Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art & Design

Academic Regulations 2027/28

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Academic Regulations 2026/27

1. About the Royal College of Art Regulations

The Royal College of Art has established Regulations, approved by Senate, which define the conditions that must be satisfied for a given process or processes to take place. These include:

- Financial Regulations – conditions that must be satisfied for the College to release its funds for any purpose;
- Information Technology Regulations – conditions that must be satisfied for an individual to gain and maintain access to the College's information technology provision;
- Library Regulations – conditions that must be satisfied for an individual to gain and maintain access to the College's library provision.

This document sets out the College's Academic Regulations which must be satisfied for the College to award appropriate academic credits and awards for a programme of study. In addition to the Academic Regulations, the College publishes a range of policies, Terms and Conditions and other governance documents that define the College's commitments to, and requirements of, its staff, students and other stakeholders. These include:

- The Admissions Policy (defining the College's commitment to ensuring admissions practices that are fair, transparent and equitable);
- Terms and Conditions of Registration (articulating the commitments made by the College to each student and each student to the College when completing registration);
- The Student Complaints Policy (defining the College's commitment to ensuring complaints procedures that are fair, efficient and transparent);
- The Academic Appeals Policy (defining the College's commitment to ensuring that appeals against academic decisions of the College are dealt with fairly, efficiently and transparently, while also ensuring that academic standards are upheld).

All the College's Student Policies can be viewed here.

The Academic Registrar shall determine the interpretation of these Regulations, subject to the authority of Senate.

1.1. Scope

The Charter, Statutes and Ordinances of the College provide for the establishment of these Regulations, which define the conditions that must be satisfied for an award of the College to be made to a student.

The Academic Regulations apply to all registered students at the College.

The Academic Regulations that apply to an individual student will normally be the Regulations in force on the first date of the student's registration. Where amendments are made during the period of the student's registration that are advantageous to the student, then the revised Academic Regulations shall normally apply. Under no circumstances will the Academic Regulations be applied retrospectively for students whose registration has completed (whether through graduation, withdrawal, or termination).

2. Glossary of Terms

ACADEMIC BOARD FOR CONCESSIONS & DISCIPLINE (ABCD)	Committee of Senate with primary responsibility for confirming awards of the College.
ASSESSMENT	Review of student achievement of unit learning outcomes through submitted or presented work.

ASSESSMENT BOARD	Board constituted at the level of academic school to consider the recommendations on unit outcomes.
AWARD	Validated qualification of the College - Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate (Exit Award), Postgraduate Diploma (Exit award), MA, MArch, MDes, MFA, MRes, MPhil or PhD level. Details of College awards are published on the College's website.
AWARDING BOARD	Board constituted at the level of academic school to consider final recommendations on programme level awards to the ABCD.
COLLEGE	Royal College of Art.
CONTINUATION STATUS	Period of registration undertaken by a research student, during which they have completed their research programme and are writing up the results. Students on continuation status will not normally have access to formal supervision sessions.
DEFERRAL	A decision taken before an assessment takes place to postpone that assessment on grounds of ill health or other circumstances beyond the control of the student.
ENROLMENT	Process by which students confirm arrangements for the payment of fees for the year and accept any revised terms and conditions of registration. Students are advised annually of the process they must undertake to complete enrolment.
LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)	Approved period of up to 3 terms (6 terms for part-time students), where the student remains registered on their programme of study but is not required to enrol. Students taking an LOA will not pay any tuition fee for the duration of the LOA but will not be able to access facilities or resources offered by the College.
LEVEL	Academic level of study, as defined by the College, which is consistent with the Quality Assurance Agency's Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
NON-AWARDING BOARD (NAB)	Board constituted to consider and approve results of individual units or elements of programmes, and to consider decisions on progression to subsequent stages of the programme
REFERRAL	Opportunity for a student to retake an element or elements of assessment by a specific date where they have not passed all unit learning outcomes on the first attempt.

REGISTRATION	Process by which an individual becomes a student at the College. Registration includes confirmation of the fee and visa status of an applicant, confirmation that the applicant has appropriate qualifications for entry to a programme, and acceptance by the applicant of the College's Terms and Conditions.
SENATE	Primary academic committee of the College.
STUDENT	Individual who has registered, and has not completed, withdrawn from, or had their registration terminated from, a programme of study offered by the College.

3. General Regulations

The General Regulations apply to all students who are registered to programmes leading to awards, including Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, MA, MArch, MDes, MFA, MRes, MPhil and PhD. For the avoidance of doubt, these regulations do not apply to students registered on defined short courses or executive education.

3.1. Registration

3.1.1. Each student must register for an awarding-programme of the College, by completing the registration process published by the Academic Registry.[1] Registration is confirmed when the student signifies their acceptance of the College's Terms and Conditions of Registration, meets any conditions outlined in the College's offer of a place on one of its programmes, and completes payment of the first instalment of the fee, as defined in the Terms and Conditions. Only students who have been offered, and have accepted, a formal offer of a place on a programme at the College may register.

3.1.2. Students may only be examined for the award that they are registered to. Students may be awarded an "exit" award, where they have not met the requirements for the award that they are registered to, but achieved criteria for a separate award as defined in the programme specification and Academic Regulations.

3.1.3. Registration is considered complete when a student has graduated with the award that they were registered to.

3.1.4. A student's registration may be terminated if they are found to have obtained an Offer because of a fraudulent, dishonest or misleading application.

3.1.5. The registration of a student may be terminated on the grounds of academic failure, as specified in the Academic Regulations, or may be terminated on the grounds of misconduct or academic misconduct, as specified in the relevant College policies.

