

Meeting of the Senatus Researcher Experience Committee
to be held on 17 May 2016 at 2.00 pm
in Hodgson Room, Weir Building, King's Buildings

A G E N D A

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------|
| 1 | Minutes of the previous meeting | Enclosed |
| 2 | Matters Arising | |
| 2.1 | Leave of absence implementation | |
| 2.2 | What is an Edinburgh PhD: working group report | REC 15/16 5A |
| 3 | Convener's Communications | |
| 3.1 | ELIR action plan | |
| 3.2 | Proposal for a new style of PhD Scholarship | REC 15/16 5B |

FOR DISCUSSION

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------|
| 4 | Postgraduate Research Student (PGR) Lifecycle Project | REC 15/16 5C |
| 5 | PGR student start dates | REC 15/16 5D |
| 6 | PGR Annual Progression Monitoring System | REC 15/16 5E |
| 7 | Tutors and demonstrators | |
| 8 | Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2017 and beyond | REC 15/16 5F |
| 9 | Review of the Academic Year: impacts for PGR | |
| 10 | PGR Space: paper and recommendations for Space Enhancement Management Group | REC 15/16 5G |
| 11 | Postgraduate Research Experience Project: PREP | |
| 12 | PGR Special Circumstances | REC 15/16 5H |
| 13 | Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students 2016 | REC 15/16 5I |
| 14 | Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees | REC 15/16 5J |
| 15 | Committee membership | |

FOR INFORMATION

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| 16 | Enhancements to Supervisor Briefings | REC 15/16 5K |
| 17 | Knowledge Strategy Committee report | REC 15/16 5L |
| 18 | Research Policy Group report | |
| 19 | Enhancement Themes update | |
| 20 | Senate Committee Planning | REC 15/16 5M |
| 21 | Any other business | |

H/02/26/02
REC: 17.05.16

- 21.1 Conferences and events:
 - 21.1.1 UKCGE: meeting the needs of distance doctoral students
 - 21.1.2 Russell Group: PGR Special Interest Group Meeting
 - 21.1.3 Universitas 21 DDoGS meeting
 - 21.1.4 UKCGE: Supervising & Assessing Interdisciplinary Doctorates, 17 June 2016, Edinburgh

22 Dates of 2016/17 meetings:

- 27 September 2016
- 15 November 2016
- 17 January 2017
- 14 March 2017
- 16 May 2017

Susan Hunter
Academic Services
10 May 2016

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

What is an Edinburgh PhD: Working Group report

Executive Summary

The working group, consisting of REC representatives from the Colleges, EUSA and support services met on 7 April 2016. Proposals and actions arising from discussion were

- Proposal A: Three study periods for PhD: 3 years research only; 3 years + 6 months integrated study; 3 years + 12 months integrated study.

Action: College representatives are asked to consult with their Schools on implications

- Proposal B: Enrolment on a Masters course with progression to PhD study as standard.

Action: REC to discuss as part of its Committee Priorities discussion on 12 April 2016

- The group agreed to review the doctoral study web pages and the Postgraduate Launchpad web pages.

Action: REC to feed in comments on the University postgraduate web pages.

- The group also considered that REC should give a steer on the PhD by Research Publications degree programme to the 2017/18 regulations review.

Action: Academic Services to obtain info on numbers enrolled for PhD by Research Publications in recent years and report to REC

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The proposals align with the University's Strategic Goals of Excellence in Education and Excellence in Research and Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience. The proposals also align with the Committee's strategic goals of enhancing the postgraduate research student experience, and identifying challenges and opportunities for appropriate development and innovation in postgraduate research training, assessment and programme delivery.

Action requested

REC is invited to formally endorse the proposals and recommended actions

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Agreed proposals will be submitted to the next regulations review.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

None

2. Risk assessment

No risks are identified as this is a discussion paper.

3. Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity will be considered in any future regulation changes resulting from discussion.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open**.

