



**Guidance Notes for Faculties, Departments and Institutes**

**PART-TIME RESEARCH COURSES**

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## INTRODUCTION

This document provides information and guidance for those wishing to admit part-time students. Part-time students are subject to the same regulations, policies and procedures as full-time students, with some exceptions which are detailed in this document. You should refer to the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees* (<http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/new-students/manage-your-student-information/graduate-students/code>) and formulate your own local arrangements for part-time students within this framework, appropriate to the subject and the specific requirements of the mode of study.

This document refers to the part-time PhD Degree. Provision has also been made for a part-time route to the MSc, MLitt and some MPhil degrees and to the Certificate of Postgraduate Study. Arrangements for these qualifications are as for the PhD with variants as set out in the timetable and the amended regulations. Note that the term 'part-time student' below refers to part-time PhD students.

## 1 Framework

### 1.1 The Qualification

The qualification obtained is the same, whether by part-time or full-time study.

### 1.2 Research requirements (terms)

The table below shows the minimum and maximum requirements in terms for different part-time degrees.

Degree	Minimum requirement (terms)	Maximum (terms)	Final submission deadline
PhD	15	21	At the end of the 7 <sup>th</sup> year
MSc/MLitt	10		
CPGS	5		

<sup>1</sup> leave to work away may be sought for the remainder

<sup>2</sup> 'other approved place' refers to approved University Partner Institutions as listed in the Postgraduate Studies Prospectus

### **1.3 Residence requirements**

There are no residence requirements for part-time research courses but there are minimum attendance requirements which will include formal supervisions and training (see 4.3 and 4.4 below). Potential candidates should be made aware that this is a part-time rather than a distance learning course; it is expected that students will live close enough to Cambridge to play a full part in the academic and social life of the Faculty or Department and the College.

### **1.4 College**

Every part-time postgraduate student will be a member of a College. He or she will be assigned to a Postgraduate Tutor who will be available to advise on welfare or pastoral matters in the same way as for full-time students.

### **1.5 Fees**

The total University Composition Fee for the course is the same, whether taken by the full-time or the part-time route. In practice, this normally means that 60% of the full-time fee is charged for each term of registration as a part-time student. Students should also be aware that there may be additional costs, e.g. travel and short-term accommodation.

## **2 Departmental Arrangements**

### **2.1 Setting up a new part-time course**

When setting up a new course, Faculties and Departments will be asked to confirm whether the course will be offered as part-time or full-time (or both).

### **2.2 Applying to admit part-time students on to an existing course**

Faculties and Departments who wish to extend provision to admit part-time students on to an existing course must contact Student Registry ([recordsandexams@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:recordsandexams@admin.cam.ac.uk)) to open the course to part-time study.

### **2.3 Resources**

Research facilities must be no less (in quantity, quality and availability) for part-time students than for full-time students, whether provided in the University or in the students' own place of work. If you wish to admit part-time research students you must confirm that you have enough laboratory, library and seminar room accommodation for the additional students and sufficient administrative capacity to manage them.

### **2.4 Supervisors and Advisors**

Supervisors and Advisors are appointed by the Degree Committee in the same way as full-time students. Supervisors should be made aware before taking on a part-time student that

- the commitment is a long term one, and can last for up to ten years;
- the student may have other commitments (domestic responsibilities, paid employment) - the Supervisor is asked to keep the balance between these elements under review;
- it may be difficult for the student to attend induction, training etc at the same time as other students; the supervisor should ensure that suitable arrangements are made;
- regular progress reports should be submitted via PFRS (as for full-time students);

- a Progress Log must be completed throughout the length of the course (see Section 4.5).

### **2.5 Health and safety and pastoral care** (see also 4.8 Student Support)

Part-time students may need to work outside regular hours. You should ensure that health and safety arrangements are adequate to cover this if necessary. Part-time students must have access to pastoral and advisory facilities. In practice much of this will be provided through the College.

