

ROYAL
ACADEMY
OF
MUSIC



RESEARCH DEGREES CODE OF PRACTICE 2026-27

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.

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**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

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RESEARCH DEGREES CODE OF PRACTICE 26-27

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Royal Academy of Music has offered research degrees (MPhil and PhD) in Performance Practice and Composition since September 2000.

The development of the research degree programme is a significant part of the Academy's Strategic Plan and its institutional research strategy. The programme provides a collaborative environment for musicians to share and critique working practices, and a framework for developing long-term projects that will drive distinctive careers. Research degree students are invited to become part of an active research community and to take a lead in furthering practice-based approaches to research questions and processes.

The Academy benefits from a series of substantial research collections, ranging from instruments and early printed editions to archive and manuscript materials. These are readily accessible within the York Gate Collections, which has been open since February 2002. Apart from its own extensive library collections, Academy research students also have easy access to the British Library, and to the University of London library at Senate House.

KEY STAFF

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2. ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC REGULATIONS

This handbook includes all the key information you should need to undertake the MPhil/PhD programme. It does not, however, include full regulatory information; a link to the Academy's Full Regulations can be found on the [Student Information Hub](#).

3. DURATION OF STUDY

The minimum length of programme for the degrees of MPhil and PhD shall be two calendar years of full-time study, although for PhD the normal period is three calendar years. Following the minimum registration period, students may continue for a further year on writing-up status. Students who have not submitted their theses after the writing up year has elapsed will have to re-register at full fees for the following year. The maximum period of registration for any research degree is seven years.

4. REQUIREMENTS OF A PHD THESIS

- 4.1 The scope of the thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after three or at most four years of full-time study.
- 4.2 The thesis shall:
 - (a) consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree;¹
 - (b) and form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power (which includes artistic insight) and/or by progressing the understanding of the discipline.
 - (c) and be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument; and/or (for portfolio submissions) embody a coherent artistic statement;²
 - (d) and give a critical assessment of the relevant context(s), describe and discuss the method of research and its outcomes and indicate in what respects those outcomes appear to the candidate to advance the study of the subject and/or the development of the discipline; and, in so doing, demonstrate the ability to place the thesis in a wider context, objectivity, and the capacity for judgment in complex situations and autonomous work in that field;
 - (e) and be written in English;
 - (f) and not exceed 100,000 words;
 - (g) and include a full bibliography and references;

¹ The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the candidate and certified by the supervisor.

² A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the candidate alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of the thesis, but may be adapted to form an integral part of the thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of the thesis. Publications derived from the work in the thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of the thesis.

- (h) and demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented;
- (i) and be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph, or as recordings, public performances, journal articles etc).

4.3. **Thesis format**

- 4.3.1 A candidate may choose to submit the main outcomes of their research as a written thesis, which may be accompanied by illustrative material in the form of recorded and/or captured live performance.
- 4.3.2 Alternatively, candidates may choose to submit the main outcomes of their research in a practical format. In this case candidates may submit a portfolio of compositions or performances/recordings accompanied by a written commentary, components which together constitute the 'thesis'.

The portfolio should show:

- (a) For composers: artistic skill, insight and originality. The portfolio should include recordings of as many of the works as possible.
- (b) For performers: artistic skill, insight and technical authority. All performance material should be captured.

The written component should:

- (a) establish the research questions that govern the submission as a whole and also the manner of its presentation.
- (b) provide critical reflection on the creative processes involved in producing the portfolio and, as appropriate, analytical commentary that explores the research questions governing the submission as a whole.
- (c) place the work in relevant contexts.

The candidate should be able independently to interpret associated debates and theoretical positions, but it is not a requirement that this be explicit in the commentary. Where it is not, it may be evaluated as part of the viva examination.

- 4.3.3 All submissions require an adequate and approved form of retainable documentation (see section 7 below).
- 4.3.4 Students should complete the **PhD Write-up Form (S6)** toward the end of their write-up period to ensure that the requirements of the thesis are clearly evident in the written submission.

5. REQUIREMENTS OF AN MPhil THESIS

5.1 The scope of the thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after two or at most three years of full-time study.

5.2 **The thesis shall:**

- (a) consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree;³
- (b) and be either a record of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and shall provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly;
- (c) and be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument; and/or (for portfolio submissions) embody a coherent artistic statement;⁴
- (d) and give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its outcomes and include a discussion on those outcomes;
- (e) and be written in English;
- (f) and shall not exceed 60,000 words; the Academy may prescribe a lower number in certain subject areas, which shall be detailed in the relevant regulations;
- (g) and include a full bibliography and references;

5.3 **Thesis format**

5.3.1 A candidate may choose to submit the main outcomes of their research in a written format, which may be accompanied by illustrative material in the form of recorded and/or live performance.

5.3.2 Alternatively, candidates may choose to submit the main outcomes of their research in a practical format. In this case candidates submit a portfolio of compositions or performances/recordings accompanied by a written commentary, components which together constitute the 'thesis'.

The portfolio should show:

- (a) For composers: artistic skill, insight and originality. The portfolio should include recordings of as many of the works as possible.
- (b) For performers: artistic skill, insight and technical authority. All performance material should be captured.