[1] Research students shall normally register to a School rather than a programme; for the purpose of these regulations a research student's programme shall be regarded as the School to which they are registered.

3.1.6. Students are not permitted to use a translation device for any assessment. Students who are found to have used, or are using, a translation device during an assessment will automatically be failed for that unit, reported to ABCD, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

3.1.7. Students are not permitted to register for a second time on a programme of study that they have already successfully completed.

3.1.8. The College may accept a student onto a programme and grant exemptions from parts of the programme where the student has certificated learning gained from a previous programme taken at the College or elsewhere. Any such exemptions are granted at the discretion of the College, on the basis that the student has already demonstrated achievement of the defined learning outcomes of the College programme.

3.1.9. All requests for exemption from parts of a college programme must be approved by the Academic Board for Concessions and Discipline (ABCD).

3.1.10. For taught programmes the maximum a student may be exempted from is 30 credits. This does not apply to MA Architecture who may be permitted direct entry into Year Two of their programme.

3.1.11. For research programmes students will need to discuss and agree to any exemptions with their supervisor and the Research Office, who will make a recommendation to ABCD.

3.2. Maximum Periods of Registration and Transfer arrangements

3.2.1. The College has discretion to extend the maximum period of a student's registration (including any Leave of Absence) if there are deemed to be appropriate circumstances for extension.

Qualification	**Maximum Period of Registration**
Graduate Diploma and One-year Master's programme	4 years full time 6 years part time
Two-year programme	5 years full time 7 years part time
MPhil	Minimum - 2 years full time[2] Maximum - 3 years full time Minimum – 4 years part time Maximum – 6 years part time
PhD *Continuation Status is included in the maximum registration period and is for a maximum of one academic year.*	Minimum - 3 years full time Maximum - 4 years full time Confirmation/Transfer - should take place no sooner than the end of year 1 and no later than the end of year 2

[2] MPhil candidates can apply for examination for their award at a minimum of 1-year full-time registration in exceptional circumstances. Submission for examination at the end of year requires approval by ABCD

	Minimum - 6 years part time Maximum - 7 years part time Confirmation/Transfer - should take place no sooner than the end of year 2 and no later than the end of year 4

3.2.2 Students may only transfer registration to another College programme with the approval of the ABCD, acting on the request of the accepting Head of Programme or Academic Lead. Further information can be found in the Student Transfer Arrangements Policy.

3.3. Enrolment

3.3.1. Students must enrol each academic year of their study, unless they have taken an approved Leave of Absence (LOA). Enrolment must be completed in accordance with the enrolment process.

3.3.2 Unenrolled students may not be assessed and shall not have access to College facilities. Students who fail to complete enrolment by a date published by the Academic Registry will be considered to have withdrawn from their programme of study, and their registration will be terminated.

3.4. Language of Study

3.4.1. The language of instruction and assessment on all programmes delivered by the College is English.

3.5. Confirmation of Award

3.5.1. Only the Senate or the ABCD, acting on behalf of the Senate, has the authority to confirm an award of the College, to permit a student to re-submit their work for re-assessment, or to fail a student.

3.5.2. College awards are constituted as below:

Programme	**Total Credits**	**FHEQ Level**
PhD	N/A	Level 8
MPhil	N/A	Level 8
MA/MArch Design Practice/MRes	180[3]	Level 7
MArch Architecture	240[4]	Level 7
MDes/MFA	300[5]	Level 7
MA/MSc Innovation Design Engineering	360 *(180 credits per award)*[6]	Level 7
Postgraduate Diploma	120	Level 7
Postgraduate Certificate	60	Level 7
Graduate Diploma	120	Level 6

[3] Where appropriate, a relevant Exit Award (Postgraduate Certificate (60 Credits) or Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits)) will be awarded where a student does not successfully complete the full credits required for a Masters' award.

[4] See n.3.

[5] See n.3.

[6] See n.3.

3.5.3. Senate has delegated authority to the Academic Board for Concessions and Discipline (ABCD) to exercise those powers assigned to it within these Regulations. Any decision of the ABCD made under delegated authority shall have the same force and effect as a decision of Senate.

3.6. Leave of Absence

3.6.1. A student may apply to their Head of Programme or Academic Lead (or Head of Doctoral Programmes in the case of research programmes) for a Leave of Absence (LOA), in accordance with the policy and criteria specified in the College's Leave of Absence Policy.

3.6.2. Leave of Absence is normally restricted to a maximum of 3 terms for a full-time student or 6 terms for a part-time student. While on LOA the student will remain registered to their programme but not enrolled. They will not pay fees during their period of absence and will not have access to any facilities or electronic resources of the College during this time. No student may be examined while on LOA.

3.7. Non-Submission or Non-Attendance at Assessment

3.7.1. If a student fails to attend for an assessment or fails to submit work for an assessment and does not submit Extenuating Circumstances acceptable to the relevant Assessment Board, the ABCD has the authority to fail the student for that assessment, considering the recommendation from the Head of Programme or Academic Lead.

3.8.Termination of Study

3.8.1. A student's registration may be terminated where:

a) the student has failed to satisfy the academic requirements of their programme, as defined in these Regulations;
b) the student has been found to have committed Academic Misconduct in accordance with the Academic Misconduct Policy;
c) the student has failed to meet the requirements of the Academic Engagement Policy;
d) the student has withdrawn from their programme of study; or
e) the student's registration is otherwise terminated in accordance with the College's Terms and Conditions or other approved College policies.

3.8.2. Except where immediate termination is permitted under another College policy, no student's registration shall be terminated until they have been notified in writing of the concerns identified and have been given a reasonable opportunity to respond.