### **2.6 Integration**

It is the University's intention that the part-time research course should be as much like a full-time course as possible. Please make every effort to involve part-time students in the academic and social life of the department. You should make arrangements for part-time students to be immersed in an active research environment including formal training in research; attendance at relevant seminars and conferences; participation in transferable skills training; and interaction with researchers in the same and cognate disciplines. For example, you might consider re-timetabling, where appropriate, so that part-time students can be integrated with full-time students; evening sessions and weekend conferences could be considered; and part-time students might be encouraged to supervise undergraduates, if appropriate.

## **3 ADMISSION**

### **3.1 Candidates**

A typical student might be employed in the University or in the Cambridge region with an employer who views a programme of part-time research as representing valuable staff development; or might be someone who works part-time or is home based for whatever reason, and wants to develop his/her research skills.

Overseas students who wish to study as a part-time student will require a visa to study in the UK. The International Student Office ([internationalstudents@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:internationalstudents@admin.cam.ac.uk)) can provide advice if required. You may receive also applications from an overseas candidate who is employed in the UK with a work permit, or who is an accompanying dependant of such a person. You will need to check that they have permission to remain in the UK for a sufficient time to complete the minimum research requirement before considering such applicants.

Academic standards are comparable to those for full-time students, The University standard minimum entry requirement is a 2:1 Honours Degree, but some part-time students may have quite different educational histories from full-time students and Degree Committees may agree to accept candidates with different but equivalent qualifications or experience. Degree Committees will need to make a case for 'non-standard' applicants in the usual way.

You will also need to agree your expectations as regards attendance requirements (see below).

### **3.2 Application procedure**

Part-time applicants apply using the online application form as with full-time applicants (<http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/how-do-i-apply>). Applicants are asked to provide a statement saying why they need to study part-time.

Instructions for referees include a request for a statement about the ability of the candidate to handle different responsibilities simultaneously. (Please note that references from a current line manager are not acceptable if the relationship does not include knowledge of academic ability.)

### 3.3 Interview

You must **interview all candidates** for part-time research degrees and a report of the interview should accompany the recommendation of admission by the Department. A pro forma for this purpose is available on the Student Registry website at <http://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/graduate-information-university-staff/information-degree-committees-and-departments/part-time/>, but as long as you retain the existing content you may adapt it as you wish to fit in with departmental styles/requirements.

Please note that the aims of the interview are to determine the academic suitability of the candidate and discuss the feasibility of the part-time route. Points that might be covered at interview include:

- Suitability of the project to part-time study, including currency of research;
- Management of time, and the extent to which the applicant would be able to manage their work and study;
- Pattern of attendance including arrangements for supervision and training;
- Proposed home location and whether this is close enough to allow the student to fulfil the attendance requirements and play a significant part in the academic life of the department;
- Fees and funding arrangements;
- Intellectual property ownership.

### 3.4 Arrangements with employers

Employed candidates are asked to provide a letter from their employer stating that they will be allowed time off, if necessary, to attend the University as required for the whole duration of their course. The letter should also state whether or not the employer will wish to discuss intellectual property rights in connection with the research (see next section).

If research for the degree is to be conducted in the workplace, candidates must agree this with their employer and with you; you should check that the supervisor will be granted reasonable access to the workplace on request.

### 3.5 Intellectual Property Rights

For employed candidates, arrangements for Intellectual Property Rights must be agreed in advance. It is best to discuss this at the interview if not before.

