



Global College Malta

Quality and Standards Assurance Manual –
Section 6 Postgraduate Research Degrees

GLOBAL COLLEGE MALTA

QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL (2021)

Section 6 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

1. Global College Malta (the College) is committed to excellence in research and actively welcomes applications from high-calibre graduates who wish to make contributions to the advancement of knowledge through the completion of a postgraduate research degree. The College seeks to provide an academically rigorous and supportive environment, within which students can learn about research and where they are given opportunities to advance their own knowledge and understanding and that of the scholarly communities to which they belong.
2. The purpose of this section of the College's *Quality and Standards Assurance Manual* is to set out the College's requirements and expectations for the organisation, management and assessment of postgraduate research degrees. The College recognises that the journey towards the achievement of a postgraduate research degree will be unique to each student. The contents of this section of the *Manual* are intended to provide a structure within which the individual nature of each student's research is recognised and accommodated wherever possible. However, all research students and staff of the College should regard the principles and procedures set out in this section of the *Manual* as minima which must be adhered to.

Definition of College Postgraduate Research Degrees

3. The College offers programmes of study recognised as being at Level 8 of the Malta Qualifications Framework and where the majority of the programme consists in the student undertaking a significant and sustained piece of independent research. The award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is covered in this section of the *Manual*.
4. The College confers postgraduate research degrees upon those candidates who have satisfied their examiners that they have reached the standard required following the submission of a thesis embodying the results of original research.
5. Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have successfully demonstrated:
 - i. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;

- ii. A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- iii. The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems; and,
- iv. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Expectations and Requirements of Students

6. Students at the College registered on programmes leading to the award of a postgraduate research degree will have the same entitlements as other students studying at the College and also be subject to the same expectations. In addition, research degree students are required to:
- i. Complete registration at the commencement of their research degree studies and then re-register annually;
 - ii. Pay the appropriate fee to the College for the research degree programme for which they are registered;
 - iii. Attend, and keep records of, formal supervision meetings with their Supervisor at least once per month if full-time and at least once per two months if part-time;
 - iv. Attend, and keep records of, formal supervision meetings with their supervisory team at least twice per year; and,
 - v. Complete Annual Progress Monitoring in accordance with the procedures set out in this section of the *Manual* in every year of their registration with the College.
7. As far as possible, adhere to the following:
- i. In respect of full-time students: conduct work relating to their research studies for a minimum of 35 hours per week over 46 weeks of the year;
 - ii. In respect of part-time students: conduct work relating to their studies for a minimum of 16 hours per week over 46 weeks of the year;
 - iii. At reasonable notice, make themselves available to attend the College or another agreed premises for the purposes of supervisory meetings, assessment of progress or other meetings required to enable the delivery of their programme of study.
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Structure for the delivery of the College’s research degree awards

8. The organisation and management of the College’s postgraduate research degrees is undertaken in partnership between the research supervisory team and the College’s central administrative services. The College’s Academic Board has oversight of the policies and the quality assurance arrangements relating to the management of Postgraduate Research Degree programmes.

8. The College recognises that it has responsibility for ensuring a viable research environment for the research students that it admits. The College recognizes that it must also ensure that its staff with responsibility for matters relating to postgraduate research programmes are able to effectively undertake their duties. Accordingly, the College will:
 - i. Adhere to the minimum admissions requirements and processes outlined in this section of the *Manual* and, in all cases, only admit students to postgraduate research programmes where it has assured itself that there exists an appropriate environment for learning about and conducting research;
 - ii. Admit students to postgraduate research programmes only where it has assured itself that there exists appropriate expertise and capacity to supervise students to a successful outcome; and,
 - iii. At the point of admission, identify the members of each student’s supervisory team and their individual roles and ensure that this is specifically communicated to the student.

Research student admission, registration and induction

9. The College Academic Dean has overall responsibility for the selection and admission of suitably qualified students onto the College’s Postgraduate Research Degree programme. The primary criterion for admission is academic capability of the prospective research student, with considerations regarding supervisory expertise and capacity and the availability of physical resources also being important.

10. The registration and induction of new postgraduate research students is arranged in collaboration between the students’ supervisory team and the central administrative services of the College. In respect of the induction arrangements, the overarching aim is to ensure that the College’s new research students are clearly aware of their responsibilities and entitlements from the outset, to enable them to commence productive study and research as quickly as possible.

Selection and Admission

11. The College’s application and admissions procedures are set out in Section 3 of the College’s *Quality and Standards Manual*. This Section of the *Manual* is intended to set out the principles that must be adhered to when following the application and admissions procedure in respect of research degree students.

12. The College's Admissions Team will make available details of the application process to be followed by prospective postgraduate research students. The College's Academic Dean will normally be responsible for considering the students' initial application file and making a *prima facie* decision on whether the application should proceed. Such a decision may be made after consultation with appropriate members of College staff.
13. Where the decision is not to proceed with the application, the College's Academic Dean will advise the College's Admissions Team and provide a reason for their decision.
14. In every case where the decision by the College's Academic Dean is to proceed with a prospective student's application, each applicant must be interviewed. The Interview Panel should normally be constituted as follows:
 - The College's Academic Dean;
 - The prospective Principal Supervisor; and,
 - As appropriate, other members of the prospective supervisory team.
15. The College sets minimum criteria which prospective students must meet in order to be deemed eligible for admission:

Evidence of appropriate qualifications and preparedness

- i. The applicant has obtained, or expects to obtain, a good honours degree from a recognized higher education institution. The degree should normally be in a discipline that is congruent with their intended area of research. In some instances, evidence of substantial prior research or high level professional experience may be acceptable.
- ii. Where the applicant's first language is not English, to provide evidence of English language proficiency at a level commensurate with study at MQF Level 8.
- iii. The applicant shows evidence of appropriate engagement with the proposed area of research via a completed application form and at interview.

Availability of appropriate supervisory expertise

- iv. There exists, within the College, members of academic staff with appropriate subject knowledge, research expertise and relevant experience of supervision who are able to form a Supervisory Team.

Viability of proposed research topic

- v. A detailed project proposal may be produced by the supervisor or student associated with funding applications in advance of the application.
- vi. In the absence of a detailed project proposal, the student must show evidence, on the application form and/or at interview, that they have a realistic prospect of developing a

detailed project proposal within a reasonable amount of time following their registration.

Availability of a suitable research environment

- vii. It is reasonable to anticipate that the College will be able to provide access to the resources that the student is likely to require in order to complete their research.
 - viii. There exists, within the College, appropriate expertise for learning and research tools which the student will have access to.
 - ix. There exists, within the College, opportunities to exchange and develop ideas with people, at appropriate levels, who are also engaged in doing and learning about research and to develop peer support networks.
16. If the criteria set out above are deemed to have been satisfied by the College's Academic Dean then the College's Admissions Team will be permitted to proceed with making a formal offer to the prospective student. When an offer of registration is made to a student, in every case, it is done so on the basis that the College will provide appropriate supervisory support to the research student. However, the College does not guarantee the continued availability of named supervisors and the acceptance of an offer may not be contingent on such continued availability.

