



# Strathclyde Business School PhD Handbook

**2016/17**



## **Welcome to Strathclyde Business School (SBS)**

I am delighted to welcome you to the SBS PhD programme, which I hope will prove to be one of the most exciting, challenging, and rewarding experiences of your life.

In choosing SBS, you have joined a strong and diverse community of about 120 research academics and 240 research students, who are located across seven departments that span all the disciplines of business. Many of our researchers are recognised internationally for their cutting edge work, which aims to be both theory-driven and relevant to policy and practice. In the most recent national research assessment exercise (REF 2014), SBS was recognised as the top business school in Scotland, and first amongst UK Business Schools for the research environment we foster. We also ranked third in the UK for the demonstrable impact that our research has in the business world. SBS is the first business school in Scotland, and one of only 73 in the world to be triple accredited (AMBA, AACSB and EQUIS) – an indicator of the quality of our international scope and standing not only in research, but also in teaching and engagement with the wider business community.

Strathclyde University is committed to enacting its mission to be ‘A place of useful learning’ through all its activities, including its support for postgraduate researchers such as yourself. The University offers a comprehensive range of information services to facilitate your progress and development. We actively support equality of opportunity in the learning, teaching, research and working environments, and we value the diversity of our students by encouraging a climate of mutual respect and positive relations between people ([www.strath.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/equalityinformationforstudents/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/equalityinformationforstudents/)). We also seek to provide an inclusive learning and working environment for disabled people ([www.strath.ac.uk/disabilityservice/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/disabilityservice/)).

This Handbook is intended to give you an overview of the PhD process at Strathclyde, but I would also encourage you to browse the University’s webpages if you have particular information needs.

Best wishes for your studies. I look forward to meeting you along the way.

Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research)  
September 2016

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## WHO'S WHO?

As you proceed with your studies, your first point of inquiry will always be your supervisors. In addition, each department has a Director of Postgraduate Research who will facilitate and monitor your performance throughout your degree. The current Directors are:

<b>Department</b>	<b>Director of Postgraduate Research</b>
Accounting and Finance	Dr Devraj Basu
Economics	Dr Alex Dickson
Human Resource Management	Prof Ian Cunningham
Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship	Dr Niall MacKenzie
Management Science	Prof Alec Morton
Marketing	Dr Matthew Alexander
Strategy & Organisation	Prof Peter McKiernan

## USEFUL RESOURCES

**Neptune** - [www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/neptune](http://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/neptune)

Neptune is the online database used for all Postgraduate Research students in the Business School. Once you register for your degree, your details will automatically appear in Neptune and information relating to your progress will be stored in this database. Login to Neptune requires your DS user ID and password.

**SBS Research Methodology Training webpage** – [www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/](http://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/)

This page provides information about research training opportunities, news, and events relevant to postgraduate research students in the Business School, as well as links to a variety of other resources that you may find helpful.

**Policy and Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes** accessible from [www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/](http://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/)

This Policy document, along with the relevant University Calendar Regulations (20.1), has informed the information provided in this Handbook. It is the definitive source for guidance on the requirements of PhD study.

**MRes in Business & Management Handbook** accessible from [www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/](http://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/)

This should be read alongside this PhD Handbook. It provides details of the taught elements of an SBS PhD.

**Researcher Development Programme** [www.strath.ac.uk/rdp/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/rdp/)

The University co-ordinates a variety of seminars and workshops in transferable skills targeted at developing postgraduate and early career researchers. You should check this site regularly and ensure you access as many of these training opportunities as you can.

**University Ethics Committee** [www.strath.ac.uk/ethics/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/ethics/)

The University requires all research that investigates human beings to be subject to Ethics approval. This site provides a link to the current Code of Practice for such investigations including details of the approval process.

**Academic Honesty and Integrity** [www.strath.ac.uk/plagiarism/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/plagiarism/)

Plagiarism Warning – Don't Do it!! The University considers plagiarism unacceptable, and the consequences of committing plagiarism are serious. Candidates should ensure they know what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it in their own work.