3.8.3. Decisions to terminate a student's registration under these Regulations shall be approved by the Academic Board for Concessions and Discipline (ABCD) acting under delegated authority from Senate.

3.8.4. A student whose registration is terminated shall be notified in writing of the decision, the reasons for the decision, and any right to request a review or appeal under the relevant College policy.

3.9.Extenuating Circumstances

3.9.1. An Assessment Board may approve an application from a student for an element of assessment to be deferred in accordance with the College's Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

3.9.2. Applications for Extenuating Circumstances should be submitted on the relevant form to the General Manager of the relevant School or, for Doctoral students, the Head of Doctoral Programmes or their nominee, no later than 24 hours after the assessment deadline.

3.9.3. The Extenuating Circumstances policy outlines the full potential range of outcomes depending on whether an application for Extenuating Circumstances is successful or not.

3.9.4. Where a Postgraduate Research Student has a claim for Extenuating Circumstances in relation to their viva voce examination accepted, that student may only be examined via a rescheduled examination.

3.9.5. Where a student is judged to have marginally failed their assessment and the student has Extenuating Circumstances, then the Assessment Board may apply to the ABCD for the student to be considered as a pass in that assessment.

3.10.Academic Misconduct

3.10.1. Allegations against students of cheating, gaining an unfair advantage or any other assessment offences are considered in accordance with the College's Academic Misconduct Policy.

3.11.Appeals

3.11.1. Appeals against assessment outcomes are considered under the College's Academic Appeals Policy.

3.12.Revocation of Award

3.12.1. Where information is provided that the confirmation of an award to a student was made in contravention of the Academic Regulations in force at the time of the award, the Academic Registrar may apply to the ABCD to have that award revoked.

3.12.2. The ABCD may, upon application from the Academic Registrar, revoke an award of any student subsequently found to have contravened the College's Academic Misconduct Policy while producing work for assessment for the award.

3.12.3. The College has the right to revoke a student's award if, after they graduate, it is found that they have committed fraudulent or dishonest actions at any point during their registration with us or provided misleading statements at the point of application.

4. General Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study

The Regulations for Taught programmes apply to all students who are registered to College taught awarding- programmes, including Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate, MA, MArch, MFA, MDes, and MRes.

4.1. Attendance

4.1.1. Students are expected to attend all scheduled teaching sessions as directed by their Head of Programme or Academic Lead. Failure to do so may lead to the termination of a student's registration.

4.1.2. On some programmes students can select Elective units. Elective units are credit bearing, and the credits count towards the completion of a student's programme.[7] Attendance at teaching sessions and successful completion of an Elective's assessments are required to ensure that a student has sufficient credits to be awarded their degree.

4.1.3. A student who is absent through illness must notify their Head of Programme or Academic Lead. If a student is away for more than seven consecutive days within a 14-day period, a medical certificate will be required. Failure to provide a medical certificate within 21 days of the student's return to College may lead to the termination of a student's registration.

4.1.4. Applications for absence on compassionate grounds, for periods of up to 21 days, must in all cases be made to the Head of Programme or Academic Lead for approval. Unauthorised absence may lead to the termination of a student's registration.

4.1.5. Students holding a Student Visa are required to follow any policy on regular attendance set by the UK government. Programme staff are required to report any unauthorised non-attendance to the Academic Registry, who in turn are legally required to report this to the UK government in accordance with the College's Academic Engagement Policy.[8]

4.1.6. Applications for periods of study leave of up to 31 days must in all cases be made to the Head of Programme or Academic Lead for approval. During a period of study leave a student's enrolment continues and tuition fees remain payable.

4.1.7. Regulations for periods of absence of longer than specified above will be considered in accordance with Leave of Absence Regulations.

4.2. Assessment

4.2.1. Students are required to take one or more formal assessments per unit during their programme. The purpose of these assessments is to ensure that the student continues to make reasonable progress towards achieving the published learning outcomes for the programme.

4.2.2. It is a student's responsibility to be fully familiar with the assessment submission and deadlines for their programme of study. If a student does not submit their assessment in the prescribed way, this will be considered a non-submission and automatic referral.

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[7] Students can express a preference for the Elective unit(s) they wish to study but are not guaranteed that they will be able to study the elective unit(s) of their choice.

[8] Non-attendance reported to the UK government can lead to the student's visa being curtailed and the right to stay in the UK revoked, along with the termination of the student's registration with the College.

4.2.3. Each student's formal assessment is assessed by an Assessment Panel against criteria published in Programme Handbooks. The Assessment Panel will recommend to Non-awarding Boards, for each student and for each element of assessment, one of the following decisions:

Outcome	Description
PASS	The student has met the requirements for the award
Pass Subject to Corrections (PSTC)	The student has not met the requirements for the award, but in the judgement of the Assessment Panel can do so by making minor corrections to one or more of the submissions for assessment.
REFER	The student has not met the requirements for the award and should resubmit one or more pieces of work to be re-considered for the award.
FAIL	The work does not meet the necessary criteria to pass the unit and cannot reasonably be expected to be amended to meet the criteria within the time available.

4.3. Pass Subject to Corrections

4.3.1. A student who has been awarded a 'Pass subject to Corrections' will be advised of any amendments or additional work to be completed, which should be completed to a deadline, specified by the relevant Board, of no less than one week, and no more than one month, from notification of that Board's decision.

4.3.2. The relevant Board may nominate one of its members to consider the amendments and determine, on behalf of the Board, whether to recommend to ABCD that the student has now passed the assessment. Should a student not meet the conditions of a 'Pass subject to Corrections' within the time frame, the student will be considered referred.

4.4.Referrals

4.4.1. Students who have not met the required standard to pass all elements of an assessment, and do not meet the criteria to be awarded a "pass subject to corrections", may be referred.