Registration and enrolment

17. The College's Admissions Team will outline the steps that are required of applicants who wish to accept a formal offer. Details will be provided in a letter outlining the College's offer. In subsequent years, following the acceptance of an offer, research students admitted must re-enrol on an annual basis. The College's Registrar's Team will contact students with details of how to complete the enrolment process. Students who fail to enrol as required may, with due warning, be withdrawn from their programme.

Periods of submission and registration

18. For a full-time doctoral research degree student the minimum period of registration, excluding periods of suspension, that be completed before submission of the thesis is permitted is 2 years. For a part-time research student it is 4 years.
19. For a full-time doctoral research degree student the maximum submission period by which the thesis should be submitted by the candidate for examination is 4 years. For a part-time research student it is 7 years.
20. For both full-time and part-time doctoral research degree students the maximum period of registration allowed to complete the programme, inclusive of periods of suspension, extension, writing up (submission pending) and resubmission is 10 years.

Periods of leave

21. College research students should consult with their Principal Supervisor regarding any period of holiday they intend to take during the course of their programme. Research students are advised to carefully consider the timing of such absences so as to reduce the impact on their studies.
22. Students should keep their Principal Supervisor informed of any period of sickness likely to impact on agreed meetings, deadlines or progress. Students experiencing prolonged or recurrent periods of absence due to ill health should discuss their circumstances with their Principal Supervisor to determine if a suspension of study may be appropriate. Time taken as holiday leave or sick leave will not result in an extension to the student's registration period or submissions periods. Significant periods of absence due to illness should be dealt with through suspension of studies.

Suspension of research studies

23. In the event that circumstances arise which prevent a College research student from pursuing or writing up their research, an application for a suspension of studies may be granted. A suspension of studies is time away from their agreed programme of research; the maximum submission period is lengthened by the equivalent period of the suspension. Applications for suspension of studies must be submitted by research students with relevant evidence that supports their claim. The College will not grant a suspensions of studies where this would cause the maximum period of registration to be exceeded unless an exceptional extension is granted.
24. An application for a suspension of registration will require approval by the student's Principal Supervisor and the College's Academic Dean.
25. Suspension of registration will be granted in whole months only, normally to a maximum of one year.
26. Back dated suspensions are only permitted in exceptional circumstances and for reasonable periods of time. They are unlikely to be approved by the College unless clear evidence is provided in support of the application that demonstrates good reason why the suspension was not applied for at the point the research student encountered issues. Backdated suspensions may be rejected if funding or Maltese visa issues have not been appropriately considered.
27. Following approval, The College's Registry Team will confirm to the research student the start and end dates of the period of suspension plus the revised date for submission (the maximum submission period).
28. The College is acutely aware that the evolving nature of research may mean that substantial periods of suspension could be detrimental to the long term viability of the research project and will be taken into account during the consideration of repeat requests for a suspension of studies.

29. In the period during which a student's registration is suspended, the student will not accrue fees but may continue to be liable for fees already accrued.
30. In the period during which a student's registration is suspended, the student undertakes:
- i. Not to represent themselves as a student of Global College Malta;
 - ii. Not to collect any data for the purposes of their research;
 - iii. Not to conduct any experimental work for the purposes of their research;
 - iv. Not to seek access to resources and facilities, other than the student email account, that the College normally makes available to students;
 - v. Not to seek access to supervision; and,
 - vi. Not to begin or continue the writing up of their thesis.
31. If the College becomes aware of any suspected breach of the undertakings listed above the matter will be reported to the College's Academic Dean who may determine that a case of academic integrity should be raised against the research student.
32. In advance of the expected resumption date, the College's Registry Team will write to the research student to confirm the date on which their studies will resume. The College will also confirm in writing any outstanding actions in respect of Annual Progress Monitoring. Research students who fail to return from their suspension of studies may, with due warning, be withdrawn from their programme.
- Extension of submission and registration period**
33. On behalf of a research student who has good cause, the Principal Supervisor may make an application for an extension to the student's final date for submission of thesis (maximum submission period) provided the extension does not cause the student to exceed the maximum period of registration permitted. Any application has to be accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence and the application has to be approved by the College's Academic Dean.
34. College research students will normally be allowed one extension only and for a maximum of 12 months. Extensions will be granted in whole months only. Where application is made for an extension in excess of 12 months or where a continuance of an extension is made, irrespective of the amount of time requested, the approval of the College's Academic Dean is required.
35. The application must explain why the student has been unable to complete within the maximum submission period. Factors referred to may include:
- i. Any record of non-submission of work or failure to meet deadlines without good cause;

- ii. Any record of suspensions, their durations and the reasons for those suspensions;
 - iii. Evidence that the student has been required, due to factors beyond their control, to substantially alter their research project; and,
 - iv. Evidence that the student has been hampered by sustained and unusually heavy workloads in any employment they might have.
36. Where an application for an extension is approved, the College’s Registry Team will write to the research student to confirm the revised submission deadline.
37. Principal Supervisors are reminded by the College that extensions adversely affect the College’s completion rates and that, accordingly, every effort should be made to ensure that the research student is in a position to submit within the maximum submission period. Applications for extensions should be exceptional.

Transfer to Submission Pending

38. Submission Pending is a registration status, that students may apply to for, which acknowledges the student has completed their data collection, investigations and experimental work and that they are in the process of writing up their research. The submission pending status attracts a reduced programme fee in comparison to the other modes of attendance, full-time and part-time, in recognition of the limited College resources and facilities that students need to access during this phase of their research project.
39. Transfer to ‘Submission Pending’ is subject to research students meeting all of the following eligibility criteria:
- i. Students must have completed their data collection, investigations and experimental work must all be completed;
 - ii. Students should be writing up their thesis;
 - iii. Full-time students must have completed three years of study, and part-time students five years; and
 - iv. Students should have all the main chapters or sections of the thesis in satisfactory draft form with clear and realistic plans for revision for submission.
40. Determination of whether the eligibility criteria has been met is at the discretion of the Principal Supervisor and College’s Academic Dean and they are entitled to decline the request if the student does not meet the above criteria. Submission pending status may be granted for a maximum of one year, irrespective of the student’s original mode of study. Students who do not submit their thesis for examination within the one year period will be transferred to their

original mode of attendance (for example, full-time) and will accrue the fees associated with their original status.

41. Prior to submitting an application for transfer to 'submission pending' status, research students must be made aware that on approval of their application their access to College research resources that would ordinarily support the investigative stages of the research project will normally be withdrawn.