**University Student Handbook 2016-17** accessible from [www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/](http://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/)

This Handbook contains a lot of useful information, particularly if you are a newcomer to Strathclyde. Here you can find details of facilities and locations on campus, information about the Students' Association, and important Regulations and Policies.

## WHAT IS A PHD?

A PhD is both a training ground for future researchers and a process that is intended to produce a coherent and well-reasoned contribution to knowledge in a particular discipline or field of inquiry. As such, you should expect it will take you to the limits of your current knowledge and beyond, into uncertain, and potentially challenging new territory. To support this process, candidates must fulfil the requirements for a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methodology in Business and Management, undertaking a minimum of 60 credits of research training, which will include:

- BF992 Research Methods (20 credits);
- BF991 Research Philosophy (20 credits);
- And an additional 20 credits of optional classes

Details of these classes and the full schedule of research training modules offered by SBS are available in the MRes Handbook accessible at [www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/](http://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/). Where a student can demonstrate that relevant learning outcomes have already been achieved through a prior course of study, the Course Director may grant a credit transfer of up to 20 of the credits required for the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methodology. Credit will be recognised once and only for the achievements within five years preceding registration for a postgraduate research qualification at Strathclyde. Applications for RPL should be accompanied by official academic transcripts and outlines for the completed classes for which credit is being claimed.

In addition, candidates are encouraged to seek out training and development opportunities such as those offered by the Strathclyde Researcher Development Programme, the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science Summer School, doctoral symposia at national and international conferences, and methods workshops offered by various UK academic institutions throughout the year. Each department in the School also offers its own programme of researcher development, including support for attendance at relevant conferences.

### Duration of Study

The minimum period of study for full-time PhD candidates is normally 36 months, during which they are expected to be working on their research for at least 35 hours per week except for reasonable periods of holiday, which should be agreed in advance with supervisors. For part-time study, the minimum duration is pro-rated to reflect the learning conditions under which the candidate is working. So for instance, for a candidate who maintains a consistent effort of 17-18 hours per week, the minimum duration of study would normally be 72 months (see University Regulation 20.1.5).

The maximum period of study for full-time candidates is normally 48 months, and for part-time candidates, the expected duration must be regularly reviewed and confirmed by

supervisors (see University Regulation 20.1.6). Doctoral candidates are expected to submit a thesis for examination within the maximum period of study. Under exceptional circumstances an extension may be granted, but fees would continue to be payable.

## **Writing up**

If your studies last longer than the *minimum* period of registration your supervisor will be asked whether you require further supervised study. A key factor in this decision will be how much of your thesis has been drafted. Candidates who have received substantial feedback from their supervisor(s) on draft material may be permitted to register as 'writing up', but they will still be expected to submit a thesis for examination within the *maximum* period of study. Candidates who are in write-up will no longer be required to pay tuition fees, but they will also cease to be entitled to a permanent desk in the PGR space on Level 6 of the Business School. Further, they will not qualify as full-time students and will not be eligible for Council Tax exemptions. They may also have reduced access to some departmental resources, but will still be able to use the library.

If the decision is made that you still require further supervision at the end of the *minimum* duration of study, you will be asked to re-register and pay fees at the normal rate for the remaining period of supervised study (counted in months).

Either way, if you go beyond the *maximum* duration you will be required to apply for an extension to your period of study in which you should make a strong case for exceptional circumstances to be considered. This application attracts a fee of £160 for every year, or part thereof, that your study continues. This fee will be applicable whether you continue to be supervised or have already transferred into 'write up'.

Given that there are financial implications if you go beyond the *minimum* period of study, it is in everyone's interest that you complete either within the minimum period of study or as close to it as possible. It is very difficult to complete your PhD if you have to move away from the department or take on additional work to support yourself.

## **Voluntary Suspension**

Candidates may, despite their best efforts, occasionally experience personal, family, or medical difficulties that interrupt the progress of their studies. Under such circumstances, the Head of Department may recommend either a period of up to one whole academic year to be taken as voluntary suspension, or a transfer from full-time to part-time study. Both options act as mechanisms to either stop, or slow down progress towards the period of *maximum* duration for study. Voluntary suspensions are available only to candidates who are still within their *minimum* period of study and who are of good academic standing. Under exceptional circumstances, voluntary suspension may be renewed for up to a total of two years maximum. Candidates unable to resume their studies after two consecutive years in voluntary suspension will normally be withdrawn from PhD registration.

