Guidance for Late Stage Review
To be completed by doctoral students (PhD, MD[Res] and EngD) no later than 24 months (full-time) and 48 months (part-time)[1]

Late Stage Review (LSR)

1. The university requires that a review of a student's doctoral research ability will be undertaken to determine whether registration of the doctoral degree can continue. **The LSR must be completed by doctoral students no later than 24 months (full-time) and 48 months (part-time), from the date of initial registration, which will include one opportunity for re-assessment**.

2. The purpose of the Late Stage Review is to confirm that the student:
   a. understands their research problem adequately;
   b. has a critical awareness of the relevant literature on the subject;
   c. has the capacity to pursue research;
   d. has a reasonable plan for future work;
   e. will complete within the registration period.

3. The form of the review will be determined by the student's department and approved by the Director of Postgraduate Studies.

4. Where generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools have been used in the preparation of assessed work, students are required to provide an appropriate reference to the specific tool utilised, in accordance with the university's [guidance on the use of generative AI](#). In addition, students must offer a clear explanation of how the toll was employed, the extent of its contribution to the work, and the means by which any AI-generated content was subject to critical evaluation.

5. These arrangements apply to all doctoral students whether full-time or part-time, registered under the Partner Research Institute (PRI) Scheme, Split PhD Scheme or for Joint PhDs (unless a variation has been approved by the university).

6. The assessment panel will include at least one independent academic assessor (a

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[1] The milestone deadlines listed in this document apply to students admitted from October 2021 onwards. Students registered prior to October 2021 should refer to the Academic Regulations in effect for their cohort. Additionally, the timings of some milestones may vary for some CDT students and some EngD students. Students are advised to check the timing of their milestones with their department.

member of academic staff independent from the research 'group', i.e. from the project and the supervisor) in addition to the supervisor.

7. If the university determines that the student's progress is such that they cannot continue, the student may be required to withdraw at this stage; alternatively, the university may transfer their registration to the degree of MPhil. The date of MPhil registration will, in this case, be backdated to the date of the initial doctoral registration. Where a student has had their registration transferred to MPhil following a LSR they should normally complete the MPhil within six months (full-time) and 12 months (part-time) of the date of the LSR.

8. All doctoral students are expected to complete the following:
   a. professional skills development training;
   b. the Online Plagiarism Awareness Course;
   c. the Doctoral Academic Communication Requirement (DACR).

9. The LSR must confirm whether the student has completed the required professional skills development training and Online Plagiarism Awareness Course as follows:

   a. **Doctoral Students (PhD, MD[Res] and EngD):** The university requires all doctoral students to achieve a minimum of four professional skills development training ECRI credits, plus the online Plagiarism Awareness Course. The online Plagiarism Awareness Course is compulsory, but does **not** count towards the minimum credit requirement set out below.

   Doctoral students are required to accumulate a minimum of 4 credits by the LSR as follows:
   - By the Early Stage Assessment – 2 credits
   - By the Late Stage Review – a further 2 credits

Course Length	Number of Credits
Up to 1 day	1
Over 1 day, up to 2 days	2
Over 2 days	3

   b. **MPhil Students:** those who are direct entry MPhil, or those being awarded with an MPhil degree having first registered for a PhD, must complete a minimum of two credits and the online Plagiarism Awareness Course before Examination Entry. The LSR professional development credit requirement does not apply to

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MPhil students.

10. If a doctoral student has not achieved a minimum of four professional skills credits and completed the online Plagiarism Awareness Course by the date of their LSR, then provided they pass the academic requirements of the LSR, the student can still progress with their doctoral programme. However, a condition of progression will be to set a deadline for achieving the required number of professional skills credits and if not already completed, the Plagiarism Awareness Course. This deadline will be set by the Department, in agreement with ECRI.

11. The LSR must also consider whether a student would benefit from further developing their academic communication competence. In such cases, students should be referred to the Centre for Academic English (CfAE) for further academic communication feedback and training.