Transfer to Resubmission Pending

42. Students given a resubmission recommendation at their first *viva voce* examination will be transferred to the registration status of 'Resubmission Pending.' This status attracts the same fee as Submission Pending.

Changes to Mode of Attendance

43. All College research students are admitted on either full-time or part-time mode of attendance. Students may make an application to change mode of attendance where they are able to demonstrate good reasons for doing so. Delays to the research project that could reasonably have been foreseen and mitigated against will not normally be permissible grounds for a change to mode of attendance. College research students are reminded that they should not seek to change mode of attendance for acute circumstances which may more appropriately be covered by requesting either a suspension or extension. Any application made by the research student will require the approval of their Principal Supervisor and the College's Academic Dean.
44. Students may transfer into the College from another institution to complete their programme of research. In such circumstances the student's maximum period of submission will be minus the total time served at the other institution. This is known as advanced standing.

Withdrawal and Termination of Studies

45. College research students are entitled to withdraw from their programme, known as voluntary withdrawal, at any time by writing to the College's Registry Team. Research students who voluntarily withdraw may be entitled to a pro-rata reimbursement of tuition fees paid for the year in which their registration is withdrawn. Research support fees will not be reimbursed.
46. Research students who voluntarily withdraw may be permitted to resume the same programme of research following an assessment by the College Academic Dean, in consultation with the Principal Supervisor, to determine the validity and currency of the programme. Students reinstated in this way will be treated as though they have been on a period of suspension and therefore will not benefit from additional time following reinstatement. If a student has exceeded, or is close to exceeding, their maximum submission period (minus the period of suspension) or maximum period of registration (including the period of suspension) they will not be reinstated. In such cases, the student may reapply for a new programme without advanced standing. Students who are reinstated will recommence their studies at the point they left the programme; any progress assessment processes ongoing at the point of withdrawal will

recommence at the same point in the process. The student's status will be the same as at the point they withdrew.

47. The College reserves the right to terminate a research student's studies by issuing any warnings and/or following any processes as relate to students of Global College Malta generally. Where the College terminates a research student's studies, they will have the right of appeal. The permissible grounds for appeal are outlined elsewhere in this *Manual*. Research students who have their studies terminated by the College are not entitled to any refund. However, the College Academic Dean will have the discretion to authorise a refund in exceptional circumstances.

Research Student Induction

48. The induction of new students registered for a programme leading to the award of a postgraduate research degree will be the responsibility of the Principal Supervisor and the College's Registry Team. The Principal Supervisor will be responsible for ensuring an appropriate subject level induction for newly registered postgraduate research students. As a minimum, this induction will include:

- A tour of the College's facilities and resources available to the student;
- The allocation of desk space where appropriate;
- A health and safety briefing;
- Information on access to buildings and resources;
- Introductions to key staff; and,
- If appropriate, introductions to other postgraduate research students in the subject area.

Research Student Supervision

49. Research supervision is an integral part of postgraduate research degree programmes and the success of the College's research students is, in part, dependent on the development and maintenance of a constructive and supportive supervisory relationship with appropriately qualified individuals.

Supervision Arrangements

50. All students' research must be supervised by at least one suitably qualified members of the College's academic staff appointed by the College's Academic Dean.
51. All College research students must have a clearly-identified Principal Supervisor who will be their main point of contact and would normally have the most appropriate expertise in the area of the individual research project. Other individuals who may form part of a supervisory team will hereafter be referred to as Secondary Supervisors.

52. No supervisor, Principal or Secondary, should normally undertake the supervision of any more than eight individual research students. It is the responsibility of the College's Academic Dean to oversee the resource allocation of academic staff to this function and they may stipulate a lower maximum number of students that may be supervised by one individual in their area.
53. Where a supervisor leaves the College and/or is unable to continue their supervision of one or more research students, for whatever reason, the replacement supervisor will be appointed by the College's Academic Dean. In nominating an individual, the College's Academic Dean will consider the measures that will be put in place to ensure appropriate continuity of supervision and to minimise the impact of such changes. Research students will be informed as early as possible if their supervisory team is going to change and should be asked to identify any concerns they may have about the continuity of supervision.
54. When appointing supervisors to students registered on the College's research degree programmes the College's Academic Dean will give an indication of the level of each supervisor's respective input into the student's supervision, by expressing this as a percentage. By means of example, where two supervisors have an equal input, this would be recorded as a ratio of 50:50. Alternatively, where the Principal Supervisor might contribute the majority input into the supervision, and a Secondary Supervisor might play a largely pastoral role, this would be reflected in the percentage split as appropriate. No supervisor will have an input of less than ten percent. The Principal Supervisor would normally have the largest percentage of supervisory input but in any case this should not normally be less than forty percent. The proportion of supervisory input by a student's Principal and Secondary Supervisor may well change over time, especially if one supervisor leaves or cannot continue to supervise for any reason.
55. Under normal circumstances an individual should not be appointed as a supervisor where they have a relationship with the student through kinship (whether by blood, marriage, civil partnership or law), or a business relationship.

Criteria for the appointment of Supervisors

55. The College sets minimum essential eligibility criteria that academic staff must meet in order to be considered for approval as a postgraduate research degree supervisor. For the appointment of individuals as Principal Supervisors for research degree programmes the criteria are:
- *Either*, the individual is a subject specialist and currently research active, as demonstrated by a publication record which includes both recently published work and work in progress, or active involvement in on-going projects;
 - *Or*, the individual is an expert practitioner, demonstrated by ten years or more of professional experience in a relevant field that includes holding an appropriate senior position, and being involved in on-going research projects;

56. Supervisors should have relevant research experience and normally hold a qualification at Doctoral level or, alternatively, at least to Master's level where the Master's has a demonstrable piece of independent research associated with its award. Qualifications of a Doctorate should be from a higher education institution providing secure academic standards for undertaking research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols and with a research environment that offers students quality of opportunities and support. The qualifications held should be relevant to the subject matter and have made a contribution to original research.
57. The College recognises that there may be occasions when specific expertise from members of staff, from within the College or those of external bodies, who do not fulfil the criteria for Supervisor, would be advantageous to the prospective research student. In such circumstances the individual may exceptionally be appointed as a Supervisor subject to the agreement of the College's Academic Dean.