The written component should:

³ The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the candidate and certified by the supervisor

⁴ A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the candidate alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of the thesis, but may be adapted to form an integral part of the thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of the thesis. Publications derived from the work in the thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of the thesis.

- (a) establish the research questions that govern the submission as a whole and also the manner of its presentation.
- (b) provide critical reflection on the creative processes involved in producing the portfolio and, as appropriate, analytical commentary that explores the research questions governing the submission as a whole.
- (c) place the work in relevant contexts.

The candidate should be able independently to interpret associated debates and theoretical positions, but it is not a requirement that this be explicit in the commentary. Where it is not, it may be evaluated as part of the viva examination.

5.3.3 All submissions require an adequate and approved form of retainable documentation (see section 7 below).

6. WORD AND PORTFOLIO GUIDE LENGTHS

Composers	Performers
PhD Thesis: Composition Portfolio consisting of a minimum of 1 hour of music and written commentary of 15-25,000 words.	PhD Thesis: Written dissertation of 50-70,000 words plus supporting material as required. OR Performance Portfolio of 60-120 minutes and written commentary of 15-25,000 words.
MPhil Thesis: Composition Portfolio of a minimum of 45 minutes of music plus written commentary of 10-20,000 words.	MPhil Thesis: Dissertation of 30-50,000 words plus supporting material as required. OR Performance Portfolio of 30-60 minutes plus written commentary of 10-20,000 words.

The balance of practical material and written text may lie anywhere between the outer limits indicated in the guidelines above. The format of the final submission will be determined by the student in consultation with the supervisor(s). If either your Commentary word count or your Portfolio length is more than 20% outside the guide lengths indicated above, please complete **Form S5** to gain approval from the Postgraduate Programmes Board. Note that 100K (PhD) and 60K (MPhil) are the maximum (and non-negotiable) word counts.

The word count **excludes**: all front matter (title page, declaration, abstract, acknowledgements, contents listings); the bibliography; all appendices, noting that appendices should only include materials which are not essential to the main arguments of the thesis but to which readers may refer if they wish.

The word count **includes** the preface, main text (including text within tables) and all footnotes. If the thesis requires extensive footnotes and thereby exceeds the word guide length (for example, by including multiple translated quotations or a wide range of primary sources), the candidate should complete Form S5.

7. SUBMISSION AND BINDING REQUIREMENTS

All theses (MPhil and PhD) must be prepared for submission according to the following:

7.1 Required content

These materials (each starting on a separate page) must be included in the thesis in the following order:

(a) Title Page

A title page that bears the title of the thesis, the candidate's full name as registered, the name of the institution (Royal Academy of Music) and the degree for which it is submitted.

(b) Declaration

A signed declaration that the work presented in the thesis is the candidate's own. For example: 'I hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are entirely my own and that the text clearly states where I have consulted the work of others.' Signed and Dated.

(c) Abstract

An abstract consisting of no more than 300 words. An extra copy of the abstract is required for publication in the RILM Abstracts of Music Literature. This should be provided on form **S3** (which is available on the Student Information Hub) and submitted to the Postgraduate Programmes and Research Administrator at the same time as submitting the thesis to Registry.

(d) Acknowledgements (optional)

If you would like to include an acknowledgements page, it should be placed here.

(e) Contents listings

i) A full table of contents for the written submission

ii) Where appropriate, a list of contents for the portfolio, with separate listings for scores, recordings, events on video etc.

iii) If practical, a list of figures

(f) Main text

This should be divided into chapters and sub-chapters as appropriate; avoid too many numbered sub-sections.

(g) Referencing and Bibliography

The written portion of the thesis should be fully referenced and a bibliography/discography included. You should employ the Chicago system of referencing; access to the full guide is available via the library catalogue.

(h) Quotations

Quotations should normally be in English in the main text with the original language provided in a footnote. Candidates should indicate if they are the translator, otherwise include details of both original and translated sources in their citation.

(i) Appendices

These should be clearly numbered; a second volume for appendices may be appropriate. Appendices should only include materials which are not essential to the main arguments of the thesis but to which readers may refer if they wish.

7.2 Layout

(a) Layout/font

Margins at the binding edge (LH edge) must be not less than 40 mm (1.5 inches) and other margins not less than 20 mm (0.75 inches). Double or one-and-a-half spacing should be used, except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used; note that existing spaces do not need doubling. A clear, standard typeface should be used throughout the main body of the text; it is recommended that a 12-point typeface is used for ease of reading.

(b) Pagination

All pages must be numbered in one continuous sequence, i.e. from the title page of the first volume to the last page of type, in Arabic numerals from 1 onwards. This sequence must include everything in the written submission. Formatting should be for printing on one side of the page only (i.e. with the wider margin on the LH side throughout).

(c) Chapters

All chapters should begin on a new page with titles centred. If sub-sections are used, titles should be left-justified.

(d) Examples

Ensure that all visual examples are reproduced in high quality and are large enough to be clearly legible. All examples must be incorporated into the main text and clearly numbered and labelled; place the example as close as possible to the relevant discussion in the text.

7.3 Presentation

7.3.1 *Submission for examination (including resubmission):*

The thesis is submitted electronically to Moodle for examination.

It should be submitted as a **single Zip folder** containing a series of PDFs (clearly labelled) as listed below. By saving your documents into a single Zip folder you ensure safe transfer of the thesis to the examiners.