## **Your Supervisors**

Typically candidates work largely independently, but with guidance from supervisors who have expertise in knowledge domains that are relevant to the candidate's programme of study. Two or more supervisors are appointed by the University and are responsible for establishing regular contact and keeping candidates informed about requirements for progress and completion of the PhD degree. At least one supervisor will be an academic member of staff in SBS. Second, and other, supervisors may be appointed from the existing staff of the School, or from another Faculty, University, or relevant Institution. The supervisors will normally operate as a team, providing guidance about the nature of research and the standards expected. They will also prepare the candidate for the final Viva Examination.

Candidates can expect to meet their supervisors on a regular (at least monthly) basis, and to receive feedback on their research and publication plans, their progress, and their written outputs. Supervisors may also encourage candidates to pursue appropriate training and development opportunities including attendance at seminars and conferences. However it is the candidate's responsibility to take the initiative in setting meeting times and dates, to raise any problems or issues that may affect progress, and to ensure that agreed deadlines are met. Candidates should also ensure that permission is granted for any periods of absence, even if this is to conduct research in another place.

The supervisory relationship is a professional one, where all parties are expected to meet professional standards of performance. If there is a failure to establish a satisfactory working relationship between candidate and supervisors, the department may make alternative arrangements for supervision.

## **Progress Reviews and Monitoring**

The University conducts formal, twice yearly reviews of doctoral candidates' progress until a thesis has been submitted for examination. These reviews are conducted through the NEPTUNE online system and involve inputs from the candidate, the supervisors, and a departmental reviewer (or review panel). Candidates should supplement their review reports by uploading written information such as research proposals, presentations, literature surveys, thesis chapters, and feedback on their performance in the instructional elements of the PhD degree. Their progress will be assessed at every review against defined criteria, and they will receive feedback that will confirm their progress as either:

- Satisfactory
- Satisfactory with reservations
- Unsatisfactory

Performance targets will be set for the next review, and where progress has been found to be less than satisfactory, these targets will seek to rectify the situation before the next review. Cases where performance continues to fall below a satisfactory level will be referred

to the Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research) for further action, which may include termination of, or a change in registration.

In some departments, candidates are initially registered for a Master of Philosophy degree. Their progress review after a full year of full-time study will determine whether they are permitted to register and proceed with research towards a PhD

Once candidates have completed a minimum of 60 credits of prescribed researcher training, they will be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methodology in Business and Management. Those candidates who accumulate a minimum of 120 credits of researcher training will be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Research Methodology in Business and Management.

### **The Viva Examination**

Candidates should work closely with their supervisors to determine when their thesis will be ready for examination. About 3 months before the expected submission date, the Head of Department (or nominee) will propose an examination committee comprising:

- an External Examiner who has a publication record that confirms her/his expertise in the field of study,
- an Internal Examiner, who has a broad knowledge of the topic area and the examination process, and
- a Convenor, who organises the Viva Examination, receives initial reports from the Examiners, and makes sure the exam runs fairly and smoothly.

With your agreement, your supervisors may also attend the Viva Examination, but in a strictly non-voting capacity.

The Examination Committee will normally conduct an oral examination that explores the candidate's knowledge of the field of study, and interrogates details of the thesis argument to determine its quality and originality. The Committee will then make a recommendation, which will be one of the following:

- i. the degree will be awarded
- ii. the degree will be awarded subject to minor amendments being made to the satisfaction of:
  - (a) the internal examiner only
  - (b) the full Examining Committee
- iii. The thesis be revised in accordance with the recommendations of the Examiners and re-submitted within 12 months or earlier of the date of this report. Recommended deadline for resubmission (please give date):

Re-examination will be required:

- (a) With oral
- (b) Without oral

- iv. The thesis will be resubmitted after further research as indicated by the examiners and a further oral examination to be held within 18 months or earlier of the date of this report. Recommended deadline for resubmission (please give date).
- v. The degree be not awarded

EXCEPTIONALLY

- vi) The degree of Master of Philosophy/Science by Research/Laws by Research be awarded
- vii) The thesis be amended and submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy/ Science by Research/Laws by Research

You will find a helpful video on preparing for your Viva included in the Video Library on [www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers](http://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers) and in addition there are classes within the Researcher Development Programme to help you in your planning and preparations.