4.4.2. A student who has been referred will be set, in writing, a specific programme of work to be submitted for assessment, which will normally be expected to take at least one week to complete.

4.4.3. The Awarding Board approves the programme of work for referred students. The programme of work for referred students should be achievable within the specified timeframe.

4.4.4. Any student can be awarded a 'Pass subject to corrections' within their referral assessment. A student not completing the corrections outlined in assessment feedback in relation to a referral within the specified time scale will be considered to have failed that assessment.

4.4.5. No student is permitted to be referred from any given assessment on more than one occasion.

4.4.6. Students are not allowed to resubmit or resit an assessment that they have already passed, or for which credit has been awarded. Assessments already passed within the programme may not be subject to appeal.

4.4.7. Where a student is referred to a maximum of one unit within a term, the Non-Awarding Board may decide to permit that student to continue with their studies pending completion of the unit in question. Alternatively, it may require a student to take a Leave of Absence (LOA) to return the following year with a view to passing that assessment.

4.4.8. Students referred in more than one unit will be reviewed termly to determine whether they may continue the programme, or are required to take LOA, or whether their registration should be terminated.

4.5.Progression and Continuation

4.5.1. The programme specification will detail if there are progression points, and students are required to have reached a defined standard (including completion of any units) to progress to the next stage of study. Students who have not met the defined standard may only progress to the next stage of the programme with the explicit approval of the ABCD, who will consider the recommendations of the Head of Programme or Academic Lead.

4.5.2. If a student fails a unit they may be permitted to continue onto the next unit of the programme, except where a programme explicitly states that the failed unit is a prerequisite for continuation. They may continue to work towards an exit award where these are available on their registered programme of study.

4.6.External Examiners

4.6.1. The College annually appoints External Examiners, who are suitably qualified and experienced in the relevant subject area. External Examiners are drawn from academic staff of other higher education institutions.

4.6.2. External Examiners do not determine assessment outcomes for individual students and do not act as additional markers. Their role is to review assessment practices, student achievement and academic standards and to advise Assessment Boards, Non-Awarding Boards and Awarding Boards accordingly.

4.7.Aegrotat Awards

4.7.1. Students who are unable to complete their programme due to ill-health may be considered for an aegrotat award. Aegrotat awards may be made by the ABCD, on the recommendation of the Awarding Board. An aegrotat award cannot be given to students on the MA Architecture programme.

4.7.2. To be considered for an Aegrotat award, the Awarding Board will consider the body of work which has been completed together with records of the student's performance and progress during their programme of study. The Awarding Board will determine whether the evidence demonstrates that the student would have

been likely to have reached a standard qualifying them for the award of the appropriate award under normal circumstances.

4.7.3. If, on the recommendation of the Awarding Board, the Aegrotat award is conferred upon a student by the ABCD, that student will not be eligible subsequently to re-enter for assessment for the award.

4.8.Posthumous Awards

4.8.1. Students who die during their studies may be considered for a posthumous award.

4.8.2. Posthumous awards may be made by the ABCD on the recommendation of the Awarding Board.

4.8.3. To be considered for a posthumous award, the Awarding Board will consider the body of work which has been completed together with records of the student's performance and progress during the programme of study. The Awarding Board will determine whether the evidence demonstrates that the student would have been likely to have reached a standard qualifying them for the award under normal circumstances.

5. Assessment Boards and Awarding Boards

5.1.Conduct of Awarding Boards

5.1.1. Awarding Boards have responsibility for considering assessment results, and for making recommendations on awards to the ABCD. The Awarding Board will consider results for each student completing their programme and confirm an outcome in line with the Regulations.

5.1.2. Awarding Boards will be convened for each of the College's Schools. The purpose of Awarding Boards is to ensure that each Non-Awarding Board has been properly constituted and are discharging their responsibilities for assessing the achievement of academic standards by its students appropriately.

5.1.3. The purpose of the Awarding Board is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of their programme of study and that they have achieved the standard required for their award.

5.1.4. The normal composition of the Awarding Board will be:

- The Dean of School (Chair)
- Associate Dean
- The Head of Programme or Academic Lead for the Programme(s)
- At least two tutors/senior tutors who have taught on the programme(s)
- The External Examiner(s)

5.1.5. External Examiners are members of the Awarding Board and shall contribute to the Board's consideration of academic standards and student achievement. The Awarding Board shall normally seek to reach decisions by consensus. Where an External Examiner does not agree with a proposed recommendation of the Awarding Board, the matter shall be referred to the ABCD for consideration and determination. The External Examiner shall be invited to provide a written statement of their concerns.

5.1.6. Awarding Boards normally meet at the completion of the programme to consider award recommendations. The quorum for any meeting will be three, including the Chair and External Examiner. Meetings may be conducted by video conferencing or other remote methods, where necessary. Where remote methods are used, Awarding Board members must have the opportunity to vote upon each recommendation to be made by the Awarding Board.

5.1.7. The Awarding Board shall receive and consider a report on the performance of each student in each unit. The report shall recommend, for each student in each unit, one of the outcomes outlined in the Regulations.

5.2.Non-awarding Boards

5.2.1. Each programme must establish a Non-awarding Board, responsible for approving unit results and referral deadlines, to be held at the end of each term.

5.2.2. Non-awarding Boards may be established for more than one programme.

5.2.3. The minimum composition of a non-awarding Board shall be:

- The Dean of School or Assistant Dean of School (Chair)
- Head(s) of Programme or Senior Tutor from the programme(s)

6. Regulations specific to the award of Master's programmes

These regulations apply only to students on MA/MArch/MDes/MFA/MRes programmes and should be read in addition to the General Regulations for Taught Programmes.