The folder should include:

- (a) A PDF of the written commentary as outlined above, with audio and video material included as embedded links (which can be hosted on a separate site).
- (b) Separate PDFs for appendices (as many as required), including links as appropriate.
- (c) For performers, a further PDF with an embedded link to the portfolio, hosted on an external site; content listings can be reproduced from the commentary for clarity.

- (d) For composers, separate PDFs for each score (where applicable) and a further PDF with an embedded link to recordings hosted on an external site; content listings can be reproduced from the commentary for clarity.
- (e) Each candidate is required to bring a copy of the submission (digital or printed) to the oral examination, paginated in the same way as the copies previously submitted.

7.3.2 *Final submission*

Once examination is complete, the thesis is submitted in both electronic and hard copies (see 7.4 and 7.5c)

- (a) Format
 - i) Theses must adhere to the content and format outlined in sections 7.1 and 7.2 (above) and to the binding regulations detailed in section 7.4 (below).
 - ii) The written portion of the thesis must be presented in a permanent and legible form.
 - iii) Scores should be individually bound separate from the commentary.
 - iv) audio and video recordings should be saved onto a USB stick.
 - v) The thesis may be submitted as a website if this is the most suitable format, but it must be permanently captured on a USB stick.

[See section 7.3.1 above for more information]

- (b) Paper

Plain white paper must be used, of good quality and of sufficient opacity for normal reading. Normally A4 size paper (210 x 297 mm) should be used, printed on one side only, although candidates may apply to the Postgraduate Programmes Board to submit in A3 format where there is a demonstrable need, or where printing on both sides of the page would allow text and examples to be viewed in tandem.

7.4 **Binding**

All completed theses must be bound according to the following instructions:

- (a) All written portions of the thesis should be formally bound in medium blue cloth.
- (b) When binding portfolios:
 - i) USB keys should be included in secure pockets bound with the main text.
 - ii) For those including multiple scores/editions and USBs, all materials must be placed in an A4 file box. File boxes may be bound in medium blue cloth or purchased in medium blue.
- (c) Both written materials and file boxes require spines formatted as follows (with a spine attached to file boxes purchased in blue):
 - i) Spines should be lettered in gold with Degree, Year, and Surname and Initials (in that order, bottom to top), with letters 16 or 18 point (.25 inch)
 - ii) If bound in two volumes, spines should indicate this clearly e.g. Vol. 1 and Vol. 2

iii) The date on the copies of theses submitted for examination in November and December should be that of the following year

- (d) Final submission requires one hard-bound and one soft-bound copy of the thesis. The hard-bound copy must have the pages sewn or be mechanically fixed in a permanent manner; soft-bound theses should have the pages glued in.
- (e) For website submissions, the USB key should be stored in a box that allows for regulation binding and spine.

7.5 Copies for submission

Copies of the thesis must be submitted as detailed below, accompanied by forms S3 and S4, and including form S5 where relevant (see 7.6 below):

- (a) Initial submission for examination:

An electronic copy (a series of PDFs in a single Zip folder) must be submitted to Moodle as detailed above. Please note that examiners have the right to request a hard copy of the thesis at this stage; you will be informed if this is the case.

- (b) Resubmission following corrections:

One electronic copy (a series of PDFs in a single Zip folder) of the relevant materials must be emailed to the Postgraduate Programmes and Research Administrator, who will forward it either to examiners or, in the case of minor corrections, to the nominated member of staff. You will be notified when the examiners confirm that corrections have been completed satisfactorily, at which point you can prepare your final submission.

- (c) Final submission:

Three complete sets of materials must be submitted to the **Registry** accompanied by form **S10** (see below):

- i) one with a hard-bound copy of the written portion of the thesis
- ii) one with a soft-bound copy of the written portion of the thesis
- iii) one complete electronic (PDF) copy (including all audio/video materials) emailed to **TReid@ram.ac.uk**

The hard-bound copy will be deposited in the Academy library (and will be the archival copy) and the soft-bound copy will be kept in the Academy's research department and may be used to make a microfilm copy if requested. **Please note you will be unable to graduate until the Academy has received copies in all three required formats.**

If you are sending the hard copies by post, please ensure that the parcel is clearly labelled and addressed to the Registry.

7.6 Administration of submission

All forms are available from the Student Information Hub's [Programme Information](#) page.

The following forms should be returned:

One month in advance of submission

- (a) Form **S1a** (MPhil) or **S1b** (PhD): Entry form, to initiate the appointment of examiners

Once the candidate has submitted the entry form, their thesis must be submitted for examination within 18 months (or a shorter period as stipulated by the Academy). If this requirement is not met, the entry will be cancelled unless for special reasons the candidate requests an extension or deferral (guidance and form available on the [Student Information Hub](#)).

- (b) Form **S6**: PhD Write-up Form

An internal guidance document for students and supervisors, to be circulated following the student's successful transfer from MPhil to PhD.

Complete this form during your final write-up period to ensure that the nature and goals of your research are clearly articulated and satisfy the requirements of a PhD thesis.

Please note – the appointment of examiners will not proceed without the S6 form.