Key words

PhD study periods, masters progression to PhD, PhD by Research Publications

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer
Academic Services
5 May 2016

REC: 17.05.16
H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5B

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Proposal for a new style of PhD Scholarship

Executive Summary

This paper was submitted to the last Principal's Strategy Group meeting. The paper proposes a pilot for a new style of PhD scholarship.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with University Strategic Plan Goal of Excellence in Education, Excellence in Research and the Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience. It also aligns with the Committee's strategic goal of enhancing the postgraduate research student experience.

Action requested

The committee is invited to formally note the paper, which is provided for information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

There are no actions for implementation by REC.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
There are no resource implications for REC.
2. **Risk assessment**
None.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
None.
4. **Freedom of information**
This Paper is open

Originator of the paper

Assistant Principal, Jeremy Bradshaw
21 April 2016

Principal's Strategy Group

29 April 2016

A proposal for a new style of PhD scholarship

Principal's Strategy Group is asked to consider the proposals set out in this paper and approve the establishment of a pilot scheme to commence in September 2017.

Background

At its meeting in October 2015, Principal's Strategy Group discussed a preliminary report from a small working group led by Assistant Principal Jeremy Bradshaw looking at the amount and type of financial support provided to our postgraduate research students (PGR). This work was triggered by concerns that PGR student numbers were not increasing as desired; with potentially deleterious impacts on the growth of impact from our research groups. Using 2013-14 data, the study identified some £16m investment of internal funds into PGR tuition fees, living cost support and PGR employment.

PSG agreed to consider a new approach to University-funded PhD scholarships, with the aim of:

- Increasing the level and consistency of student quality;
- More explicit involvement in the academic community;
- Ending the money-go-round of internal funds in which Schools and Colleges pay tuition fees, only to have a portion of them returned through NPRAS;
- Making an "Edinburgh Offer," of a PhD position for the best of our graduates, more affordable.

Proposal

The proposal is to pilot a new style of PhD scholarship. The award would include:

1. A charge to cover support group costs;
2. A living cost award, linked to an expectation that the scholar would engage in an agreed programme of academic development;
3. Opportunities to access further relevant employment, limited by stipend and visa rules.

The charge to cover support group costs would replace the normal tuition fees. NPRAS would not apply; there would be no return of income to the school or college. The annual charge (probably around £1k) would be set at the level that covers the central costs associated with the studentship.

The University's published tuition fees (for externally-funded students) would remain unchanged.

The actual cost of a PhD varies according to the nature of the research project. The proposed scholarship would separate the fixed (support group) costs from the project-specific costs. This

model has the advantage that Schools or Colleges would be directly responsible for covering these costs and could budget accordingly.

There would be a clear expectation that scholars would engage in developmental activity and carry out teaching duties. To avoid difficulties with visa and tax rules, there would be two distinct phases to the scholarship. During the first 6 months, the scholar would complete a development package of theoretical and experiential learning to develop their teaching skills. During this time, they would not be employed as a teacher. Successful completion of this basic training would bring the opportunity of supplementing the scholarship with employment as a teacher, during which they would receive further training and support for this role. The number of hours of development practice would be predicated on scholars being assigned a substantive teaching or other academic practice role sufficient to work towards a recognised qualification, such as HEA Associate Fellow status, via the University CPD framework for learning and teaching¹. The initial training package would be coordinated by the Institute for Academic Development, would be made available to any PhD student, irrespective of their funding source, and would become a requirement for any student who wishes to teach.

Other implications of the proposal are:

- An explicit expectation that PGR students will be part of an academic community.
- A recruitment package closer to the US model with an expectation of training and employment for those on a “university package” and which legitimises exploration of wider skill set (possibly including a higher level of English language requirement) as part of the recruitment process.
- A UK PhD represents a minimum² of 3 years, full-time, study, so each scholarship would have to be for 3.5 – 4 years depending on how much training and development, teaching, preparation and marking the Scholar would be required to complete. The student would be enrolled on a “PhD with integrated study” programme.
- A differential between an internal charge (when scholarships are provided from internal funding and designed to cover the marginal support costs of additional PGR students) and that for externally funded students, and thereby remove the “money-go-round” of internal funds.