6.1.Award

6.1.1. To be eligible for the award of an MA/MArch/MDes/MFA a student must successfully complete the required number of Level 7 credits, outlined in the Regulations.

6.1.2. The required units are specified in the Programme Specification for each programme.

6.1.3. Students undertaking successive Level 7 programmes are not permitted to submit the same assessment evidence twice. This is considered self-plagiarism and is a form of academic misconduct.

6.1.4. Students who do not complete the programme to which they are registered but do complete some credits, may be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) or Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits), on the recommendation of their Awarding Board, subject to the approval of the ABCD.

6.2.Assessment

6.2.1. Assessment must be conducted by at least one member of academic staff (including Associate Lecturers) and one moderator who should be an AEF member of staff, and who will review a sample of at least 10% including all PSTCs, referrals and fails.

6.2.2. For Independent Research Project (IRP) units, assessment must be conducted by a minimum of two academic members of staff, at least one of whom should be AEF staff.

6.2.3. Where External Examiners cannot be present for an assessment, an appropriate "sampling" method should be used, such as use of videos or transcripts of assessment, to enable External Examiners to confirm that appropriate standards have been met.

7. Regulations Specific to the Award of Graduate Diploma

The regulations for Graduate Diploma programmes of study apply to students registered to Graduate Diploma programmes only, and should be read alongside the General Regulations for Taught Programmes

7.1.Assessment

7.1.1. The assessment methods for each unit of the Graduate Diploma will be defined in the programme documentation. This will include guidance as to how the final unit results shall be calculated.

7.1.2. The final unit result for each unit will be an integer between 0 and 100. The pass mark for each unit will be 40.

7.1.3. If, following the result of a successful appeal, a student is permitted to resubmit an assessment already passed, the result from the final attempt will replace any previous result, even if this is a lower result. This result will be used in any calculation for determining eligibility for Merit or Distinction.

7.1.4. The maximum mark that may be awarded for a piece of work submitted under the referral provisions of these regulations shall be 40.

7.2. Awarding Board

7.2.1. In addition to Assessment Regulations detailed above, the Awarding Board for the Graduate Diploma will make awards in line with the assessment scores outlined below:

Outcome	**Description**
PASS	Where the unit result is between 40 and 100.
Pass Subject to Corrections (PSTC)	Normally where the unit result is between 35 and 40.
REFER	Normally where the unit result is between 20 and 35; the degree of failure should be no more than could be retrieved within 6 weeks.
FAIL	Where the work does not meet the necessary criteria to pass the unit and cannot reasonably be expected to be amended to meet the criteria within the time available.

7.2.2. Following consideration of unit results, each student that has achieved 120 credits will be awarded an overall mark, which will be an integer between 0 and 100. This

mark will be calculated by multiplying the unit mark for each unit by the number of credits awarded for that unit and then dividing the sum of these scores by the number of credits for the programme (normally 120). The Awarding Board will make a recommendation for the final award for each student as follows:

Outcome	**Description**
To award the student a Graduate Diploma with **Distinction**	a student must have an overall mark of 70 or above).
To award the student a Graduate Diploma with **Merit**	a student must have an overall mark of between 60 and 69 inclusive).
To award the student a **Graduate Diploma**	a student must have an overall mark of between 40 and 59 inclusive).
To **refer** the student	
To **fail** the student	

7.2.3. Where the overall mark falls usually within 1 mark of a grade boundary, the Awarding Board has the discretion to consider awarding the higher grade. Criteria for the use of this discretion includes:

- Exit velocity (achievement of higher marks towards the end of the programme);
- Unrepresentative performance in one unit which reduced the overall mark.

7.3. Submission of Referrals

7.3.1. For Graduate Diploma students, the deadline for submission of referred work will normally be no earlier than 5 weeks and no later than 7 weeks, after confirmation of the decision to refer the student. If the revised work remains inadequate, the student will be considered to have failed the programme, and their registration on the programme will be terminated.

8. Regulations for the award of Research Degrees

These Research Degree regulations apply to students registered for the degrees of MPhil and PhD

8.1. Doctoral Training Programme

8.1.1. All students must attend the College doctoral training programme, unless alternative arrangements have been approved, in advance, by the ABCD.

8.1.2. All students are required to attend at least 80% of the mandatory sessions to progress to the next year of study, unless an exception has been agreed by the ABCD.

8.2. Examinations

8.2.1. Candidates must comply with instructions issued by the Research Office on the practical arrangements to be followed for any examination to take place. Failure by candidates to do so may result in examinations being suspended or cancelled.

8.3.Annual Progress Review

8.3.1. Each student, both full time and part time will have a formal Annual Progress Review (APR), other than when this is replaced with Transfer, Confirmation, or Final Examination.

8.3.2. Student progress will be assessed at the APR by an Annual Progress Review Panel. Only those students whose progress is accepted by the ABCD as being satisfactory will be permitted to proceed to the next year. The APR will include a judgement on the student's progress in achieving defined objectives, including those defined in the student's Individual Training Needs Analysis.

8.3.3. On the recommendation of the APR Panel, and with the approval of the ABCD, a student whose progress is not satisfactory will be referred.

8.3.4. The minimum composition for an APR panel is:

- Dean/ Associate Dean or a member of the academic staff, at Senior Tutor level or nominee, nominated by the Dean (Chair);
- One Tutor/Senior Tutor from the student's School or Research Centre, who is not part of the supervisory team;
- The student's supervisor(s).