At the point of submission:

- (c) Form **S3**: Abstract of Thesis (max. 300 words).
- (d) Form **S4**: Declaration of Word Count, signed by the candidate and the supervisor. Where a candidate wishes to exceed the guide lengths for a thesis specified in these Regulations, the candidate must complete form **S5** (see below) for approval by the Postgraduate Programmes Board (prior to completing S4).
- (e) Form **S5**: Please complete this form if either your Commentary word count or your Portfolio length is more than 20% outside the guide lengths indicated above. Note that 100K (PhD) and 60K (MPhil) are the maximum (and non-negotiable) word counts.

Once the thesis (including corrections) is complete:

- (f) Form **S10**: Final submission; this should be included with final submission of the completed thesis.

8. SUBMISSION REGULATIONS

- 8.1 The work in the thesis submitted by the candidate must be their own and submission of a thesis for examination for the MPhil or PhD degree will be regarded as a declaration of this fact.
- 8.2 All work submitted as part of the requirements for any examination of the University of London must be expressed in the candidate's own words and incorporate their own ideas and judgments. Plagiarism is:

the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as though they were the candidate's own and is an examination offence. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished work of another must always be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and a full reference to their source must be provided in the proper form. A series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Equally, if another person's ideas or judgments are summarised, the candidate must refer to that person in their text, and include the work to which reference is made in the bibliography.

- 8.3 Allegations of misconduct will be considered under the Academy's academic malpractice regulations. These include but are not limited to:
- i) plagiarism;
 - ii) deliberate attempts to represent falsely or unfairly the ideas or work of others;
 - iii) the invention or fabrication of data;
 - iv) the submission of work commissioned from another person.
- 8.4 A candidate may submit the results of work done in conjunction with their supervisor and/or with fellow research workers, provided that the candidate states clearly their own personal share in the investigation and that the statement is certified by the supervisor.
- 8.5 The copyright of the thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author. The Academy reserves the right to make a digital copy of the thesis for the purposes of archiving as substitution of the original copy.
- 8.6 Applications by candidates for restriction of access to the thesis must be supported by the candidate's supervisor and will be considered by the Postgraduate Programmes Board on a case-by-case basis. A clear application must be made, the reasons will be minuted, and a log of reasons will be maintained to facilitate the development of case law.
- 8.7 The decision to submit a thesis in any particular form rests with the candidate alone.
- 8.8 Students must be registered at the Academy in order to submit their thesis.
- 8.9 If a candidate has entered the examination for the MPhil or PhD degree, but has not settled or made acceptable arrangements to settle any fees outstanding, no report will be made on the result of the examination until it has been certified that payment has been made in full.

9. THE VIVA PANEL

- 9.1 PhD and MPhil theses are assessed by two examiners, both of whom have relevant expertise and neither of whom will have a close connection with the candidate or their work. One of the examiners will usually be a member of Academy staff or from the University of London, the other will be external to both. Two external examiners will be used if the candidate is a member of staff. At least one of the examiners for each candidate shall, whenever practicable, have had experience in examining for the MPhil/PhD degree of the University of London.
- 9.2 The candidate's supervisor will approach and nominate examiners and complete all associated documentation. Nominations for examiners will be made to the Postgraduate Programmes Board for approval, subject to confirmation by the Standing Committee of Academic Board. The Postgraduate Programmes and Research Administrator will write to confirm the appointment of the examiners, allowing an opportunity to declare any connections not previously disclosed.
- 9.3 The Postgraduate Programmes Board will also appoint an independent chair for the examination, drawn from a pool of experienced Academy staff. Their role is to assist in the running of the examination and to advise the examiners on matters of procedure, but they do not take part in the examination process itself. The independent chair will not normally have detailed knowledge of the thesis being examined.

- 9.4 The supervisor cannot be an examiner, but is invited to attend the viva as an observer unless the candidate indicates otherwise on their entry form. The supervisor does not have the right to participate in the examination of the candidate but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners.
- 9.5 Other than the attendees listed above, all viva examinations are held in private.

10. CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS

- 10.1 All candidates are required to attend a viva examination conducted by the two appointed examiners (and in the presence of an independent chair and, where agreed, their supervisor). Candidates must bring a copy of their thesis with them to the viva examination, paginated in the same way as the copy submitted to the Academy.
- 10.2 The examiners prepare independent preliminary written reports on the thesis to assist in the viva examination using the Report Form provided; these are submitted to the Postgraduate Programmes and Research Administrator at least one week in advance of the oral examination, and are not given to candidates except in the case of their making an appeal against an examination decision, or unless indicated by the examiners. Apart from the two examiners, **only the independent chair may see the reports prior to the viva.**
- 10.3 Under usual circumstances, examiners will meet before the viva to discuss their assessment of the thesis and prepare questions for the viva. The independent chair will be present at this discussion at the request of the examiners. The candidate will be invited to join the examiners to conduct the viva. Once the examiners have completed their questioning, the candidate will be asked to leave the room whilst the outcome of the examination is agreed (again, this can be in the presence of the independent chair). The examiners may, at their discretion, consult the supervisor before finalising their decision. Usually the candidate will then return to hear the final outcome.
- 10.4 After the viva the examiners complete form **R1b** and make a final joint report, which is then submitted to the Academy. The candidate is formally notified of the result of the examination by the Postgraduate Programmes and Research Administrator, who will send them a copy of the final report.
- 10.5 Depending on the outcome of the examination (see section 11 below), the candidate will either prepare the thesis for final submission or undertake any required corrections/changes in preparation for resubmission (see section 7.4 above.)
- 10.6 Once the examination process is complete (and corrections/changes have been approved), the result is ratified at the next available Exam Board. The Academy will arrange for the degree to be awarded by the University of London, who will produce the certificate.
- 10.7 All copies of the final thesis must be submitted to the **Registry** along with form **S10**, prior to Graduation.
- 10.8 Students are encouraged to submit an abstract of their thesis to RILM abstracts of music literature.

