

IALS

**INSTITUTE OF
ADVANCED
LEGAL STUDIES**

**SCHOOL OF
ADVANCED STUDY
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MPhil/PhD (Academic) FAQs



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Role of Supervisors

Students will have two supervisors – a main supervisor and a co-supervisor. The main supervisor has primary responsibility for supervision and will be the normal point of contact for the student. The co-supervisor will provide particular expertise, or offer support in other defined ways.

The proportional responsibilities of each supervisor will vary from case-to-case, but should be made clear to the student at the outset.

At a minimum, the student should maintain contact with the main supervisor every 4 to 6 weeks (in the first year, there should be monthly meetings). Contact can take the form of meetings or other communication (eg substantive discussion by email). Students must, as a minimum, meet with their co-supervisor 6 times per year.

The student is responsible for contacting supervisors to arrange supervision meetings.

Students must submit the record of meeting form to Registry for each contact – it is the responsibility of students to do so, even if the supervisor has not filled in their section of the form. The form is available [here](#).

IALS faculty will supervise no more than 6 students at any one time. This limit applies to full time faculty, and will be adjusted accordingly for part-time faculty.

External supervisors will supervise no more than 5 students at any one time.

Progress Reports

The RDC will consider progress reports of each student on a bi-annual basis. The progress report form, available [here](#), must be completed by the student and the main supervisor.

Year 1 to year 2 progress

At the end of year 1, all students are required to meet with the Director of PGR to discuss their progress during the first year of study. This meeting should take place either in month 12 or 13 of registration (month 24 or 25 for part time students).

Ahead of this meeting, students must submit 1. a substantial piece of written work, of approximately 8,000 to 10,000 words; 2. A brief outline of the thesis (eg draft chapter headings and abstracts); 3. A preliminary bibliography; 4. Details of personal development and/or training undertaken in year 1; and 5. A completed progression form (available [here](#)).

This is an important milestone in your studies that enables you to discuss your research and progress with the Director of PGR. If the Director of PGR is your supervisor, the Chair of RDC will nominate another person to conduct this progress meeting.

The submitted work must demonstrate commitment to pursuing research leading to a PhD degree; satisfactory participation in personal development and/or research training; ability to engage critically with relevant material; ability to synthesise information and demonstrate that it provides context for the research focus; and ability to organise arguments and ideas in a logical fashion.

Upgrade (transfer to PhD programme)

Normally, the upgrade will be held during year 2 of study (or equivalent for part time students). In exceptional cases, the upgrade can replace the year 1 to year 2 progress meeting (above). In such instances, the upgrade can be held in month 12 or 13 of study.

****From AY20/21, it will not be possible for the upgrade to replace the year 1 to year 2 progress meeting in IALS.****

At least 2 weeks prior to the upgrade, students must submit 1. the upgrade from MPhil to PhD form (available [here](#)); 2. A substantial piece of written work between 10,000 to 15,000 words; 3. An outline of the overall thesis; 4. A brief introduction to the thesis and how the submitted material fits in to the overall thesis; and 5. A timetable for completion of the full thesis.

If a student submits more than 15,000 words for no.2 above, the panel will only read up to 15,000 words at their own discretion.

The panel will consist of 1. An external assessor with knowledge of the subject matter; 2. An IALS nominee (usually a member of staff or an Associate Fellow), who will also Chair the panel; and 3. One of the supervisors.

****Advice from IALS: while the material submitted for the year 1 to year 2 progress will likely be descriptive and/or background material, the written material submitted for the upgrade must demonstrate evidence of critical analysis of PhD standard. Our advice to students is to submit material that sufficiently demonstrates analytical skills (ie a descriptive, introductory chapter is not the best piece to submit and will likely result in referral for a second upgrade). It is for the student to decide which sample that they will submit, in discussion with their supervisor.****

If the upgrade is not completed during year 2 of study (or equivalent for part-time students), the Director of PGR will advise RDC that de-registration should be considered. In such circumstances, the student must demonstrate to RDC why continued registration is appropriate.



When can I enter 'writing up' stage?

The earliest that a student can enter writing up is after 3 years (full time) or 6 years (part time) of registration.

To enter writing up, the student must have completed all research for the thesis (eg empirical work, literature analysis, etc) and have a draft of each chapter.

The main supervisor must agree, and confirm, that the student is in a position to submit the thesis for examination within 12 months. If so, the student must submit the relevant [form](#) and copy of the draft chapters (in one document) to the Director of PGR for further review.

Ethics

Students must comply with the School ethics policies, available [here](#).

Duration of study

The normal **minimum period** of registration for an MPhil is 2 years and for a PhD 3 years. The minimum period for part time students, for both the MPhil and PhD, is 4 years.

The normal **maximum period** of study for a PhD, including interruptions, is 6 years (full time) or 8 years (part time). Exceptionally, this period may be extended for a further year, on application to AQSC. In such instances, the maximum study period shall be 7 years (full time) and 9 years (part time).

Word limits

The maximum word limit is 60,000 words for the MPhil degree and 100,000 words for the PhD degree. This word limit includes footnotes, but excludes the bibliography and appendices. Note, appendices should only contain material that examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis.

In exceptional circumstances, a student may apply to exceed the word limit by up to 10%. This request must be made at least six months in advance of submission of the thesis, and must be supported by the supervisor (who will also have to provide a supporting statement). This request will be forwarded to the Chair of AQSC for consideration.

What do I need to do to submit my thesis?

The period between submission and viva voce is, at times, a lengthy one, so it is important to take appropriate steps in advance to ensure that the process runs smoothly.

The student should provide the supervisor(s) with a full draft of the thesis for any final feedback, and allow sufficient time for the supervisor to read this draft.

At least four months prior to submission, the student should submit the Examination of Thesis form to Registry. See [here](#), under PhD Entry form. Failure to do so inevitably leads to delay in holding the viva.

Potential examiners can (and should) be discussed by supervisor(s) and student, however examiners should not be approached without informal discussion with the Director of PGR. Examiners are subject to approval by the RDC and AQSC.

Please note that potential examiners have previously been rejected by RDC/AQSC, so to avoid any potential embarrassment it is important to discuss with the Director of PGR before any contact is made.

Viva Voce

The viva is arranged by the primary supervisor, in discussion with Registry. If the primary supervisor is external to IALS and the second supervisor is internal to IALS, then the second supervisor will arrange the viva.

The panel should consist of an independent chair, an internal examiner (from the University of London federation) and an external examiner (external to the University of London federation). The viva will normally be held in IALS.



Graduation

Graduation normally takes place in December each year. Detailed information is sent to students following successful completion of the examination.



Fees

The policy on tuition fees is available [here](#).

If a student is in arrears of fees for six months, the RDC will recommend to AQSC that de-registration be considered.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, you should contact Registry as soon as possible to discuss the options available, including payment plans.

Hardship Grant

The SAS Hardship Grant provides discretionary financial assistance for all students – particularly to meet extra costs that cannot be met from other sources of support. The Fund is intended to alleviate financial hardship.

An application can also be made for research students who wish to attend courses or conferences and who do not have the funds to pay for this themselves.

You can apply for help from the Fund at any time during the academic year.

The application form is available [here](#).

Contacts

Your main point of contact with Registry is:
Dr Ivan Leonidov (Ivan.Leonidov@sas.ac.uk)

The Director of PGR at IALS is:
Dr Colin King (colin.king@sas.ac.uk)

The Chair of the IALS RDC is:
Professor Carl Stychin (carl.stychin@sas.ac.uk)