12. The LSR form must include the names and signatures of the Head of Department (or nominee), the supervisor(s), and the independent assessors.

13. The Late Stage Assessment form can be found on the university's [Academic Policy webpages](#), under the *Milestones for Research Degrees* section.

14. Departments must confirm to the Assessment Records Team in Registry that an LSR has been completed. The completion date will be recorded as the date of the assessment in the university's central student record system. However, the LSR should only be reported and confirmed as complete once all elements of the procedure have been finalised, including submission, examination, and review of the assessment panel's recommendation, confirmed by the Director of Postgraduate Studies (or nominee).

15. In accordance with the university's [Regulations for the Awards of MPhil and PhD](#), any extension to the LSR completion deadline[2] would require approval. An extension should only be considered due to mitigation where a student's progress has been affected by circumstances beyond their control. Students concerned about their ability to submit and complete the assessment for their LSR by the given deadline are advised to speak to their supervisor and departmental administrator at the earliest opportunity. Prior to consideration of an LSR extension request, departments are advised to consider whether an interruption of study would be appropriate and more beneficial to the student based on the mitigation

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[2] 'Completion deadline' refers to the date by when the student submission and oral examination for the ESA must be completed.

declared. For further information, refer to the university's [Student-led Changes to Registration Status Procedure](#).

16. All requests to extend the LSR completion deadline require departmental approval. Once approved, the new deadline must be confirmed to the Assessment Records Team in Registry for recording in the student's central record. The updated deadline will then be visible to students via the PGR Milestones platform on the My Imperial student portal.

17. An approved milestone extension will extend the milestone completion deadline for the individual student with no detriment to the student's academic record; this will allow the student to proceed to assessment in the usual way. Please note that extensions will apply only to the relevant milestone (ESA or LSR), and any agreed extension period will not affect future milestone deadlines or extend the overall registration period.

Guidance on completing the Late Stage Review Form

Section A

18. To be completed by the student and department ahead of the LSR. Section A includes confirmation from the department that the student has completed the Professional Skills credits, the Online Plagiarism Awareness Course, and the Doctoral Academic Communication Requirement (DACR).

19. ECRI (ecri@imperial.ac.uk) will provide departmental administrators with a report confirming what professional skills courses students have completed. Alternatively, students may present their administrator with a copy of their professional skills attendance certificate as evidence. The CfAE (english@imperial.ac.uk) will be able to provide confirmation that the DACR has been met, if not known.

Section B

20. To be completed by the independent assessor(s) (a member of academic staff independent from the research 'group', i.e. from the project and the supervisor). Departments are reminded that it is best practice to appoint members of staff who are not responsible for providing pastoral care to students as independent assessors of those students.

Section C

21. To be completed by the supervisor following the LSR. Both the supervisor and

student must sign the form to confirm the conversation has taken place.

22. The university is committed to ensuring that its research students receive a world-class experience, supported by high-quality supervision. Supervisors are expected to provide students with regular informal feedback; however, the LSR Form serves as the formal mechanism through which supervisors provide structured feedback to students.

23. Supervisors and assessors are also reminded that students are asked to comment on the quality of supervision that they receive at Imperial as part of the national Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), an important benchmarking tool. Students will be asked to comment on whether they are supported by their supervisors and receive regular feedback on their research activities.

24. Section C has been developed in order to facilitate broader discussions between students and supervisors not just on academic progress but the wider developmental needs of students. Supervisors should also take the opportunity to support students following an outcome of transfer to MPhil.

25. When considering what professional, technical and other training students may need as they progress through their doctoral programme, supervisors are reminded that they can review the full list of training and development opportunities available to students via the ECRI website. It may also be possible for students to attend technical and other taught courses offered by departments. To access this information, supervisors are advised to search the university's timetabling software and contact departments directly to see if venue capacity will permit additional attendees.

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