11. OUTCOMES OF THE EXAMINATION

- 11.1 The following options are open to examiners in determining the result of an MPhil or PhD examination as follows:

- (a) if the thesis fulfils the criteria set out in these regulations, and the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination for the MPhil or PhD degree.
- (b) if the thesis otherwise fulfils the criteria but requires minor amendments and if the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the candidate to make amendments specified by them within **three months** of the date of their final joint report. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the Postgraduate Programmes and Research Administrator, who will send it to the examiners (or to one or other of them as agreed at the viva) for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory. The amendments required will not make substantial changes to the arguments or conclusions of the thesis. Amendments in this category will usually be typographical in nature, but may also include minor changes to the text to improve or clarify explanations or descriptions.
- (c) if the thesis otherwise fulfils the criteria but requires more substantial amendments than indicated at (b), above, and if the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the candidate to make amendments specified by them within **six months** of the date of their final joint report. The amendments required may include the re-writing or re-structuring of significant parts of the thesis and the clarification of arguments. The amended thesis shall be submitted to both of the examiners for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
- (d) if the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present their thesis in a revised form within **18 months** for PhD examinations, **12 months** for MPhil examinations. Examiners shall not, however, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of their thesis, a candidate who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
- (e) if the thesis satisfies the criteria for the degree, but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding **18 months** for PhD examinations, and **12 months** for MPhil examinations.
- (f) For MPhil examinations:

the examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination. The examiners shall not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination.

For PhD examinations:

if, after completion of the examination including the oral examination or re-examination for the PhD degree, the examiners determine that a candidate has not reached the standard required for the award of the degree nor for the re-presentation of the thesis in a revised form for that degree, they shall consider whether the thesis does or might be able to satisfy the criteria for the award of the MPhil degree. If so, the examiners shall submit a report which demonstrates either (a) how the criteria for the MPhil degree are satisfied, or (b) what action would need to be taken in order for these criteria to be satisfied. Thereafter the following conditions and procedures will apply:

Either

- (i) the candidate will be informed that they have been unsuccessful at the examination for the PhD degree, but that the examiners have indicated that they have reached the standard required for the award of the MPhil degree (with or without minor amendments). The candidate must indicate within two months if they wish to accept this option. Any minor

amendments required shall be made within **three months** of the date of the final joint report. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the Postgraduate Programmes and Research Administrator who will send it to the examiners (or one or other as agreed by them) for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.

- (ii) a candidate who indicates that they wish to be considered for the award of the MPhil degree under this Regulation will not be required to submit the thesis, as may be required under the Regulations for the MPhil degree, or to undergo an oral examination, but will be required to fulfil the requirements for the MPhil examination in all other respects.
- (iii) a candidate who has reached the standard for the award of the MPhil degree who does not indicate that they wish to be considered for the award of that degree within the period given in paragraph (i) above will be informed that they have failed to satisfy the examiners for the PhD degree and that they may no longer be considered for the award of the MPhil degree.

Or

- (iv) if the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to enter the examination for the MPhil degree and re-present their thesis in a revised form within **12 months**. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of their thesis, a candidate who under these regulations has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
- (v) The examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination. The examiners shall not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination.

- 11.2 If the examiners are unable to reach agreement, their reports shall be referred to the Chair of the Examination Board, who shall determine the action to be taken.
- 11.3 A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners will not be permitted to re-enter for the examination.
- 11.4 All matters relating to the examination must be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of previously unpublished material contained in a candidate's thesis until such time as any restrictions on access to the thesis, which have been granted by the Academy, are removed.

12. PROGRESSION AND TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS

Each student's progress is monitored throughout their period of study and students are discussed at each of the Postgraduate Programme Board meetings.

There are two formal assessment hurdles prior to the final submission of the thesis, with requirements detailed below. Students will initially be registered for the degree of MPhil and must pass an End of Year One assessment in order to progress to Year Two of the programme. The student can then undertake a transfer assessment in order to progress from the MPhil to the PhD degree. If the transfer is successful, the PhD will be registered from the initial registration date of the MPhil, and the MPhil registration will lapse.

END OF YEAR 1 ASSESSMENT (PROGRESSION TO YEAR 2)

A student's progress is assessed at the end of the first year of study and they must pass this assessment in order to progress. The assessment will normally take place at the end of the summer term. The panel will consist of the student's Principal Supervisor, the Head of Postgraduate Programmes, and one other assessor (two where the Head of Postgraduate Programmes is the Principal Supervisor).

Requirements

- (a) Students are required to demonstrate a level of critical and artistic engagement (as appropriate to the orientation of the project as a whole) that indicates an ability to complete either MPhil or PhD degrees within the appropriate time frame.
- (b) This will be assessed through:
 - a publicly presented research paper or lecture recital of c.45 minutes
 - an accompanying written submission– either a script of the presentation or, if presenting from notes, a full-prose commentary capturing the content of the presentation. The word count (there is no prescribed length) will depend on how spoken content is balanced with musical examples or other illustrative materials in the presentation, although c.5000-7000 is typical.