8.3.5. The Panel may seek advice from any appointed external consultant.

8.3.6. For students registered jointly between two Schools or Research Centres, the APR panel should include the postgraduate research lead for the lead School and the postgraduate research lead for the second School, or their nominees.

8.3.7. The lead School is defined as the school which will be responsible for arranging APRs, confirmation, transfer, and / or final examinations and other administrative requirements in consultation with the second School. Where either of the postgraduate research leads is, or has been, the supervisor of the student being examined, the APR panel should be chaired by another postgraduate research lead, or a Senior Tutor from another School, who is an experienced research supervisor.

8.3.8. It is the responsibility of the Chair of any APR Panel to ensure that the correct procedures and standards are adhered to, both during and after the examination and that all paperwork is submitted in a timely fashion.

8.3.9. The membership of an APR Panel considering a referral submission should normally be identical to that which made the referral decision. An observer may attend and may participate in concluding discussions at the request of the Examiner(s) and Chair.

8.4.Confirmation Examination

8.4.1. Students whose initial registration was for the degree of PhD must, within 24 months (or the part-time equivalent of their initial resubmission) undertake a confirmation examination, to confirm that the student remains on track to submit and be successfully examined for a PhD. Students who do not pass their confirmation examination may be required to re-register for the degree of MPhil.

8.4.2. Membership of Confirmation Examination Panels

The minimum composition of a Confirmation Examination Panel is as follows:

i) a member of academic staff from the student's School or centre, at Senior Tutor or nominee , who is not part of the supervisory team. This person will be nominated by the School's postgraduate research lead (Chair);
ii) one Research Tutor/Senior Tutor from the student's School;
iii) the student's supervisor(s);
iv) an independent additional member of the academic staff with experience of research supervision, from another School or Research Centre.

8.4.3. The Panel may seek advice from any appointed external consultant.

8.4.4. The minimum composition of a Confirmation Examination Panel for students registered jointly between two schools or research centres will be as follows:

i) the lead School's postgraduate research lead or a member of academic staff at senior level or above nominated by the lead school's postgraduate lead, who is not part of the supervisory team (Chair);
ii) the postgraduate research lead from the second School or member of academic staff, at Senior Tutor level or above nominated by the postgraduate research lead from the second School;
iii) an additional member of the academic staff with experience of research supervision, from another school.

8.4.5. The Panel may seek advice from any appointed external consultant.

8.4.6. Where the postgraduate research lead is, or has been, the supervisor of the student being examined, the Confirmation Examination Panel should be chaired by a postgraduate research lead, or a Senior Tutor, from another School who is an experienced research supervisor. In this instance the additional member of academic staff is not required.

8.4.7. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Confirmation Examination Panel to ensure that correct procedure and standards are adhered to, both during and after the examination.

8.4.8. The Confirmation Examination Panel shall, after the examination, make one of the following recommendations to the ABCD:

Pass	The student may proceed towards examination for the degree of PhD, subject to continuing satisfactory academic progress.
Pass subject to corrections	The student may proceed towards examination for the degree of PhD, subject to the student making minor corrections to the submitted work, to the satisfaction of the Confirmation Examination Panel, within one month of notification of the decision.
Referral	The student may not proceed towards examination for the degree of PhD and must make substantial changes to the work that they have submitted, within two months of notification of the decision. Students may only be referred at confirmation examination on one occasion.
Re-register to MPhil	The student may not proceed towards examination for the degree of PhD but may re-register for the degree of MPhil.
Fail	The student's registration shall be terminated.

8.4.9. Where ABCD confirms a decision of pass subject to corrections or referral, but the corrections are not subsequently made to the satisfaction of the Confirmation Examination Panel within the deadline set, then the student shall be recommended for re-examination at the discretion of the Confirmation Examination Panel. The panel should reconvene for a further oral examination, if any corrections are not subsequently made to the satisfaction of the panel, the student shall normally be required to re-register to MPhil.

8.4.10. The membership of the Confirmation Examination Panel to consider a referral submission should normally be identical to that which made the referral decision. An observer may attend and participate in the concluding discussion at the request of the examiners and the Chair of the Confirmation Examination Panel.

8.5.Final Examination

8.5.1. On completion of the programme of research, the candidate's submission will be examined by a Final Examination Panel (FEP).

8.5.2. A FEP convened to enable the candidate to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme and have achieved the required standard for the award.

8.5.3. Membership of Final Examination Panels

a) The composition of an **MPhil** FEP is:

i) a Dean/ Associate Dean, postgraduate research lead or member of academic staff at Senior Tutor level or nominee, nominated by the Dean (Chair) who is not from the students' School / research centre or part of the students' supervisory team (and who has been approved by the Research Office);
ii) at least one internal examiner;
iii) at least one External examiner, appointed by the Research Degrees Committee in accordance with the College's External Examiner Policy.

b) The composition of a **PhD** FEP will be:

i) a Dean/Associate Dean, postgraduate research lead or member of academic staff at Senior Tutor level or above nominated by the Dean (Chair) who is not from the students' School / research centre or part of the students' supervisory team (and who has been approved by the Research Office);
ii) at least one internal examiner;
iii) at least one External Examiner, appointed by the Research Degrees Committee in accordance with the College's External Examiner Policy. [9]

8.5.4. The Examiners will have an equal voice in the deliberations, oral examination and final decision. Where the examiners are unable to agree upon a recommendation on the award of the degree, the decision must be referred to the ABCD acting on behalf of the Senate.

8.5.5. The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that the examination is conducted fairly and according to the regulations but will not contribute to the final recommendation of the examiners.

[9] Where appropriate expertise is not available for the role of internal examiner, a second External Examiner may be appointed.

