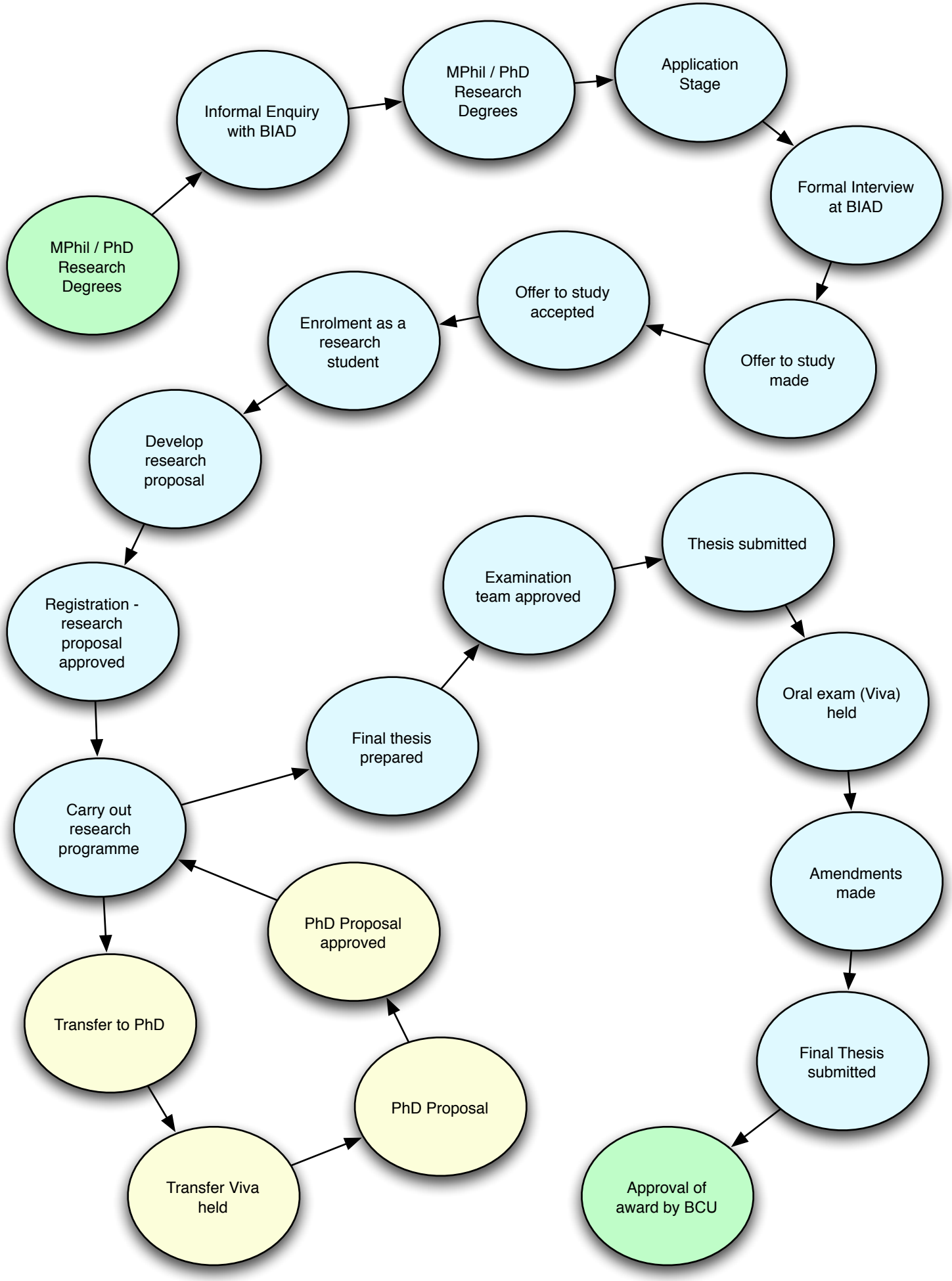RESEARCH DEGREE PROCESS