There would be clear encouragement to apply for external funding. If successful, then those arrangements would replace the University scholarship but applicant would have the benefit of knowing that package already in place if their application for external funding were to be unsuccessful.

¹ For Associate Fellowship the UK Professional Standards Framework specifies that participants must demonstrate successful engagement in at least two of the five areas of activity (e.g. A2 Teach and/or support learning; A3 Assess and give feedback to learners).

² According to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), “Doctoral degrees are designed at SCQF Level 12 and are allocated at least 540 SCQF Credit Points of which a minimum of 420 are at SCQF Level 12.” Since a single Credit Point “represents the amount of learning achieved through a notional 10 hours of learning time which includes everything a learner has to do to achieve the outcomes in a qualification including the assessment procedures,” this means that the thesis represents a minimum of 3 years of fulltime study (40 hours per week).

Training and Support

Each scholar would be allocated a set of teaching and learning responsibilities designed to grow their teaching experience and skills progressively throughout their PhD. Details would be tailored to individual circumstances, interests and prior experience. Scholars would be registered for an appropriate pathway and level of the University CPD Framework³. In most cases this will be at the HEA Associate Fellow level, via the Edinburgh Teaching Award Level 1 or Introduction to Academic Practice. With sufficient prior experience or progress during their PhD period scholars may be supported at the HEA Fellow level (via the Edinburgh Teaching Award Level 1 or PGCAP). Scholars would be allocated a mentor from the IAD linked to their participation in the CPD framework. Peer support, via group meetings, is a key element of the CPD framework. In order to gain the appropriate level and amount of experience to support their participation in the CPD framework scholars would be assigned substantive teaching and learning roles, with the potential to increase the level of complexity through time. Responsibility for induction to their teaching role and liaison with other members of the teaching team, as well as on-going support for the teaching activities, including feedback and development, would be retained by the School.

Governance

Effective management of the scholar would be required at local (school) level, together with institutional oversight. This would include both the professional development of the scholar and the quality of the teaching they provide to undergraduates. Both would be facilitated by electronic recording of key events and performance (as proposed in the Postgraduate Research Experience Project proposal). There would also need to be a policy and agreed procedures for how to deal with substandard teaching performance.

Pilot Scheme

PSG is asked to approve the establishment of a pilot scheme involving a small number of schools, probably one per college, starting in September 2017. Before the pilot commences, a protocol for evaluation of the pilot scheme would have to be agreed, with the aim determining the success of the scheme and whether a full scale roll-out should proceed.

Conclusion

The proposed scheme has the following advantages:

1. Elimination of the money go round when tuition fees are paid from internal sources;
2. A more systematic approach to PhD student development;
3. More robust oversight of teaching by PhD students.
4. No effect on headline fees for students who self-fund or who bring external funding.

... and disadvantages:

³ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/cpd>

1. The proposal only covers academic training. Most PhD graduates do not go into academia or research, so future developments may consider other types of professional development as an alternative to teaching.
2. The selection procedure would need to be revised for Edinburgh Scholars. It may not always be possible to identify candidates who are best suited to teaching.
3. There may be an increase in drop out rate, unless schools are able to provide enough other opportunities for student employment. There would need to be alternatives for students who can not teach.
4. It would be necessary to put in place procedures to deal with students who do not perform well as teachers.

It is proposed that a pilot scheme is trialled in a limited number of schools in academic year 2017-18, with an agreed time-line and evaluation protocol. If successful, the scheme would be rolled out to all schools in 2019-20.