8.5.6. The membership of the FEP to consider a referral submission should normally be identical to that which made the referral decision. An observer may attend and participate in the concluding discussion at the request of the examiners and the Chair of the FEP.

9. Regulations for the award of the Degree of MPhil

These regulations apply to students registered to the degree of MPhil only

9.1.MPhil by Thesis

9.1.1. The submission for the degree MPhil by Thesis shall consist of a written thesis in English presenting the results of research in the field of history, theory or practice of art, design or communication, supported, where appropriate, by practical work related to the research.

9.1.2. The required length of the thesis shall be between 30,000 and 40,000 words (footnotes and appendices are not included but should not exceed 10,000 words; the bibliography is outside of all word counts), illustrated as necessary and accompanied by an abstract.

9.1.3. Any thesis which is over 40,000 words in length shall be referred.

9.2.MPhil by Practice

9.2.1. The submission for the degree of MPhil by Practice will consist of a work or group of works of art, design or communication, presented in the form of original(s), prototype(s), scale model(s), drawings, CD-ROM, photographs, film(s), or sound and vision recording(s), together with a piece of written work in English, defining the purpose of the work, the factors taken into account in its conception and development, and explaining the results.

9.2.2. The work submitted must demonstrate progression in knowledge or understanding in the candidate's discipline, or in related disciplinary areas.

9.2.3. The length of the report and other written work shall be 15,000 to 20,000 words (footnotes and appendices are not included but should not exceed 10,000 words; the bibliography is outside of all word counts), illustrated as necessary and accompanied by an abstract.

9.2.4. The textual and practical elements of the project should be conceived as a whole, with both aspects reaching the required standard of MPhil as outlined above.

9.2.5. Any report which is over 20,000 words in length will be referred.

9.3.Final Examination

9.3.1. Before the degree of MPhil is conferred, the student must present to the Research Office an electronic copy of the thesis, including any non-textual elements (e.g. sound or image files), which constitute part of the submission, for lodging in the College's digital repository.

9.3.2. The following copyright statement should be included in each thesis: 'This text represents the submission for the degree of Master of Philosophy at the Royal

College of Art. This copy has been supplied for the purpose of research for private study, on the understanding that it is copyright material, and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement'.

9.3.3. After the viva voce, the Final Examination Panel (FEP) will make one of the following recommendations:

Pass	the student passes the Final Examination
Pass, subject to minor corrections	the student passes the Final Examination, subject to minor corrections being made to the satisfaction of the Internal Examiner of the FEP. [10] Such amendments must be completed within three months.
Pass, subject to major corrections	The student passes the Final Examination, subject to major corrections being made to the satisfaction of the External Examiner of the FEP. Such corrections should be completed within 6 months.
Referral	The student is referred for re-submission within 12 months and is to be re-examined as follows: 1. the project/thesis must be revised substantially and if deemed satisfactory by the FEP, the candidate will be exempt from further oral examination, or 2. the project/thesis must be revised substantially, and the candidate must undergo a further oral examination.
Fail	the student fails the final examination and is not permitted to be re-examined.

9.4.Transfer Examination Panels

9.4.1. Role of the Transfer Examination Panels

9.4.2. Students registered to the degree of MPhil may, at the discretion of their supervisor, submit a transfer of registration to the degree of PhD. To be eligible to transfer to PhD, a student should be able to demonstrate:

9.4.3. a high level of competence in the development and implementation of the research methodology;

9.4.4. present a case that the research has progressed to a greater focus and depth, and;

9.4.5. have formulated an hypothesis for further research which would, in the opinion of staff and external experts, be likely to produce an original contribution to knowledge.

[10] For the avoidance of doubt, minor revisions are small adjustments including, but not limited to, typographic errors, bibliographic adjustments, small clarifications and definitions that the Internal Examiner of the Exam Panel can check have been completed accurately. Anything beyond this would be appropriate for major modifications/referral.

9.4.6. Membership of Transfer Examination Panels

The minimum composition of a Transfer Examination Panel shall be as follows:

i) a member of academic staff from the student's School or Centre, at Senior Tutor or Head of Programme or Academic Lead level of above, who is not part of the supervisory team. This person will be nominated by the School's postgraduate research lead (Chair);
ii) one Research Tutor/Senior Tutor from the student's school;
iii) the student's supervisor(s);
iv) an independent additional member of the academic staff with experience of research supervision, from another School or Research Centre.

9.4.7. The Panel may seek advice from any appointed external consultant.

9.4.8. The minimum composition of a Transfer Examination Panel for students registered jointly between two schools or research centres will be as follows:

i) the lead School's postgraduate research lead or a member of academic staff at senior level or above nominated by the lead School's postgraduate lead, who is not part of the supervisory team (Chair);
ii) the postgraduate research lead from the second school/Centre or member of academic staff, at Senior Tutor level or above nominated by the postgraduate research lead from the second School or Centre;
iii) an additional member of the academic staff with experience of research supervision, from another School or Research Centre.

9.4.9. The Panel may seek advice from any appointed external consultant.

9.4.10. Where the postgraduate research lead is, or has been, the supervisor of the student being examined, the Transfer Examination Panel should be chaired by a postgraduate research lead, or a Senior Tutor, from another School who is an experienced research supervisor. In this case the additional member of academic staff is not required.

9.4.11. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Transfer Examination Panel to ensure that correct procedures and standards are adhered to, both during and after the examination.

9.4.12. In the case of an unsuccessful transfer examination, the candidate will be allowed to be re-examined at the discretion of the Transfer Examination Panel. Re-examination should take place within three months of the original examination.