The submission should be clearly written and presented and include footnotes and a bibliography in Chicago style. It should be submitted to Moodle before the presentation (this can be immediately before) along with any slides, links to audio-visual materials or relevant scores.
 - a discussion with the assessment panel following the presentation
- (c) Students are not expected to give an overview of their complete thesis at this stage, but rather to show critical engagement with one aspect of their research (composers are expected to explore in some detail at least one composition completed during the year).
- (d) Following the assessment, students will receive a short report from the panel. The assessment may be deemed to have:
 - Passed
 - Passed subject to the submission of additional materials
 - Failed, after which one further attempt at transfer is permitted
- (e) The Postgraduate Programmes Board will decide on the student's progression, subject to the panel's report.

TRANSFER ASSESSMENT (INCLUDING PROGRESSION TO YEAR 3)

In order to be eligible for the PhD research degree students must transfer from MPhil to PhD status, normally at the end of the second year of the programme. Students are not able to progress into year three of the programme until they have passed transfer (although progression will not normally be delayed by the requirement to submit further materials following an otherwise successful assessment).

Transfer requires the submission of a selection of materials relating to the final thesis (see below) and a viva.

The assessment panel will include an independent internal assessor alongside the Principal Supervisor, the Head of Postgraduate Programmes and/or the Senior Postgraduate Tutor (or their nominated representatives).

Requirements

- (a) Students are required to demonstrate a level of critical and artistic engagement (as appropriate to the orientation of the project as a whole) that is considered by the assessment panel to be commensurate with expectations of work at PhD level; the transfer assessment (submission and viva) should indicate an ability to complete the PhD degree after one further year of full-time study and a write-up period of up to one year.
- (b) Submission of transfer materials should be to Moodle by the date agreed with the Programme Tutor. (See section 7.2 for advice on presenting the written portion of the submission.) The Portfolio and/or illustrative audio-visual materials (as appropriate) should be included as links, and scores should be provided as separate PDFs. The written submission should be fully referenced using Chicago style and include a bibliography.
- (c) Submission requirements for Performers:
 - An abstract (300-500 words) presenting an overall summary of the proposed thesis and including a working title
 - A detailed plan of the chapters of the proposed thesis, including summaries of the proposed content of principal components
 - A bibliography
 - Depending on the intended model for the final thesis:

either

A full draft of at least one chapter, or two part-chapters (c. 20,000 words) intended for the thesis, including some fully-worked examples of core research materials

or

A performance portfolio (normally c. 30-45 minutes) accompanied by a full draft of at least one chapter or two part-chapters (c. 8,000 words) intended for the commentary that together demonstrate the critical and artistic perspective of the thesis as a whole. (Some compensation between the alternative requirements above may be made where appropriate).

- (d) Submission requirements for Composers:
 - An abstract (300-500 words) presenting an overall summary of the proposed thesis and including a working title
 - A portfolio of at least 30 minutes of music (with recordings where possible)
 - A written commentary on the portfolio, including a full draft of at least one chapter or two part-chapters (c. 8,000 words). This should normally include detailed reflection on at least one of the works in the portfolio.
 - A detailed plan for the remaining elements of the portfolio, including timings and summaries of how each piece will relate to the written component of the thesis.
 - A bibliography

- (e) Following the assessment, the student may be deemed to have:
- Passed
 - Passed subject to the submission of additional materials
 - Failed, after which one further attempt at transfer is permitted
- (f) The independent internal assessor or chair will submit a short report following the viva, which will be passed to the Postgraduate Programmes Board. The final decision concerning the outcome of the transfer lies with the Board.

13. SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS

Principal Supervisor

Each student is allocated a principal supervisor, who is approved and appointed by the Academy's Postgraduate Programmes Board and who will be a member of the Academy's staff with recognised experience of doctoral study and supervision practices. They are responsible for reporting on the student's progress and for overseeing the course of the student's study, and thus should have proven expertise in the student's area of research.

Additional Supervisor(s)

The Academy's Postgraduate Programmes Board may also allocate each student a subsidiary supervisor (who may be a member of the Academy or of another institution). The student should consult with the Head of Postgraduate Programmes about other supervisors to whom they might wish to refer (including practical supervisors). It is the student's responsibility to keep a record of how many supervisions they have with subsidiary supervisors, and to report on this to the Head of Postgraduate Programmes.

Appointment of Supervisors

Principal and subsidiary supervisors will be nominated after discussions between Head of Postgraduate Programmes, the individual student and the proposed supervisors (principal and subsidiary). Nominations will be discussed by the Postgraduate Programmes Board and formally appointed thereafter.

GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISION (SUPERVISORS AND CANDIDATES)

Responsibilities of Supervisors

- (a) at the commencement of studentship
- discussing with the student the aims, scope and presentation of the thesis
 - clarifying the student's and the supervisor's respective expectations of supervision and of the operation of the supervisory team. Agreement should be reached on expectations pertaining to frequency of contact (normally not less than once a fortnight), recognising that there are different needs at different stages of the thesis
 - proposing a realistic timetable to meet the requirements of the course over 3-4 years, including recognition of End of Year and Transfer requirements

- establishing expectations of students' attendance at research skills training; identifying any individual training requirements, particularly where the student has not already undergone research skills training
 - identifying any English-as-a-second-language student who needs assistance in communicating orally or in writing in English; advising the student of the need for this assistance; referring the student for appropriate academic skills assistance
 - identifying any material resources necessary to complete the thesis
 - discussing any directed reading/listening considered necessary
 - establishing expectations of students' involvement in Research Student Seminars and Academy research events
- (b) during the studentship
- initiating and holding frequent and adequate discussions with the student on the student's research programme. Supervisor and student are jointly responsible for initiating such discussions, and there should normally be contact between the supervisor and the student at least once each fortnight even if a formal meeting is not always possible
 - encouraging the student to be actively engaged in the research course in a manner likely to produce significant materials by the time of End of Year assessments, in preparation for the Transfer examination and by the time the thesis is due to be submitted; or advising the student in writing that progress is unsatisfactory and identifying improvements necessary for continuation of candidature
 - ensuring that any major decisions about the student's research programme made in conversation between the supervisor and the student, or any major variations to agreed expectations and guidelines, are shared with the Programme Tutor who will report the decisions to the Postgraduate Programmes Board
 - in consultation with the Head of Programmes, arranging and attending End of Year and Transfer examinations
 - encouraging the student to participate in the research environment of the Academy through involvement with Research Student Seminars and research events; encouraging students to participate in external research events/conferences
 - requiring work (writing/performance/composition) from the student on a pre-arranged and agreed schedule; reviewing drafts of submissions for assessments; reviewing drafts of the thesis and providing written and/or verbal comments within a mutually agreed period; providing written and/or verbal comments on the completed thesis before it is submitted for examination
 - in consultation with the Head of Programme, and after giving the student an opportunity to comment on possible examiners for the thesis, nominating examiners to the Postgraduate Programmes Board
 - arranging the student's final Viva by liaising with the student and examiners, and informing the Postgraduate Programmes and Research Administrator of the agreed oral examination date
 - in consultation with the Head of Programme, advising the student on any examiners' recommendations for amendments to the thesis and advising the student during the revision process for re-submission and re-examination

- advising and negotiating with the student in respect of any publication or joint publication likely to arise during or on the basis of the research project, ensuring appropriate and adequate recognition of the student's and the supervisor's contribution to the publication
- advising the student on career options, and on any prospective publications arising from the final thesis

Responsibilities of Students

- becoming familiar with the *Research Degrees Code of Practice*
- initiating (when required) and participating in frequent and adequate discussions with the supervisor(s) during the research programme. Supervisors and students are jointly responsible for initiating such discussions, and there should normally be contact between the supervisor(s) and the student at least once a fortnight even if a formal meeting is not always possible. Contact should be maintained during any period of fieldwork
- establishing with your supervisor a realistic timetable to meet the End of Year and Transfer requirements over 3-4 years; understanding expected progress at each stage of the course
- attending research skills training as agreed with your supervisor
- in discussion with your supervisor, identifying any individual training requirements (including any English Language support), any external supervisory needs, and any material requirements necessary for you to complete your thesis
- participating in the research environment of the RAM through involvement with Research Student Seminars and research events; attending and participating in relevant external events/conferences
- actively engaging in the programme in a manner likely to produce significant results by the time of the end of year assessments, transfer examination and by the time the thesis is due to be submitted. This should include submitting written work to the supervisor in accordance with a pre-arranged and agreed schedule
- engaging with the programme on a full-time basis and reporting to your supervisor and Tutor any significant change around other commitments likely to affect the progress of the research course, including the need for a period of suspension of studentship or attendance
- negotiating with your supervisor(s) in respect of any publication or joint publication likely to arise during or on the basis of the research project, to ensure appropriate and adequate recognition of the student's and the supervisor's contribution to the publication
- producing the final copies of the thesis for the examiners, and ensuring that its content and standard of presentation is in accordance with University of London requirements.
- Following completion of the examination process, providing final PDF and bound copies of the thesis to the Academy as detailed in 7.5(c)

14. SEMINAR ARRANGEMENTS

Seminars for MPhil/PhD students are co-ordinated by the Programme Tutor and take place on an approximately fortnightly basis during term time. All research degree students are required to attend these and are expected to present their work a number of times during their studies. The Academy runs its own internal Research Skills Seminar series which is available to research students where appropriate, and

additional sessions for MPhil/PhD composers are organised by the Head of Composition. MPhil/PhD performers are allowed to take part in faculty classes and activities (performance classes, masterclasses etc.) only at the discretion of the Head of Study concerned; they are not normally allowed to participate in Academy competitions.

15. STUDENT REPRESENTATION & APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

Research degree students at the Academy are represented on the institution's committees, including the Postgraduate Programmes Board and the Student-Staff Liaison Committee. They are also invited to fill in the Academy's institutional and programme feedback forms. The research degree programme will be monitored and reviewed as part of the Academy's internal processes of review set down in the Quality Assurance Procedures. Students also have the opportunity to speak to their Tutor for issues of academic and/or pastoral concern.