Assistant Principal, Jeremy Bradshaw

21 April 2016

Appendix 1: Example Teaching, Learning and Associated CPD Profile

- Year 1, semester 2: small group tutor or laboratory demonstrator for 1st or 2nd year undergraduate course (3 hours per week contact time + preparation + marking + CPD time)
- School based induction and support, registration for appropriate element of CPD framework
- Year 2, semester 1 or 2: opportunities to build on prior experience, perhaps by including an element of peer support for less experience tutors/demonstrators or by giving a lecture or leading practical demonstrations) alongside small group tutor/demonstrator for 2nd or 3rd year undergraduate course (3 hours per week contact time + preparation + marking + CPD time)
- Participation on appropriate element of CPD framework (IAD)
- Year 2 semester 2 or Year 3 semester 1; either an opportunity to consolidate learning by similar role; or an opportunity to extend practice (e.g. online tutoring, lecturing, Masters supervision) (3 hours per week contact time + preparation + marking + CPD time)
- For some scholars there might be the opportunity to register for the next level up on the CPD framework

For Schools with significant numbers of scholars or other PhD students, early career academics or other GH tutors IAD may be able to provide support for the development of local School versions of appropriate elements of the CPD framework (details to be explored as part of pilot project).

REC: 17.05.16
H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5C

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Postgraduate Research Student Lifecycle Project

Executive Summary

The paper provides details of what the PGR Lifecycle project will deliver. This paper will be accompanied at the meeting with a demo of what has been developed so far.

The project is aiming to deliver by Mid August 2016.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper is relevant to the University Strategic Goal of Excellence in Education and Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience, and the Committee's strategic goal of enhancing the postgraduate research student experience.

Action requested

For discussion / information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

No action is proposed in the paper actions will come through the project.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

All resource implications are covered in the project.

2. Risk assessment

Covered in the project

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper is provided for discussion only and equality and diversity would be considered for any subsequent actions arising.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper

Ruth McCallum
Student Systems
02 May 2016

Background

The PGR lifecycle Project is currently underway working closely with a set of PGR administration staff based in the three colleges. These are the sets of user who currently use PPMD.

The objectives of the project fall into 3 main areas,

- Remove the need for PPMD to be maintained moving all of the functionality to support the PGR lifecycle into the core student record in EUCLID.
- Remove the need for colleges to hold separate records in spreadsheets of where students are in the thesis examination process
- Provide visibility for all parties as to the status of the process – Colleges/Schools/Supervisors and Student.
- Allow recording of concessions within EUCLID.

Deliverables.

The intention of this paper is to give visibility to REC as to what the project will deliver and receive the committee's endorsement going forward.

The deliverables are as follows:

Examiners

- Ability to maintain external examiners within EUCLID
- Ability to link internal/external examiners to students within EUCLID viewable within the Student Hub. (including non-examining chair)
- Letter to be sent to the examiners generated from the system confirming their involvement in the process.

Thesis Workflow

- Thesis Title held on EUCLID.
- Thesis workflow present to the user to step through recording all the relevant dates and outcomes. Showing a 4 step process to the users.
- Thesis workflow will be able to cope with re-submission and corrections
- Clear status changes to give an indication of where the student is in the process.
- Simplified workflow for MSc by Research and High Degrees.
- Outcomes will mirror the regulations and will define.
 - Outcome is Award/Fail/Corrections/Re-Submission
 - Letter Required
 - Default no of months to make changes
- Cut down version of workflow presented to the student to give clear view of status

Letters

- Letters linked to each of the outcomes to reflect the regulation and the information required by the student.

- Access for staff to edit letters when the regulations change using formatting and data tags which will pull data from the student record.

Concessions

- Place with EUCLID to hold a record of the concessions for a given student. Leave of Absence, Extensions and Interruptions.
- Record available separate from the student's record impact on the end data for the student etc.
- Concessions present to the students.

External Supervisors

- Allow access to the supervisors restricted to the students which they have defined relationship within EUCLID. Currently they can see any student's record.

Business Objects / Reporting

- All new data elements used in the new processing will be available in BIS so reports can be written to monitor the thesis examination process going forward.

Future Developments.

In the future what has been developed in this project will allow the following additional developments to be delivered more quickly.

- Workflow for examiners appointment form.
- Workflow for concessions approval
- Additional Letter editing by end users rather than technical staff within EUCLID.
- External Examiner Access to EUCLID to be involved in the process.