Responsibilities of all Supervisors (supervisory relationship with the student)

58. It is the responsibility of all supervisors to establish a professional and supportive relationship with their research student(s), in order to facilitate their development as a researcher, within a vibrant and stimulating research environment.
59. Supervisors should encourage and assist their students to engage in the wider Maltese and international research community including opportunities to attend relevant conferences and workshops or through dissemination via journal publications, where appropriate. Supervisors should ensure that students are aware of the current developments in both specific and wider areas of research and should encourage students to question critically the existing literature around the specific subject area, the assumptions of the research project and the results they obtain.
60. In their professional supervisory relationship with students, supervisors should endeavour to encourage students' engagement with their research project but should remain critical and realistic about students' progress. Supervisors are required to record any concerns they have, particularly during any formal process for evaluating a student's academic progress. It is recognised that on occasion supervisors may have different approaches and opinions on a range of issues pertaining to the students' research project however supervisors are collectively responsible for ensuring advice and guidance issued to students is clear and consistent.
61. Supervisors should advise students on issues relating to academic integrity, provide advice and guidance on the College's policies on such matters, and take steps to assist students to avoid plagiarism, collusion and dishonest use of data.
62. Supervisors should make it clear to students that their research project is the students' own responsibility and that it is the examiners, who are entirely independent of the supervisors, who will ultimately determine the final outcome of the doctoral research. Supervisors must not engage in any activity which could compromise the independence of the *viva voce* examination,

which includes consulting with the appointed examiners regarding the scheduled examination or taking part in any formal examination of the thesis or research project, including attending, in any capacity, the examination.

63. It is strongly advised that, as a matter of good practice, the opportunity is taken to document in writing (for example in an email summary) all substantive interactions between supervisors and students, however informal, to ensure that supervisors and students are clear about the frequency, content and outcomes of such supervisory meetings.
64. It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that students are made aware of the consequences of not making satisfactory progress with their research project.
65. It is the responsibility of all supervisors to advise students on the processes for requesting a change in registration, particularly in relation to a suspension of studies if the students' personal, financial or health circumstances prevent them from continuing on their programme temporarily. Supervisors are required to process such requests in a timely fashion and should explain the implications and the consequences of suspension of studies, taking advice as appropriate from professional services.
66. Principal Supervisors are required to meet with their full-time students at least once per month and with their part-time students at least once every two months and to ensure that a formal record of such supervisory meetings is kept. These formal supervisory meetings should have an agenda agreed in advance and a record of agreements of outcomes and targets reached during the meeting. Principal Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their students record such supervisory meetings. Principal Supervisors should also ensure that their research students complete their Annual Progress Report (APR) within the required timescales and to ensure that they complete the supervisor's evaluation with supportive but critical and realistic feedback. The expectation is that a Principal Supervisor will meet at an appropriate frequency with students outside this formal process.
67. Supervisors should ensure that drafts of part or the full thesis are read, with appropriate feedback given within agreed timescales.
68. Supervisors should take the lead in nominating Examiners for approval by the College's Academic Dean and to inform the student of the names of the Examiners and to ensure that the student is prepared and supported to undertake the *viva voce* examination.

Entitlements and Responsibilities of Students in relation to Supervision

69. College students registered on a research degree programme are entitled to a high quality of research supervision, through the allocation of appropriately qualified staff and exposure to the wider internal and external research environment.
 70. The College's research students have a responsibility to become familiar and keep up to date with changes and updates to the relevant College policies and procedures related to their
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research degree programme. They should adhere to the content of these policies and procedures, as appropriate.

71. Importantly, research students are required to take responsibility for the planning of their project with their supervisors and to engage with their research programme in accordance with agreements made with their supervisors prior to and during their formal registration period.
72. Research students are required to meet regularly with their supervisors and to record at least one formal meeting per month (every other month for part-time students). It is strongly advised that students and supervisors make a written record of all supervisory meetings, however informal.
73. Research students should work independently on their research and writing their thesis, taking advice when necessary. They should take ownership and responsibility for meeting agreed objectives and deadlines and ultimately should take responsibility for the submission of their thesis for examination. Students should be aware that their supervisors play no part in the examination process.
74. Students should maintain a professional and courteous relationship with their supervisors and should be prepared to receive critical feedback of their work. They are entitled to expect, however, that any feedback will be provided by their supervisors in a constructive and supportive way.

Problems with Supervision

75. If a research student feels that they wish to raise concerns about their supervision, in the first instance they should raise the issue with the supervisor(s) themselves or, if that is not appropriate, with the College's Academic Dean. If the matter is not resolved, the student should refer to the College's complaints procedures. Students can also raise any concerns that they might have about supervision during the formal Annual Progress Monitoring process and ensure that their concerns are recorded.
76. Supervisors who are approached with a complaint by a student should seek advice from the College's Academic Dean. Supervisors should aim to address any concerns raised by students as quickly as possible, referring matters to other members of staff as appropriate.

Research Student – Annual Progress Monitoring

77. Annual progress monitoring is used by the College to assess research degree students' progress and all students registered on research degrees are subject to a formal Annual Progress Monitoring process. The formal record for Annual Progress Monitoring is the Annual Progress Report, a report completed by the student and their Principal Supervisor.

78. The College's research degree students are more likely to succeed in their research degree programme if they engage fully with their supervisory team, attend supervisory meetings as required and plan their work carefully to meet deadlines. Failure to engage appropriately usually results in the student not making satisfactory academic progress. Students are expected to take full ownership and responsibility for their research project and the interactions they have with their supervisors. Failure of students to engage appropriately could lead to termination of their studies. The responsibility for monitoring student engagement falls to the research student's supervisory team.
79. The Annual Progress Report is the formal record of the Annual Progress Monitoring process and must be completed in a manner that recognises the importance of it. Completed research student Annual Progress Reports will be held by the College's Registry Team. Students whose studies are suspended at the time that their Annual Progress Monitoring activity is due are required to engage in that activity on their return from suspension. Research students who fail to adequately engage with the Annual Progress Monitoring process, including non-submission of an Annual Progress Report, or failure to reasonably agree a date for a meeting in relation to their annual review, may, with due warning, be withdrawn from their programme.

Meetings of Research Students and Supervisors

80. All full-time College research students are required to meet with their supervisors frequently and at least one supervisory meeting should be recorded each month. It is expected the minimum that part-time students would meet with their supervisors and record this meeting would be every two months, although this could be more frequent should the student and the supervisor agree that this is necessary. Meetings should be formally planned and recorded. There should also be at least one formal meeting with the whole supervisory team per term.
81. It is expected that, in most cases, students and supervisors will meet more frequently than the minimum requirements set out above and will make some informal record of their meetings. The relationship between the student and the supervisor(s) is critically important to support the student in making satisfactory progress with their research project. Students are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their supervisor(s) and supervisors are required to carry out their supervision duties with appropriate care and diligence.
82. Students who are required to re-submit their thesis following their initial viva examination are expected to maintain contact with their supervisory team during the period of resubmission.

Development of a Research Project Plan

83. All students, in consultation with their supervisors, must prepare a project plan that defines the scope of their research project and outlines the objectives to be achieved in the first year of study. This would normally be undertaken no more than three months after initial registration but part-time students may take up to six months, by agreement. This plan should be no more than two sides of A4 and should be signed and dated by the supervisor(s) and the research student as an indication that there is clarity by all parties about the project aims. The document

should provide a brief description of how the supervision will be conducted such as the frequency of meetings, timing of feedback on drafts and the expectations of both the supervisors and the student. Copies of the project plan should be retained by the student and the supervisor(s).