### **Seminars and Conferences**

Attending and presenting work at conferences and seminars is an essential part of your development as an academic. These events not only provide valuable networking opportunities, but they can also be seen as important stepping stones towards the publication of your work. As such, they should feature in your publication plans and as a regular topic of discussion in your supervision meetings. Your department will have a policy about conference attendance, including the extent to which you may be financially supported, and which conferences would be appropriate for you to attend. Your supervisor will be able to advise you about this. Your department may also expect you to present your work at departmental seminars and/or internal researcher events.

### **Studentships**

Financial support is available to students through a variety of competitive funds including:

- National studentships fully-funded or co-funded by the Research Councils UK
- University studentships Tranches 1, 2 and 3
- Faculty studentships
- Departmental studentships

Each of these sources has its own specific conditions, which may include the expectation that candidates will undertake a certain amount of tutoring and/or research assistant work. If

you hold a studentship, you should find out from your department what is expected of you in terms of hours and types of work.

### **Undertaking Work in the School**

SBS has a policy to ensure fairness and consistency across departments in relation to PhD candidates undertaking tutoring, teaching, or research work. Its focus is on the number of hours that doctoral candidates can be asked to work in an academic year, the conditions attached to any work that is undertaken and payment for that work. In this context, 'work' means preparation time, teaching, tutorial contact time, marking of tutorial assignments and invigilation. No candidate should normally undertake more than 80 hours of contact time in an academic year. In addition, no candidate should normally undertake more than 50 hours of surgery time in an academic year.

Candidates undertaking work will receive contracts that specify rates of pay, work conditions, and a description of the work required.

### **Ethics**

Investigations involving human beings as participants are frequently undertaken in the course of teaching and research. The University seeks to ensure that the conduct of all its staff and students carrying out such work, whether biological, psychological or sociological, conforms to standards set by professional bodies, and is known to do so. The University Ethics Committee, with its associated Departmental/School Ethics Committees, has been established to consider general ethical issues relating to teaching and research that involves investigations on human beings. It aims to provide impartial advice to participants and investigators and to protect the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all actual and potential participants. In carrying out this role it is the body responsible for giving ethical approval for investigations involving human participants. Ethical approval is required before any such investigation may commence.

If your research requires any of the following you must apply for Ethics Approval:

- investigations involving human beings using any type of research methodology; or
- investigations conducted on University property, through the University, or under the auspices of the University (including on sites external to the University and involving investigators from outside the University), that involve human beings as participants, including investigations which have been transferred from other organisations; or
- collaborative investigations involving human participants carried out by University staff and students working with investigators who are not staff or students of the University, including data analysis where the data has been obtained by a collaborating body

Further information and application forms can be found at [www.strath.ac.uk/ethics/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/ethics/)

## **Academic Integrity**

The *University Procedures and Guidelines for Dealing with Possible Instances of Academic Dishonesty* will be followed in all cases of alleged academic dishonesty. Candidates must make themselves aware of the definitions of academic dishonesty and the consequences of breaching these standards. Each candidate is personally responsible for maintaining appropriate standards of integrity in their on work. Further information may be found at [www.strath.ac.uk/plagiarism/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/plagiarism/).

## **Academic Appeals**

Any letters informing a candidate of a decision to transfer or terminate his or her registration, or not to award a degree includes notification of the right to appeal in writing to the Faculty Board of Study. The letter also gives notice of the date by which the candidate must lodge any appeal with the Faculty Manager.

The Faculty sets up an Appeals Panel of impartial academic staff with a Senior Academic Officer of the Faculty as Convenor. The Faculty Appeals Panel decides the outcome of the Faculty Appeal, operating in accordance with the principles of natural justice and the maintenance of academic standards.