Next Steps

The next steps for the project are as follows:

- Testing with the user group
- Testing with the Student Records Team
- Demonstrations to School staff – admin and supervisors
- Sign-off for go Live – Mid August

Ruth McCallum
Student Systems
May 2016

REC: 17.05.16

H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5D

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Postgraduate Research Student Start Dates

Executive Summary

The paper provides an evaluation of the impacts of having a firm first of the month start date, with particular focus on September, for postgraduate research students. It includes considerations on student records, statutory reporting, compliance, services and induction, particularly focusing on the September intake. The paper is provided to inform discussion and no recommendations are made.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper is relevant to the University Strategic Goal of Excellence in Education and Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience, and the Committee's strategic goal of enhancing the postgraduate research student experience.

Action requested

For discussion

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

No action is proposed in the paper. Implementation and communication of any actions arising will be agreed by the Committee.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Potential resource implications are identified in the paper.

2. Risk assessment

Potential reputational and financial risks are identified in the paper.

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper is provided for discussion only and equality and diversity would be considered for any subsequent actions arising.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer

Nichola Kett, Head of Enhancement Team

Academic Services

26 April 2016

Background

Arising from postgraduate research admissions proposals developed by Student Recruitment and Admissions, REC discussed postgraduate research start dates in 2014/15. In July 2014, the Committee agreed twelve 1st of the month start dates with exceptions for 8 September 2014 and 12 January 2015 for 2014/15. In September 2014, the Committee discussed this topic again, focusing on end dates. At that time the Committee proposed end dates corresponding to the last day of the month preceding the 1st of the month start date, with the exceptions of September and January where end dates would be the end of September and January respectively.

The issue

In March 2016 the Committee noted continuing implications around the September and January start and end dates for postgraduate research students. Students who begin their postgraduate research programme in September may currently be disadvantaged by having less time to complete. The student record defaults to a start date of 1 September but students may not arrive at the University until Welcome Week in mid-September. This means September arrivals may have two or more weeks less to complete their programme than students who begin at other times of the year, and may need to apply for an extension at the end of their period of study.

Based on this year's student data, more than 70% of postgraduate research students arrive in September, with around 10% arriving in October and around 7% arriving in January. The remaining arrivals occur each month throughout the year, with minimal numbers due to arrive in June and July. (See appendix I.)

Approach

The Committee asked Academic Services to gather information on the implications of having a firm start date of the 1st of the month, particularly in September. Implications were also explored for 1 October and 1 January starts. Academic Services met with Student Systems, the Operations Manager (UKVI Compliance), Accommodation, Catering and Events (ACE), the Student Induction Team and Student Recruitment and Admissions to consult on implications. The findings from these discussions are outlined below.

Findings

Student record, statutory reporting and compliance

For postgraduate research students, the corporate student record measures months from 1st of each month and reporting is calculated in whole months. The accuracy of information is crucial for statutory reporting, compliance, UKVI requirements and for University planning. For students who do not start on the 1st of the month, there may be an additional administrative burden for Schools, for example dealing with funding implications and the need to obtain an extension at the end of the period of study.

From a recruitment perspective, the need for clarity in start dates and end dates is important. In order to meet Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) requirements, there is a need to provide prospective students with accurate, clear and timely information at the time of researching choices and making arrangements to commence study. The lack of clarity in September start dates leads to potential for misunderstanding in communication with applicants, and potential for contravening visa reporting requirements (see Visa compliance below). The current misalignment of 'actual' start date with 'system' end date risks potential student complaints from September starts, if the duration of study has been shorter than that of peers starting in other months.

Visa compliance

It is essential that the start date of study given on the Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) as provided to the Home Office matches the start date of study stated on the University's corporate student record. All data held about an applicant/student is auditable by the Home Office under the terms of the institutional Sponsor Licence and any discrepancies of this sort present a risk to the University's ongoing permission to sponsor international students for the purpose of study in the UK. As students beginning their studies in September and January currently have a start date in line with induction activity, rather than the start of the month, and so do not have a full 4 years on programme, some Tier 4-sponsored postgraduate research students need to make a visa extension application at the end of their studies to allow enough time to complete. Each visa extension application costs in excess of £400.

