant subject benchmark statement/s (where they have been published);
- the relationship of the degree to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications;
- the relationship of the degree to any other external reference points.

5.6 It is anticipated that the external adviser's comments will be taken into account during the development of the degree. However, there may be instances when the degree team decide not to incorporate certain elements into the proposal. In this case the degree proposer must include a note of explanation.

5.7 In case of any delays in receiving comments from an external adviser, a second nominee will be considered by the Faculty.

6. Timetable for Approval

6.1 There are no specific deadlines for the submission of new postgraduate research degree proposal forms to the Research Degrees and Researcher Development Team / MDCSG. However, proposers are advised to consider the timing submissions at each stage to allow for sufficient lead-in time for the full development, approval and marketing of the degree for the proposed start date of the new programme.

6.2 Schools / Faculties can implement local deadlines for the submission of new PGR programme applications if deemed appropriate.

6.3 Proposers should also be mindful of internal School and Faculty Teaching and Learning deadlines for the approval of taught credited course units and/or taught early exit awards (where applicable).

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[3] Where there is a taught credit element or exit award consideration should be given to TLD policy that states the external advisor should not be a current taught external examiner.

Version amendment history		
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Policy owner:	Alex Hinchiffe, Research Degrees and Researcher Development
Lead contact:	Alex Hinchliffe, Research Degrees and Researcher Development