Annual Progress Reports (APR)

84. The Annual Progress Report is the formal record of Annual Progress Monitoring for each College research student and is divided into two sections:

Student

- i. The research student details their progress since their last review. Details of supervisory meetings, attendance at conferences or training and any issues that may have impeded their progress should be noted. This commentary is then sent to their Principal Supervisor along with any supporting or additional documents that the research student feels may be helpful.

Principal Supervisor

- ii. The research student commentary is received by the Principal Supervisor and they write an evaluation of the research student's progress to date and a recommendation to the College's Academic Dean. It also provides the opportunity for supervisors to confirm any areas where the research student's progress is satisfactory and provides confirmation of the areas in which the student needs to improve. On completion of their commentary, all the documentation prepared by the research student and the Principal Supervisor is sent to the College's Academic Dean.

Managing Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

85. If the supervisor(s) deems that a research student is not making satisfactory academic progress at any point during the academic year the student should be formally warned of the situation, in writing, by the Principal Supervisor in consultation with the College's Academic Dean. The supervisory team should not wait for the next cycle of Annual Progress Monitoring before taking action.
86. The written warning should provide clear targets for improving performance and a realistic timescale for achieving the improvements must be set by the supervisory team, which should not be less than two months for a full-time student or three months for a part-time student. The research student should be informed that the letter constitutes a formal warning and that the consequences of either not responding or not meeting the required targets may lead to a termination of their studies.
87. The College's Academic Dean will report matters relating to the progress of College research students to the College's Academic Board and, as necessary, the College's Quality Assurance Committee.

Submission of Research Thesis

88. It is the candidate's responsibility alone to ensure that their research thesis is prepared and presented in accordance with the requirements set out below.

Preparation, Formatting and Presentation of the Thesis prior to Submission

89. Whilst all candidates should also consult their supervisors prior to preparation and submission of their thesis, the following key requirements should be observed:

- *Word count*

The maximum length of a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the College shall be 100,000 words. This word count includes footnotes and references but not appendices or the bibliography. The information in the appendices is supplementary to the thesis and so should not include material integral to the thesis itself. Material in the appendices will only be referred to by the examiners where they think necessary and may not all be read by the examiners. Information which the research student feels is critical to their argument must be included in the main body of the thesis. The appendices should not exceed either 20,000 words or 80 pages.

If, in exceptional circumstances, the candidate wishes to exceed the relevant maximum word count, they should contact their Principal Supervisor as far in advance of the submission of the thesis as possible. In all cases, the College's Academic Dean will then be consulted and will provide guidance on whether they believe the criteria have been met or whether the student should be advised to reduce the word count prior to submission. Ultimately it is the student's decision as to whether they submit their thesis having exceeded the stipulated word count; the Examiners will not be notified of any of the discussions which have taken place in the College prior to submission. All decisions on the outcome of the *viva voce* examination will be taken by the Examiners.

- *References*

References to published work should be given and all sources appropriately acknowledged. References to published work should be provided in a consistent format that is currently accepted in the field covered by the thesis. If in doubt, candidates should consult their supervisors about the most appropriate approach.

- *Table of contents*

The table of contents must include chapter headings and page numbers. All separate sections of the thesis, such as bibliography, lists of abbreviations, supporting papers, etc. must also be identified on the contents page.

- *Declaration*

Each copy of the thesis must contain, on a separate page and at an appropriate point towards the front of the thesis, the following declaration from the candidate:

“The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of Global College Malta or another higher education institution except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.”

The candidate should sign and date underneath the declaration on each soft bound copy of the thesis submitted.

- *Abstract*
Each copy of the thesis must contain an Abstract indicating the aims of the investigation and the results achieved. It should be no longer than one side of an A4 sheet using single-spaced font (normally about 450 words) and should include a heading indicating the author and title of the thesis.
- *Language of thesis*
The thesis must be written in English, except for quoted material, which may be in the original language.
- *Academic Integrity*
The College has established conventions of academic practice, such as referencing and citation protocols, which both display and ensure academic integrity. Failure to adhere to these conventions can result in poor academic practice or, in unfair and/or dishonest academic practice. The section of this *Quality and Standards Assurance Manual* dealing with the assessment of students sets out these expectations.
- *Supporting material*
Diagrams, maps and illustrations should be placed as near to the relevant text as possible. If it is necessary to place illustrations in a separate volume, the binding must match that of the text. Images must be of good quality and adequate size. Where material is fixed in the thesis it must be securely mounted in each copy. Essential material that cannot be easily included within the bound thesis (e.g. large charts, CDs, etc.) must be placed securely in a pocket attached to the inside back cover of each copy.
- *Original Creative Material*
Where a collection of original creative material is also submitted for examination, the archival record should include photographic, video, CD-ROM or DVD evidence, which encompasses the material submitted and any artefacts or documentation integral to the creation of the work. A short inventory with brief descriptions should also be included.
- *Presentation*
Font: A common font and style should be used throughout the thesis, with clear text and illustrations. The main body of the text should be in black ink on white paper. Pages

should be numbered consecutively and the position of page numbers should be consistent throughout.

Title page: The following format should normally be observed:

(Centred) Title of thesis

'Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of Global College Malta for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by [full forenames and surname].'

(Centred) Date (month and year) with suitable line spacing.

Paper: A4 white paper of at least 80g/m² weight must be used for both originals and photocopies, except for any endpapers which carry no text. Paper may be printed on both sides or on one side. On the binding edge the margin must be 40mm. Other margins must be 25mm minimum.

Line spacing: 1½ line spacing is advised, but at least double line spacing should be used for text that contains many subscripts and superscripts. Quotations may be indented. Candidates should check the text carefully and it is strongly advised to make full use of error-checking facilities.

Binding of the thesis: Binding printed copies of the thesis submitted for examination must be soft-bound and the binding of all volumes must be identical. The thesis should be presented in such a way that the pages cannot be readily removed. Accordingly, ring binders and spiral binding are not permitted. The candidate's surname, initials, the date (month and year) and the degree must be displayed on the outside front cover. Theses that are submitted to Registry Services that are bound contrary to these requirements may not be accepted.

Number of Thesis Copies Required for the Examination

90. The candidate must provide one soft-bound copy for each of the College's Academic Dean, the Principal Supervisor and the External Examiner. The candidate should retain one copy for their reference prior to and during the *viva voce* examination. Candidates must submit the soft-bound printed copies to the College's Registry Team and, prior to the submission of the printed theses, upload an electronic copy of their thesis to Turnitin. The electronic thesis must have the main body of the text in a single file and be compatible with the 40MB limit imposed by the Turnitin software. Once the candidate has submitted their thesis to the College's Registry Team for examination no amendments or additions can be made to it. The College's Registry Team will make arrangements for the theses to be sent to the examiners.