9.4.13. The membership of the Transfer Examination Panel to consider a referral submission should normally be identical to that which made the referral decision. An observer may attend and participate in the concluding discussion at the request of the examiners and the Chair of the Transfer Examination Panel.

10. Regulations for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

These regulations apply to students registered to a PhD only

10.1.PhD by Thesis

10.1.1. The submission of research in a theoretical discipline shall comprise a written thesis in English presenting an account and the results of a programme of research in the field of history, theory and practice of art, design or communication, supported, where appropriate, by practical work related to the research.

10.1.2. The thesis shall be between 60,000 and 80,000 words in length (footnotes and appendices are not included but should not exceed 20,000 words; the bibliography is outside of all word counts).

10.1.3. It shall be illustrated as necessary and accompanied by an abstract.

10.1.4. Any thesis which is over 80,000 words in length shall be referred.

10.2.PhD by Practice

10.2.1. The submission of research in a studio discipline shall comprise a work or works of art, design or communication, or a group of interrelated works of art, design or communication, presented as appropriate in the form of original(s), prototype(s), scale model(s), drawings, CD-ROM, photographs, film(s), or sound and vision recording(s), together with a piece of written work in English, defining the purpose of the work, the factors taken into account in its conception and development, and explaining the results.

10.2.2. The work submitted must demonstrate progression in knowledge or understanding in the candidate's discipline, or in related disciplinary areas.

10.2.3. The written component shall be not less than 25,000 words and not more than 40,000 words in length (footnotes and appendices are not included but should not exceed 10,000 words; the bibliography is outside of all word counts), illustrated as necessary and accompanied by an abstract.

10.2.4. The textual and practical elements of the project should be conceived as a whole, with both aspects reaching the required standard of PhD as outlined above.

10.2.5. Any written component which is over 40,000 words in length will be referred.

10.3.Requirement for Copies of Final Submission

10.3.1. Before the degree of PhD is conferred, the candidate must present to the Research Office an electronic copy of the thesis, including any non-textual element, e.g. sound or image files which constitute part of the submission, for lodging in the College's digital repository and with the British Library, for them to make available online via EThOS.

10.3.2. The following copyright statement should be included in each thesis: 'This text represents the submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Royal College of Art. This copy has been supplied for the purpose of research for private study, on the understanding that it is copyright material, and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement'.

10.4.Final Examination Panel (FEP)

10.4.1. After the viva voce, the PhD FEP will make one of the following recommendations:

Pass	the student passes the Final Examination
Pass, subject to minor corrections	the student passes the Final Examination, subject to minor corrections being made to the satisfaction of the Internal Examiner of the FEP. [11] Such amendments should be completed within three months.
Pass, subject to major corrections	The student passes the Final Examination, subject to major corrections being made to the satisfaction of the External Examiner of the FEP. Such corrections should be completed within 6 months.
Referral	the student is referred for re-submission within 12 months and is to be re-examined as follows: i) the project/thesis must be revised substantially and if deemed satisfactory by the FEP, the candidate will be exempt from further oral examination, or ii) the project/thesis must be revised substantially, and the candidate must undergo a further oral examination.
Fail	i) the student fails the final examination for the award of PhD, but is recommended for the award of MPhil, or ii) the student fails the final examination and is not permitted to be re-examined.

11. Regulations for the award of the Higher Doctorate

11.1.Standard of Award

11.1.1. The standard of the award of the Higher Doctorate is that expected of an applicant who is a leading authority in the field of study or practise concerned and has made an original and significant contribution over many years to the advancement or application of knowledge in that field. The Higher Doctorate awarded by the College is Doctor of the Royal College of Art (Dr (RCA)).

11.1.2. An applicant should make a submission in accordance with instructions issued by the Academic Registrar. The actual submission may take the form of books, contributions to journals, patent specifications, reports, specifications and design studies and may also include other relevant evidence of original work.

[11] For the avoidance of doubt, minor revisions are small adjustments including, but not limited to, typographic errors, bibliographic adjustments, small clarifications and definitions that the Internal Examiner of the Exam Panel can check have been completed accurately. Anything beyond this would be appropriate for major modifications/referral.

11.1.3. An applicant should state which part of the submission, if any, has been submitted for another academic award.

11.1.4. The contents of a submission must be in English.

11.1.5. In addition to the copies of the work on which the application is based, the applicant should submit a statement of not more than 1,000 words setting out the applicant's view of the nature and significance of the work submitted and a full statement of the extent of the applicant's contribution to any of the work submitted which involves joint authorship or other types of collaboration.

11.1.6. The application will be referred to the ABCD which will advise whether a prima facie case for proceeding to a formal assessment of the submission has been established, taking any advice, it deems appropriate.

11.2.Assessment

11.2.1. If satisfied that a prima facie case has been established, the ABCD will submit the application to two examiners, each of whom will be asked to make an independent report.

11.2.2. In the event of disagreement between the examiners, the ABCD may appoint a third examiner. All examiners shall be external and wholly independent of the College.

11.2.3. The ABCD will make a recommendation to the Senate. If the Senate agrees to award the degree of Dr (RCA) a copy of the applicant's submission will be lodged in the Library.

Version	Summary of Changes	Date
001	Minor Editorial changes; changed degrees to award; articulation of PGCert as Exit Award; removal of MRes Healthcare and Design; added resubmission implications on Graduate Diploma; added clause on delegation authority; clarified the role of External Examination; re-worded Termination of Studies	16 June 2026
002	Removal of MEd, updated MDes and MFA credit values. Brought forward annual review date. Minimum length of p/t PhD study corrected from 3 to 6 years. Updated timeframes for the resubmission of thesis corrections; Nomenclature updated in memberships of PGR APR and Final Exam Boards.	October 2026