If the employer is not asserting any rights in the intellectual property created in the course of the research, a statement to this effect must be included in the letter at 3.4 above. We would generally expect this to be the case where the employer is neither paying for the time of study nor contributing to fees. In the absence of any claim on the IP by the employer, the position on IP is identical to that of a full-time PhD student (<http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/graduate-exam-information/submitted-and-examination/phd-msc-mlitt/research#ip>)

If the employer wishes to claim rights in the IP, the Research Operations Office (<http://www.research-operations.admin.cam.ac.uk/>) must be contacted in advance of the studies to negotiate an agreement which sets out the position on IP and, among other things, confirms the level of any sponsorship by the employer. While the employer may wish to retain ownership in any IP created by the student, the University will also want to ensure that regard is given to the IP rights in any contributions from the supervisor or other members of the Department, as well as its obligations to other external sponsors. The University will also wish to make sure that the employer cannot restrict the use or exploitation of the student's share in any collaborative project in which s/he takes part, nor prevent the submission of the thesis on grounds of confidentiality.

### 3.6 Financial arrangements

Candidates must produce a signed financial undertaking that they can cover the fees for the duration of their course. Living (maintenance) costs can be covered from various sources, including income from the student's employment or from a partner. Candidates should bear in mind that there will also be other expenses such as travel and short-term accommodation.

### 3.7 Students who are University of Cambridge employees

Candidates for a part-time course who have or expect to have an employment contract with the University of Cambridge may be eligible for a reduced University Composition fee. In order to qualify, they must:

- i. have a contract of at least 40 per cent full-time employment with the University of Cambridge (not including University Partner Institutions).
- ii. obtain a written statement of their Head of Department agreeing that they may undertake a research degree while continuing with their duties as an employee;
- iii. be able to demonstrate that their research will contribute directly to their paid employment
- iv. sign an undertaking that they understand and agree that if the employment contract comes to an end, then so will the staff rate and that they will be assessed for the remaining fees in the usual way.

The staff composition fee is currently set at one third the relevant Home composition fee regardless of the candidate's subject or other fee status.

### 3.8 Departmental recommendation

When recommending admission, you must attach to the application an employer's letter, a report of the interview, (see a recommended pro forma at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/ptstudents/>) and confirm that:

- there is a suitable supervisor willing to take this student on a part-time basis;
- substitute arrangements will be made available should that person not be able to supervise for the entire duration of the course;
- the topic of research can be completed on a part-time basis within 5 years;
- the topic can be reasonably expected to yield results which will make a contribution at an appropriate level to the field of study in five years' time;
- the normal Departmental attendance requirements (as agreed when opting in to the arrangements) will apply to this student, with a special case made if this is not to be so.

## 4 WORKING WITH PART-TIME STUDENTS

### 4.1 Attendance requirements

Part-time students should have *minimum* attendance requirements specified at the point of offer; progression will be conditional on these requirements having been met. Attendance in one block (e.g during the summer months) is not sufficient; students must attend and work on their studies throughout the year.

### 4.2 Induction

Where possible, part-time students should attend the same induction events as full-time students; however, if this is not possible alternative arrangements should be made.

### **4.3 Training requirements**

You will need to specify your expectations regarding attendance at research training and safety seminars, weekly institutional/group seminars, etc when applying to register for the scheme. Training may be 'front-loaded' or may be spread more evenly over the first two years. Please note that transferable skills training should be made available, pro rata, to part-time students.

You should specify at what times training sessions are available. We do not necessarily expect you to duplicate the provision for full-time students. You may specify that part-time students must attend day time training sessions; alternatively you may opt to reschedule existing sessions to evenings weekends or vacations so that part-time students are able to attend.

You should set out all attendance requirements in your Handbook, and subsequently monitor attendance by means of the Progress Log.

### **4.4 Handbook**

You should issue part-time students with a Departmental Handbook on arrival (see *Code of Practice for Research Students*). The information for part-time students may be contained within the general Departmental Handbook, or you may produce a separate handbook. It should contain information specifying the attendance and other requirements to be met and reasonable mutual expectations for the student and supervisor. While we recognise that the student-supervisor relationship cannot be mapped onto a simple template, it is clearly important for both parties to enter the partnership with a shared expectation of what is reasonable. The Handbook should also contain a timetable of progress and submission landmarks.