Copyright

91. The copyright for a postgraduate research thesis will belong to the candidate, unless ownership of copyright is transferred. The candidate's final thesis may be embargoed where it is required

by third-party funding terms or in cases where Global College Malta is pursuing evaluation, exploitation or protection of intellectual property.

92. In accordance with normal academic custom, the results of the postgraduate research project may be publishable by Global College Malta and the supervisor(s). The candidate engaged in the project shall be permitted to present and to publish the methods and results of the project, provided that the College is provided with advance notice of any disclosure and will enjoy discretion to delay proposed publication or presentation if, in its reasonable opinion, such delay is necessary to secure protection of intellectual property rights.

Intellectual Property

93. The candidate will be entitled to the intellectual property rights arising from their programme of research except where:
- i. A person other than the College owns or is entitled to the intellectual property rights;
 - ii. The candidate has worked in collaboration with others in a manner that gives rise to joint creation of the intellectual property rights, or interdependent intellectual property rights, in which case they may be required to assign the intellectual property rights to the College or place the results in the public domain without restriction;
 - iii. The research degree candidate is also a member of staff of the College, in which case the College will be entitled to the intellectual property rights in the absence of specific agreement to the contrary; and,
 - iv. The intellectual property rights resides in databases, computer software, firmware, courseware and related material if they may reasonably be considered to possess commercial potential.
94. The College will have a non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual licence to use material which falls within paragraph 93 above for teaching, research and other academic purposes.
95. The College is the proprietor of the registered trade mark of its name, logo and has goodwill and reputation to protect. Candidates must not publish, post or commercially exploit in any form or medium any matter in which they are entitled to the intellectual property rights set out at paragraph 93 above in any form which mentions the name or logo of the College or any member of staff without the College's prior consent to the form and context.

Confidentiality of Material

96. The Examiners will treat the thesis as privileged and confidential information. The full thesis must be submitted to the examiners for examination. Where a candidate or their sponsor considers that elements of the thesis are particularly confidential, the candidate should inform the College's Academic Dean prior to submission of the thesis, in order for the Examiners to be informed of the particularly sensitive nature of the material.

97. Following a successful defence at the *viva voce* examination, where a candidate or their sponsor considers that elements of the thesis are confidential they may request restricted access by third parties to the thesis deposited in the College's Library.

Modifications

98. Normally candidates are expected to submit their modifications directly to the designated Examiner, by email, within a period of three months or six months (as determined by the Examiners) from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* by the College's Registry Team. The Examiner(s) is entitled to request that candidate undertakes further work on the thesis if the original modifications requested following the viva have not been completed to their satisfaction. Examiners may not request additional modifications at this stage.

Re-submission of thesis

99. Normally candidates are expected to provide any re-submission to the College's Registry Team within a period of one calendar year from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* by the College's Registry Team. The resubmitted thesis should be provided in line with the requirements for a first soft-bound thesis as set out at paragraph 89 above. A candidate re-submitting their thesis is subject to the College's normal Annual Progress Monitoring processes.

Examination and Examiners

100. Research degree students are examined on the basis of a body of work (normally a thesis) and submit to a *viva voce* examination undertaken by suitably qualified individuals with the relevant expertise. This section of the *Manual* covers the nomination and appointment of examiners, their duties and responsibilities and the recommendations available to examiners.

General Principles

101. Following submission of the thesis, a *viva voce* examination will be held, at which the candidate will be required to defend the subject of their thesis. There must be a minimum of two Examiners to examine the candidate, normally one Internal Examiner and one External Examiner. The Internal Examiner will be a suitably qualified member of staff of Global College Malta.
102. The External Examiner will not be a member of staff of Global College Malta. Former members of the College's academic staff should not normally be invited to act as External Examiners until a period of some four years has elapsed since they left the employment of Global College Malta. A second External Examiner may be appointed where the candidate (studying on a full-time or part-time basis) is a member of the College's staff, this includes College academic and support staff.

103. The candidate's supervisor(s) will make a recommendation as to the Examiners to be appointed and this will be approved by the College's Academic Dean.
104. The *viva voce* will not be recorded and the *viva voce* may not be undertaken remotely, all parties must be co-located in an appropriate venue.
105. In the case of re-submissions a second *viva voce* will be held in order to allow the candidate the opportunity to defend their thesis. Where all examiners agree that the thesis is a straight pass and that a second *viva voce* is not required, very exceptionally, the *viva voce* may be waived. No modifications may be requested of the candidate if a straight pass is recommended. This provision in no way precludes a *viva voce* being held for any resubmission.
106. On receipt of a modified thesis following a *viva voce*, if the Examiners determine the required modifications have not been made or completed to a sufficiently high standard, they may require the candidate to undertake additional work. This return of the thesis may continue until the Examiners are satisfied with the thesis provided that the modifications being requested are not additional to those required immediately following the *viva voce*. Students who fail to submit their thesis within the maximum period of submission may have their studies terminated.
107. Students who fail to engage with the modifications or resubmission process may be deemed to have withdrawn from their programme.

Criteria for the appointment of doctoral Examiners

108. The College requires that its examiners for doctoral programmes are either a subject specialist who is currently research active or has an involvement in on-going projects or is an expert practitioner, demonstrated by ten years or more of professional experience in a relevant area that includes holding an appropriate senior position.
109. Examiners should normally hold a qualification at Doctoral level or, alternatively, at least at Master's level where the Master's has a demonstrable piece of independent research associated with its award. These qualifications should be from a higher education institution that provides secure academic standards for undertaking research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols, within a research environment that offers candidates appropriate opportunities and support.
110. Where the candidate is a member of academic staff of the College, individuals who are subordinate to the candidate should not normally be appointed as an internal Examiner.

Appointment of Examiners

111. The appointment of examiners is initiated by the candidate advising their Principal Supervisor that they intend to submit their thesis. This notification acts as advance notice to the College that examiners need to be appointed.
-

112. The formal responsibility for the appointment of Examiners rests with the College's Academic Dean, following recommendation from the research student's supervisory team. The College's Academic Dean will initially receive an appropriate summary of the candidate's thesis, indicating clearly the field or fields of specialist study that are involved, from the candidate's Principal Supervisor. The Principal Supervisor will also supply a list of proposed or External Examiners, with a clear indication of their specialised competence and indicating how this matches the detailed content of the candidate's thesis. Supervisors must ensure that none of the proposed Examiners has had a substantial direct involvement in the candidate's research project and thesis. For example, it would not normally be appropriate for an Examiner to be a co-author on a paper resulting from the research presented in the thesis.
113. Once the College's Academic Dean has determined the composition of the examination panel, the College's Registry Team will write to the identified individuals, outlining the conditions of appointment and their responsibilities as examiners. Candidates will not be informed of the names of the approved Examiners until the formal appointment of those Examiners by the College has taken place. Once the Examiners have been appointed, it is the responsibility of the Principal Supervisor to inform the candidate of the names of the appointed Examiners. Neither the supervisors or the candidate must contact the appointed Examiners prior to the *viva voce* to discuss any matter connected to the examination, other than logistical arrangements.