If a student wishes to appeal against a decision made at the End of Year One or Transfer assessments, they should use the Academy's appeal procedures as laid down in the institution's Academic Regulations. If they wish to appeal against the decision at the final examination there is an approved Research Degrees Appeals Procedure and set of Guidelines, both of which are detailed in section 17 below.

16. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OR DEFERRAL

During the programme of study it is sometimes necessary for a student to take time out of the programme for professional or health reasons. Students should discuss this with the Programme Tutor and their supervisor and complete an 'Interruption of Studies' form which is available on the [Student Information Hub](#).

If a student wishes to take time out of their writing-up year or if for any reason their final submission will be delayed, they should request an extension or deferral. Please see the guidelines on the [Student Information Hub](#) for further information on making applications.

17. RESEARCH DEGREES APPEALS PROCEDURE

This procedure is for the consideration of appeals by candidates for research degrees at the Royal Academy of Music and applies to candidates for whom the result of the examination was that the degree of either MPhil/PhD was not awarded.

The appeal submission should be submitted using the [Academic Appeals Form](#), along with any supporting evidence. The appeal will be referred to the Appeals Screening Panel for consideration and if there are judged to be adequate prima facie grounds for appeal, copies of the appeal submission will then be sent to the examiners, who will be asked whether they wish to make a written response to the submission, although there is no requirement for them to do so. At the same time, the examiners will be invited to attend a meeting of the Academic Appeals Committee. The Academic Appeals Committee will then be convened by the Academic Quality Officer in accordance with the Academic Appeals procedure.

Candidates may also appeal against the outcomes of transfer viva voce assessments, in accordance with the Academic Appeals Regulations, provided that there are appropriate grounds to do so, as judged by the Appeals Screening Panel.

1 Grounds for Appeal

Candidates may appeal on one of the following grounds:

- (a) That a candidate's performance at the oral examination was affected by extenuating circumstances which the examiners were not aware of when making their decision and that this had produced an unfair result.
- (b) That there is evidence of prejudice, bias, or of inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners such that the result of the examination should not be allowed to stand.
- (c) That there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination or an administrative error of such a nature to have caused reasonable doubt as to whether the result of the examination would have been the same had they not occurred.
- (d) Any appeal on the grounds of the above should be addressed in writing, along with any relevant supporting evidence, to the Academic Quality Officer and must be received within 30 days of the date of notification to the candidate of the result of the examination.
- (e) If the appeal does not fall within the remit of this procedure, inadequate grounds for appeal are provided, defective documentation is submitted or if the appeal is received after the 30-day deadline, then the appeal will be automatically dismissed without hearing. The Academic Quality Officer will advise the candidate of this before the appeal is dismissed.

2 Composition of the Research Degrees Appeals Committee

- the Principal, who shall be Chair of the Appeal Committee (or their nominated Deputy)
- two senior academic members of staff
- the President of the Student's Union, or a student, nominated by the President of the Students' Union
- a member of the Academic Secretariat will be in attendance as clerk of the committee

3 Attendees

The candidate will be invited to attend the Academic Appeals Committee and has the right to be accompanied by a person of their choice, although practicing solicitors are not normally permitted to participate in academic conduct processes. The name of this person should be forwarded to the Academic Quality Officer at least two working days before the meeting.

The examiners will be invited to attend the Academic Appeals Committee.

The committee will normally conduct the hearing in the presence of the candidate and the examiners. All parties have the right to be present throughout the meeting until the time when the committee retires to consider its findings.

The candidate may call witnesses, with the permission of the Chair of the Committee and their names must be forwarded to the Academic Quality Officer at least five working days before the day of the meeting.

4 Research Degrees Appeals Committee Proceedings:

- (a) The committee will be provided with copies of the following:
 - final reports and the preliminary independent reports of the examiners.

- Any written submissions which either the candidate or the examiners wish to submit (this should be submitted to the Academic Quality Officer at least two working days before the meeting).
- (b) The candidate will address the committee first, outlining any relevant evidence as appropriate. They may call witnesses, if this is appropriate. The examiners will then be invited to address the committee, in response to the candidate's statement.
- (c) Other relevant documentation will be circulated as necessary.
- (d) Any questions raised by the candidate or the examiners will be directed through the chair. The committee may ask either the candidate or the examiners questions at any time during proceedings.
- (e) The Appeals Committee shall make one of the following decisions:
- To reject the appeal so that the result of the original examination shall stand; or
 - To request that an alternative examination is arranged with new examiners who were not part of the original examination or involved in the appeal.
- (f) The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and will be communicated to the candidate in writing within 5 working days of the meeting.

5 Guidelines for Candidates

The candidate must prove their case to satisfy the Appeals Committee on the balance of probabilities that the complaint should be upheld.

The Committee must be satisfied that the error or defect is such that the examiners' decision should not be allowed to stand.

The grounds of appeal must be clearly set out in accordance with paragraph 1 above (Regulation RD11.1) and must be supported by appropriate evidence. Any supporting evidence must be sufficiently clear and precise so that if its truth or accuracy is accepted by the Committee, it would offer a reasonable prospect of the appeal being allowed.

The Procedure detailed above completes the University's consideration of the matter. Attention is, however, drawn to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE).

The OIAHE provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints about a final decision of a University's disciplinary or appeal body.

Full details of the OIAHE and how to make a complaint are available from the Academic Quality Officer, or on the website of the OIAHE <http://oiahe.org.uk>.