Induction

In March 2014, REC agreed the model of four postgraduate research induction cohorts throughout the year. Events currently run in September, November, January and April.

The existing event in Welcome Week is a combined one for both postgraduate research and postgraduate taught students. Running this event earlier, or later, would mean separating research and taught students and running two events, one for each cohort. This would require resources; venue, staff, budget. Airport pick-up and welcome is only available during Welcome Week, and extending it earlier or later would also require resources; staff, budget. ACE also centres its core induction activity around Arrival Weekend before Welcome Week.

The current September event is well publicised and well known to Schools. A change for postgraduate research students would need to be promoted by Schools as something their students should attend, particularly if it is outwith Welcome Week.

If a 1 October start was to be the main intake and the postgraduate research cohort channelled to the November induction event, this would likely mean an increase in numbers attending and therefore potentially require more resources; larger venue, staffing. There is also pressure on University space during the start of the year and availability of a suitable venue for November may mean having to source one externally (for example, the Festival Theatre which is being used for events in September while McEwan Hall is unavailable). In this case, there would be budget implications relating to venue hire. This might be offset somewhat if there was no event in September for postgraduate research student, however the postgraduate taught event would still need to be held and therefore there would be additional resource implications in holding two events.

Accommodation, Catering and Events (ACE)

Accommodation, Catering and Events have identified significant implications in relation to service deliverability and impact on student experience, which are outlined below. Numbers of postgraduate research students in University accommodation for September 2015 are provided in Appendix I.

1 September start:

For 2016 there will be a one week gap between the end of pre-sessional English accommodation and the start of student accommodation contracts. Contracts begin on 10 September 2016. However, this may not be consistent each year.

To manage a 1 September start date may require segmentation of postgraduate accommodation into postgraduate research and postgraduate taught students, therefore restricting choice for postgraduate students generally. There are important considerations around ensuring all rooms are filled and ensuring an appropriate selection of available accommodation for all students who request it. There is also significant potential to restrict the both mix of students and potential benefits of cohort forming. If accommodation is not fully occupied, there are financial implications for the University. If students cannot be accommodated, there is a reputational risk for the University and also to the student experience.

ACE require a clear week to turnaround rooms at the end of contract. A 1 September start would have implications for achieving this. Due to contractual obligations, there are critical additional implications for the new Holyrood accommodation. Balfour Beatty deliver services at Holyrood, and also have a significant say in how the property is run. ACE believe that arrival changes would mean this property would no longer be available to PGR students

Contractually there are Year 1 issues for a change to 1 September. All postgraduate students have 51-week contracts and a change would disadvantage students in the first year. Such a change would need careful planning and communication, and would also mean a change to published information for 2016 (and 2017), and for students who have already applied for a second year of accommodation. (ACE guarantees three years continuous accommodation for postgraduate research students who request it.)

If the **programme** start date is 1 September, then students may wish to arrive before 1 September and there would be further accommodation implications related to that.

ACE are dealing with cohorts a year in advance, so careful advance planning would be needed for changes. They also require accurate information on types of students requiring accommodation to enable them to manage buildings, the student mix and occupancy effectively.

1 October start:

A change to a 1 October start would mean three empty weeks, which is financially undesirable.

1 January start:

Although it is assumed that demand for 1 January starts would be limited, there are very similar issues to those outlined above. The major issue with 1 January starts assumes the primary need is to concentrate on the beginning of the 'normal' academic year in September. In which case, if there is any demand for 1 January starts, accommodation availability is very likely dependent on there being

some 'attrition' among postgraduate research residents in the period from September to December. However, there is some evidence that postgraduate research cohorts are less likely to move, so there may be very few spaces available.

Examples of Implications for Schools

The College of Science and Engineering consulted with Schools within the College on implications of a firm 1 September, start of Semester 1, or 1 October start date. Consultation showed a variety of opinions between Schools. Some already use a 1 September start date and one uses a 1 October start and also expressed some preference for a 1 January start. Comments received are attached as Appendix II.