Outcome of the *viva voce* Examination

114. The outcomes available to Examiners are:
- i. That the degree of Doctor of Philosophy be awarded;
 - ii. That the degree of Doctor of Philosophy be awarded subject to the candidate making minor modifications to the thesis within three months of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* examination by the College;
 - iii. That the degree of Doctor of Philosophy be awarded subject to the candidate making major modifications to the thesis within six months of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* examination by the College;
 - iv. That the candidate be permitted to make a subsequent application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a further *viva voce* examination, on one occasion only, provided that the application is made no later than one calendar year from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* examination by the College. This outcome cannot be used where the *viva voce* examination is in respect of a resubmitted thesis;
 - v. That the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded, subject to minor or major modifications being made to the thesis, if required, within three or six months (as

applicable) of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* examination by the College;

- vi. That the candidate be permitted to make a subsequent application for the degree of Master of Philosophy with a further *viva voce* examination, on one occasion only, provided that the application is made no later than one calendar year from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of their *viva voce* examination by the College. This outcome cannot be used where the viva examination is in respect of a resubmitted thesis; or,
- vii. That the candidate be deemed not to have attained the standard required for the degree of either Doctor of Philosophy or Master of Philosophy and that no further opportunity for examination be permitted.

Threshold for Modification and Resubmissions

- 115. Determining the outcome of a *viva voce* examination is strictly the considered and reflective academic judgement of the Examiners however the circumstances in which modifications and resubmission are appropriate are outlined below.
 - 116. The outcome of minor modifications is appropriate when:
 - The modifications do not alter the substance of the thesis in any significant or fundamental manner;
 - The modifications address minor errors, omissions of substance, typographical errors, occasional stylistic or grammatical flaws, corrections to references, addition/modification to a limited number of figures and minor changes to layout;
 - The modifications may require limited further analysis; and,or,
 - The modifications require no new data collection.
 - 117. The outcome of major modifications is appropriate when:
 - Large quantities of minor modifications are required; and,or,
 - The reordering of chapters, without substantive change to the central argument of the thesis, is required.
 - 118. The outcome of resubmission is appropriate when:
 - A substantial rewrite of the thesis is required;
 - Substantial additional data collection is required; and/or,
-

- The conclusions of the thesis may need to be substantially altered.

119. A candidate is not permitted to request the opportunity of making a re-submission; it is wholly the decision of the Examiners whether a candidate should be allowed to re-submit.

Failure of the Examiners to Agree an Outcome

120. Where Examiners are unable to agree on an outcome of the examination, each Examiner will prepare an independent commentary outlining the reasons underpinning their viewpoint and submit it to the College Principal. In discussion with the College's Academic Dean, the Principal will review the commentaries of the Examiners and determine the appropriate course of action, having regard to the options available at paragraph 114 above.

Disclosure by Candidates of Issues Affecting Examination

121. Candidates are responsible for disclosing any medical or exceptional circumstances that may affect their performance in the *viva voce* examination to their Principal Supervisor in the first instance who, where appropriate, shall refer the candidate to the relevant College support service. The Principal Supervisor is responsible for informing the College's Academic Dean of any such disclosures, seeking consent from the student to share this information before doing so.

122. On receipt of such a disclosure in advance of a *viva voce* examination, the College's Academic Dean shall contact the Examiners to brief them of the issues raised by the research student. On disclosure of a disability or health issue the College will make adjustments to the conduct or operation of the *viva voce* examination, which are determined to be reasonable. Reasonable adjustments do not alter the standard of attainment required to achieve the doctoral degree being sought. All adjustments must be approved in writing by the College's Academic Dean in advance of the *viva voce* taking place.

Entitlements and Responsibilities of Candidates in Relation to the Examination

123. Candidates registered on a Global College Malta research degree programme are entitled to a fair, timely and properly conducted examination and to the allocation of appropriately qualified individuals as Examiners.

124. Following submission of their thesis for examination, candidates are required to take responsibility for their preparation for the *viva voce*. The candidate will be examined on the material that has been submitted and the context within which the research has been conducted. The candidate may not submit further material after initial submission of the thesis.

125. Candidates should maintain a professional and courteous relationship with the Examiners and should be prepared to potentially receive critical feedback on their work in the *viva voce*. They are entitled to expect, however, that any feedback will be provided by their Examiners in a constructive and supportive way. If a candidate feels that they wish to raise concerns about the conduct of the *viva voce* examination, in the first instance they should raise the issue with the College's Academic Dean.

126. Candidates should inform their Principal Supervisor and the College’s Registry Team before the *viva voce* of any exceptional or medical circumstances that might affect their ability to attend the viva examination.
127. The Examiners will treat the student’s research thesis as privileged and confidential information. The full thesis must be submitted to the Examiners for examination. Where a candidate or their sponsor considers that elements of the thesis are particularly confidential, the candidate should inform the Student Administration Office prior to submission of the thesis, in order for the Examiners to be informed of the particularly sensitive nature of the material.

Ethical approval of Research Degree Projects

128. It is the responsibility of each student registered on a College programme leading to the award of a postgraduate research degree to consult with their supervisors to determine whether their proposed research will require ethical approval and, if so, to ensure that they follow the correct procedures for obtaining such approval. Failure to obtain any necessary ethical approvals for research, conducting research that requires ethical approval before consent has been given or breaching the terms imposed by an approving authority may constitute research misconduct.

Ethical Approval Procedure

129. Prior to undertaking research, all postgraduate research students and their supervisors are responsible for ensuring that an appropriate assessment of risk has been carried out. Where, during the planning phase, it is identified that ethical approval for a research project is required, it is the responsibility of the student to undertake the process to obtain such approval. Moreover, the student may not commence work on the project until such approval has been granted. **Appendix 20** to this Manual sets out the College’s Ethics Approval Form.
130. Each student is ultimately responsible for adhering to the processes for obtaining ethical approval, ensuring that they do not undertake work on the project until such approval has been granted and that in conducting their research, they remain within the terms agreed by the approving authority. Through the normal supervisory relationship, supervisors must have due regard to whether students are undertaking these responsibilities in the conduct of their research. Any concerns must be noted and, where appropriate, reported to the College’s Academic Dean.
131. It is the responsibility the College’s Academic Dean, working closely with members of the College’s academic staff, to scrutinise project proposals from postgraduate research students. The College’s Academic Dean is empowered to grant ethical approval where appropriate to a research project, with whatever conditions or limitations they see fit.

