Policy on Writing Up / Examination Only Research Students

Introduction

1. The purpose of “writing up” status is that, as students who have finished the research part of their programme and are now engaged in writing up the results have lower levels of use of College facilities, the fee should reflect their actual use of Birkbeck facilities. In particular students on writing up status would normally have less use for library facilities and are likely to need only minimal supervision, to clarify minor points and gain advice on the drafting of the results. Examination Only status is for those students who have submitted their thesis for examination, and who have no further use for the facilities of the College other than for the examination itself, (although they may subsequently be required to make minor or major corrections to the thesis and may on an individual basis be granted further access to College facilities).

2. Students only move to write up status once the supervisor is satisfied that they have completed the research element of their programme; there is no automatic right to move to write up status after a given length of time on fully enrolled status.

Procedure

3. The College Code of Practice for Postgraduate Training and Research for Research Degrees currently states that:

“40. It is the responsibility of Departments to monitor the progress of their research students, to ensure that they are progressing satisfactorily towards completion, normally within 4 years (full-time) or 7 years (part-time).

Normal practice is for a full time research programme to last for 3 years, with one further year to "write up", and for part time programmes to last for 5 years, with two further years to "write up".

4. A student's move to writing up status is at the discretion of the supervisor, and is dependent on progress, rather than on the time elapsed since beginning the programme. The College's responsibilities in terms of supervision, access to facilities etc are laid out in the Code of Practice; where students are unable to access supervision or facilities then they should consider applying for an approved break in study.

5. Students moving to write up status should normally be given a maximum of one year (full time) and two years (part-time) to move to submission. In exceptional circumstances this can be extended by a further year, at the request of the relevant Department and on the approval from the Pro-Vice Master (Research). A case must be made that the student is making adequate progress in completing their thesis and that their research remains current. In addition, students who are unable for medical or other reasons to continue writing their thesis up may take a break in study, in line with the College policies on breaks in study, for up to two years.

6. Where an application for an extension of writing up status is rejected then the student will normally be considered to have made insufficient academic progress and will have their registration terminated. Students should therefore be aware that, if they do not complete the writing up phase of their research in a timely fashion, they are at risk of being unable to submit their thesis.

7. Where a Department considers that a student is making insufficient progress in writing up their thesis they can, at any time, institute the College's Policy and Procedure for the Termination of a Students' Registration.

Academic Board
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