

Changes to Academic Regulations 2025/2026 (Research)

This document provides details of the substantive changes that have been made to the university’s academic regulations for research programmes (PhD, MPhil, EngD, MDRes) and the DSc for 2024/2025. If further information is required, please contact the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team at quality@imperial.ac.uk. Please note that it would be expected that students liaise with their programme team in the first instance if they have questions regarding the regulatory framework.

1. General Regulations

These regulations apply to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students governed by the *Academic* and *Examination* Regulations (Regs B), and to all research students (PhD, MPhil, EngD, MDRes). There are no changes to these regulations for academic year 2025/2026.

2. Research Regulations (PhD, MPhil)

The table below shows the changes that have been made to the *Regulations for the Awards of MPhil and PhD*. Key changes that have been made relate to:

- Confirmation that students that withdraw or have their studies terminated will not normally be permitted to re-entry for the same, or closely related, field of study.
- ESA and LSR reassessment opportunities

From 1st September, all students will be permitted to have one reassessment opportunity should they fail to satisfy the examiners at first attempt at their Early Stage Assessment or Late Stage Review

- Updates to wording of the purpose of the ESA and LSR to provide clarity and progression from ESA to LSR.
- DACR requirements (see below)

Doctoral Academic-Communication Requirement (DACR)

From 1st September 2025, the university will require all new doctoral students to undertake academic-communication diagnostic training in the first year of their programme. For the first time, the Requirement will apply to all new doctoral students without exception, i.e. no exemptions.

The diagnostic training replaces both the compulsory initial assessment (DACR A1) and the compulsory progress assessment at ESA (DACR A2). This training will enable each student to understand the extent to which their communication competencies and strategies align with their ambitions and the demands of their doctoral programme. In addition to the training’s self-diagnostic, students will be offered the opportunity to submit a writing sample for personalised feedback and targeted recommendations.

At the beginning of September, all departments will receive further details from Centre for Academic English (CfAE), e.g. how students will access the training and how completion will be recorded.

The updated DACR will be integrated into the latest versions of the ESA guidelines and form template. The university's 2025-26 ESA form will have one section applies to students who began their doctoral programme before 1st September 2025 (i.e. those who were included in the previous version of DACR), and one section applies to students registering on their doctoral programme from 1st September 2025, and who will therefore be participating in the updated Requirement from autumn 2025.

Table of changes: MPhil, PhD regulations

23/24 para number	New para number	Change	Notes
n/a	18	Additional paragraph regarding readmission	Para text: <i>Applicants who have previously enrolled on an MPhil or PhD programme at the university and who subsequently withdrew, either voluntarily or due to academic failure, will not normally be re-admitted to undertake research in the same or a closely related academic field, including with advanced standing.</i>
29	30	Additional line to refer reader to <i>Student-Led Changes to Registration Status Procedure</i>	
43	44	Remove 'normally'	All students will be granted an opportunity to be re-assessed in their ESA
44-46	45-48	Updates to ESA purpose definition and para sequencing	
47	49	Remove 'normally'	All students will be granted an opportunity to be re-assessed in their LSR
48	50	Update to purpose of LSR	
54-56	56-58	Update to DACR (see above)	
57	59	Minor update to improve wording	

3. Research Regulations (EngD)

EngD regulations include:

- Regulations for the award of Doctor in Engineering (EngD) Non-Destructive Evaluation
- Regulations for the award of Engineering (EngD) Nuclear Engineering
- Regulations for the award of Engineering (EngD) QNDE
- Regulations for the award of Engineering (EngD) Water Engineering

There are no changes to these regulations for academic year 2025/2026.

4. Research Regulations (MDRes)

There are no changes to these regulations for academic year 2025/2026.

5. Regulations for the Award of the Doctor of Science (DSc) Degree

There are no changes to these regulations for academic year 2025/2026.

6. Regulations for Students

Staff, students and interested parties are reminded that these regulations were rescinded from 2024/2025. Please see the mapping document on the regulations webpages which details of how aspects of these regulations have been incorporated elsewhere within the university's regulatory structures or have been fully rescinded.