132. In the event that the student intends to conduct research outside of Malta, they shall be subject to the local ethical review regulations of each country in which they intend to work. They may also require additional approvals via an appropriate review procedure in each country. It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to ensure that they obtain the necessary authority to conduct research outside of Malta.
133. Where a research student may require ethical approval from an external authority, the College will recognise that the relevant external body will provide the appropriate ethical approval within their jurisdiction. In any such circumstances the student must notify the College's Academic Dean of their intention to seek such approval and provide a draft copy of their application.
134. Following appropriate consideration by the College's Academic Dean, a letter will be sent to the student and their Principal Supervisor by the College's Academic Dean outlining whether or not ethical approval for the project has been granted and any conditions or limitations that are to be placed on the project by the College. If approval is not granted, the College's Academic Dean will provide guidance on whether a modified proposal may be resubmitted.

Academic and Research Integrity

135. Global College Malta requires that students undertaking a programme leading to the award of a postgraduate research degree create work that is substantially a product of their own original research and writing. The College further requires that any research undertaken by students of the College is conducted ethically and with due regard to all applicable College procedures. Failure to adhere to these principles may constitute a breach of academic and research integrity. Where there is any suspicion that a student may be in breach of the College's academic and research integrity principles (please refer to paragraphs 75 to 91 of Section 5 of this *Manual*), at any point during their period of registration or following the conferment of a College postgraduate research degree, the procedure outlined below will be followed.

Maintaining Academic and Research Integrity

136. In order to adhere to the College's principles of academic and research integrity, College research students are expected to abide by the following conventions when completing work during their period of registration with the College:
- i. Acknowledge all sources of information, knowledge and ideas used when completing work for submission by consistently and correctly using an acceptable referencing system;
 - ii. Produce work that is the product of their own, individual efforts. An exception to this is where a piece of work is the result of a joint or combined research effort (such as, for

example, a jointly authored research paper), whereby all contributing parties should be appropriately acknowledged;

- iii. Declare whether they have used work before in a previous research output or submission (whether successful or not) using an acceptable referencing system;
 - iv. Present accurate information and data that has been obtained appropriately and which is a fair representation of their own endeavours, knowledge and understanding; and,
 - v. Adhere and comply with all applicable regulatory, legal and professional obligations and associated ethical requirements.
137. It is the sole responsibility of the research student to act in a way that is consistent with the principles set out above and to seek advice and guidance from their Principal Supervisor or the College's Academic Dean if they are unclear.

Allegations of Breaches of Academic and Research Integrity

138. Allegations of a research student registered for a programme leading to the award of a postgraduate research degree being in breach of the College's principles of academic and research integrity may be submitted by any member of the College, Examiner, research sponsor, research participant, member of the public or organisation.
139. Allegations should normally be made in writing to the College's Academic Dean as soon as possible after suspicion arises. Any delays in reporting should be explained. Allegations should contain as much evidence as is available to the complainant. The identity of the complainant will, as far as possible, remain confidential throughout the initial stages of investigation.
140. Allegations of breaches of academic and research integrity may arise from the conduct of the student and/or in relation to work created by the student. For example, this might include:
- Material created by the student for dissemination either internally in the College or externally, where the student identifies that work as being produced as a result of research or scholarly activity being undertaken as part of their programme of study;
 - Work submitted as part of the annual research progress monitoring cycle;
 - Thesis or exhibition presented for examination.
141. The College, through the office of the College's Academic Dean, reserves the right to initiate an investigation, even if there is no specific complainant, but where there exists good cause to suspect that a breach of academic and research integrity might have occurred.
142. At any stage during a student's period of registration, the College's Academic Dean may require an electronic copy of any written work prepared by a research student be submitted for

checking via the College's plagiarism detection software, Turnitin. Where a student is required to submit an electronic copy of their written work, failure to do so in a format that can be accepted by the College's plagiarism detection software for the purposes of checking, may constitute a disciplinary matter.

143. Where the allegation arises during the course of the research student's examination process, the examination shall be suspended and the matter reported to the College Principal. The point at which this occurs shall be determined by the Examiners alone:
- In the event that a breach of academic and research integrity is suspected prior to the conduct of the *viva voce*, the Examiners may either suspend the examination at that point, or may continue with the *viva voce* if they are of the opinion that the candidate may be able to explain the aspects of their work which are thought to be problematic;
 - In the event that a breach of academic and research integrity is suspected during the conduct of the *viva voce*, the Examiners shall determine an appropriate point at which to conclude proceedings and suspend the examination; and/or,
 - Irrespective of the point at which the examination is suspended, the Examiners shall refrain from making any recommendation as to the outcome of the examination.

Postgraduate Research Academic Appeals Procedure

144. The College's postgraduate research academic appeals procedure is intended to allow College research students to raise concerns about their academic progress, where there is evidence to suggest that it is reasonable to do so. The procedure is designed to ensure that these concerns are fully considered and that, where appropriate, action is taken to deal with them.
145. At all times the College strives to ensure that the academic experience of each of its students is positive and productive. However, where its research students might have concerns, it is important that these are directed appropriately. The postgraduate academic appeals procedure is designed to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve outcomes that are appropriate to their ability. However, recognising that there may be times when a student is dissatisfied with their experience which has not had a direct impact on their academic achievement, the College operates a comprehensive complaints policy.
146. For further information on the College's appeals procedures please refer to Section 5 of this *Manual*.



GLOBAL COLLEGE MALTA
QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL (2021)

Appendix 20 to accompany Section 6 – Postgraduate Research Activity

Research Ethics Form

Name	
Student Number	
GCM Email address	
Research type (please tick box)	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Student
	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate Student
	<input type="checkbox"/> College staff member
Supervisor	
Title of Research	
Expected date of commencement	
Approximate duration	

1) Briefly describe the rationale of your research proposal

2) What are the research aims?

3) Please describe your research design

--

4) Methods to be used for data collection and analysis

--

5) Will any vulnerable groups be used as participants in your study?

	Yes
	No

6) Briefly describe the participant characteristics to be involved in the research

--

7) How will participants be selected?

--

--

8) What potential risks to the participants do you foresee?

--

9) How do you propose to deal with any potential risks to participants?

--

10) What potential risks do you foresee for the researcher(s)?

--

11) How do you intend to deal with any potential risk to the researcher(s)?

--

--

12) Will informed consent be asked from participants?		
--	--	--

	Yes	Please attach the consent form
	No	If 'No', please give reasons below:

--

13) Will participants be given the right to withdraw throughout the research process?		
--	--	--

	Yes	Please attach the consent form
	No	If 'No', please give reasons below:

--

14) How do you ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants?		
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Applicant's support	
Signed	
Date	

Supervisor's support	
Signed	
Date	

College Academic Dean's support	
Signed	
Date	