### **4.5 Progress reports**

Supervisors should prepare a termly report on their part-time students on PFRS.

### **4.6 Progression**

The Registration of part-time research students who begin their course not at first registered for any qualification will proceed exactly as for full-time students, but will not take place until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> term (see Section 5).

However, a part-time student should not automatically be permitted to progress from one year to the next. At the end of **each** twelve months (both before and after Registration) the student should meet the supervisor to consider a brief but formal progress paper. The supervisor's statement should confirm that the student is on target to complete within five years and that the topic remains viable as a contribution to learning.

### **4.7 Examination**

The examination process is exactly the same for part-time students as for full-time students. The University expects the mode of study to have no bearing on the standard of the thesis nor on the consideration of the outcome of an examination by the Examiners or by the Degree Committee.

### **4.8 Student support**

Part-time students should have available the same Departmental and University pastoral and academic support structures as are available to full-time students. Depending on the nature

of the difficulties, the student may refer to the Director of Postgraduate Education within their Faculty or Department or their Postgraduate Tutor.

## **5 PROGRESS MONITORING AND THESIS SUBMISSION**

### **5.1 The formal Registration exercise**

Registration for a part-time PhD should take place by the end of the fifth term if possible and certainly by the end of the seventh term. The assessment should take the same form as that for full-time students.

### **5.2 Early submission**

Students who wish to submit their thesis before the end of their minimum period of registration must apply for an exemption of terms. Further information is available on the Student Registry website <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/allowanceexemption-research-terms>.

Where exemption is sought for a previous qualification, the maximum number of terms for which exemption can be allowed is 3 terms (full-time) and 5 terms (part-time), at the recommendation of the Degree Committee.

Early submission from part-time students who have no grounds for an exemption but who have been able to devote more time to their research than expected under the scheme may be permitted providing the full fee for the five-year minimum research period has been paid.

### **5.3 Deferral of submission**

Students must submit their thesis no later than the end of their seventh year. In exceptional cases, students may apply to defer submission to a later date. Further information can be found on the Student Registry website at <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/extending-your-end-registration-date>

### **5.4 Leave to work away**

Students who need to leave Cambridge, or their current place of residence, to undertake fieldwork or research must apply for permission to do so in advance. Further details, including details of how to apply, can be found on the Student Registry website at <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/work-away-cambridge>.

It is possible that work away may, by its nature, be full-time research. The Degree Committee must decide whether a stint of work away will count as full-time or part-time, depending on the circumstances. In these cases the terms away will be counted as the equivalent of the following number of part-time research terms, as follows

<b>Time away from Cambridge</b>	<b>Number of part-time term</b>
Whole years	5 terms
1 term	2 terms
2 terms	3 terms

Degree Committees may agree to allow more than one change of mode in either direction (see 5.6, below) in these situations.

### **5.5 Intermission**

Part-time students may apply to intermit in the normal way. Further details, including details of how to apply, can be found on the Student Registry website at <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/intermission>

Unlike terms of leave to work away, for part-time research students terms lost through intermission always count as part-time terms. So a candidate who intermits for 3 university terms must continue for 3 part-time terms beyond the normal end-date of their part-time degree.

### **5.6 Transfers between part-time and full-time mode**

Transfer of registration mode is normally permitted *once only in either direction* (except as noted under 5.4 above) Transfers are not normally permitted a means of avoiding either the original submission deadline or the payment of full-time fees.

The following time conversion chart shows how to calculate terms for students considering a change of mode of study. Transfers can normally be made only at the end of a full twelve months (counting from the date of start of study):

- 12 months full-time (3 full-time terms) = 5 part-time terms
- 12 months part-time (3 part-time terms) = 2 full-time terms (rounding to nearest whole number)

Further details, including information on how to apply, can be found at the Student Registry website at <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/changing-your-mode-study>. Students would need to show that the impact of the change on their research has been fully assessed ..