Review of the Academic Year

For information, the current consultation on the academic year structure proposes that from 2018/19, Welcome Week and Semester 1 start one week later than at present.

Susan Hunter

Nichola Kett

26 April 2016

PGR Arrivals by month

Data provided by SRA

Month	No. of PGR arrivals
01/08/2015	33
01/09/2015	2152
01/10/2015	352
01/11/2015	83
01/12/2015	26
01/01/2016	220
01/02/2016	50
01/03/2016	42
01/04/2016	23
01/05/2016	17
01/06/2016	9
01/07/2016	4
Grand Total	3011

25-Apr-16

PGR students in University accommodation

Data provided by Accommodation, Catering & Events

Sep-15		
Total PG	PGR	% of PG residents
1820*	216*	12%

Breakdown of PGR residents: Sep-15		
Home/EU	International	Total
97	119	216

*figures are approximate

06-May-16

SCHOOL	OPTION 1 - Sept 1st, Jan 1st	OPTION 2 - start of semester	OPTION 3 - main cohort starts Oct 1st	Notes
Biological Sciences			Main PGR cohort starts on 1st October with late starts on 1st January would work best for Biology. We have two Wellcome Trust funded PhD programmes, which already start on the 1st of October and we have decided at School level to implement this start date for all our PGR students.	Mid-September or early-September start does not work for us. All academic members of staff who are involved in undergraduate teaching (most of us) are usually very busy in early-mid September as they have to meet with their tutees (up to 20 undergraduate students for some of us). This greatly detracts from welcoming appropriately the new PGR students. Also, it is very difficult for the Graduate School to run a PGR induction that coincides with the arrival of undergraduate students.
Chemistry	Chemistry currently starts the vast majority of students on 1 September. This is to ensure that they can start without the chaos of undergrads, and more importantly we can get them trained as demonstrators for the beginning of our undergraduate labs.	We are against the mid-September option because of the requirement to pay students stipends from the beginning of the month, meaning we are paying them when they aren't working (and thus not paying them at the end).	1 October is too late for T&D training so we are strongly against this option.	Our strong preference is for our students to start, to be paid, and to have university accommodation available from 1 September.
Engineering				
GeoSciences	Option 1 may work better for procedures and systems	Option 2 would be the first choice as it is the 'actual true date' of matriculation	Option 3 would not be our choice.	Something else to consider is that one of the problems we find is that most of the candidates starting in September that are in the process of completing a Masters at another HEI cannot provide completion for officially starting in September. In most cases we would provide them with a later start date but this does not work for DTP/CDTs as training is offered immediately therefore their start date is required to be in September.

SCHOOL	OPTION 1 - Sept 1st, Jan 1st	OPTION 2 - start of semester	OPTION 3 - main cohort starts Oct 1st	Notes
Informatics				<p>From an Informatics perspective there is no single option that meets all requirements. It is our view that all three options should remain open to Graduate Schools. I understand the need to be clear about the actual start date for each student, and that this must tally with visas and contracts. However, I do not believe this implies any need to apply the same set of dates for all PGR students. For example, we have some students who would ideally start on the first day of the semester, as they will be starting courses as part of a CDT. For these students 1st September or 12th September would work. Then we have other students who cannot start until 1st October, due to a variety of constraints (e.g. residence eligibility, completing a previous degree, or the start date from their funding agency).</p>
Mathematics		<p>Maths prefers Option 2. Starting mid-month guarantees that most supervisors are around. We have our induction meetings arranged in that period, so Graduate School members can participate in them (I am guessing Career Services and IAD could come at some other dates, but I am not sure).</p>		

SCHOOL	OPTION 1 - Sept 1st, Jan 1st	OPTION 2 - start of semester	OPTION 3 - main cohort starts Oct 1st	Notes
Physics and Astronomy	In Physics & Astronomy we would go for Option 1, in fact, we use Option 1 at the moment.			For example, we have some students who would ideally start on the first day of the semester, as they will be starting courses as part of a CDT. For these students 1st September or 12th September would work. Then we have other students who cannot start until 1st October, due to a variety of constraints (e.g. residence eligibility, completing a previous degree, or the start date from their funding agency).

REC: 17.05.16
H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5E

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

PGR Annual progression monitoring and milestones: School of Law

Executive Summary

The paper comprises an extract from the Joint Teaching Programme Review and Postgraduate Programme Review in the School of Law. Senatus Quality Assurance Committee identified this as an area of good practice by to be shared more widely through REC. It is also relevant to REC's discussion and review of the PGR annual progression monitoring system.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with University Strategic Plan Goal of Excellence in Education, Excellence in Research and the Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience. It also aligns with the Committee's strategic goal of enhancing the postgraduate research student experience.

Action requested

The committee is invited to formally note.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

There are no actions for implementation as the paper the paper is provided for discussion.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
None as no change in policy or process is proposed.
2. **Risk assessment**
None.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
None.
4. **Freedom of information**
This Paper is open

Originator of the paper

Ms Ginny Spencer, Graduate Manager
School of Law
April 2016

School of Law

Joint Teaching Programme Review and Postgraduate Programme Review

Extract from Analytical Report 2014

2.2.3 Monitoring of research programmes

In relation to postgraduate research degrees the postgraduate research community is supported by a Postgraduate Research Committee (PGRC) which comprises two first year representatives; at least three second year representatives, two third year representatives and at least one LLM (Research) representative. It is a student led committee that acts as a liaison between the student body and academic and administrative staff. Members of the PGRC attend Staff Student Liaison Committee and Law School meetings as well as meetings of the Postgraduate Studies Committee, the School Computing Committee and the School Library Committee. Members of the Committee also liaise formally and informally with the Director of Postgraduate Studies and the Director of Doctoral Research Training to resolve any problems that may arise.

Progress of each research student is individually monitored. Each research student has supervisors who receive training arranged within the Law School. Those members of academic staff that have not attended a training session within the previous three years are required to attend for updated training. Records of attendance are retained centrally by the graduate manager. Students prepare records of supervision meetings which inform annual reports prepared by supervisors detailing the student's progress and notifying the School and College of any concerns or issues. Each research student is issued with the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students and the PhD Handbook. An assessment panel meets to consider progression at the end of first year. The panel comprises a chairperson, two independent colleagues, and the two supervisors of the student. The panel considers the student's first year report (an outline of the research topic compared to the initial proposal showing how thinking has progressed over the course of the year and clearly identifying thesis and research questions, as well as plans for the remainder of the period of study). In later years progression follows consideration of a brief annual report from student and reports from supervisors detailing meetings and progress during the year. Reports are considered by postgraduate studies committees in School and at College level. Panels can be convened where necessary to consider reports in later years.

During the period of study there is a Doctoral research training programme which includes, in the first year of study, doctoral research training seminars and seminars presenting work to fellow students; in second year, poster presentations, a requirement to disseminate work through publication or conference presentation, and a formal paper submitted to the director of postgraduate research training; and in the third year of study the student leads a seminar on his or her research and will act as a discussant.

Progress through these actions is monitored through the annual reports. Student feedback can be given to the Director of postgraduate research training through the PGRC or the informal mechanisms. An important element of these is that the Director has a second instance pastoral care role, in which capacity students can approach him in the event of issues arising in relation to supervision.

2.4.1.3 PGR assessment

It is important for individual students, as well as the School, that PhD students complete within the prescribed period of study. There is a formal review process in order to flag up, at an early stage, any issues that may prevent completion.

All students in the Law School undergo a first year panel before they are allowed to progress into the second year. The panel process is designed to implement University regulations. As part of the first year review, students are expected to submit a first year paper of no more than 7000 words (excluding footnotes) which includes an overview paper of approximately 2000 words explaining the context of the research, the principal research questions and the methodology, as well as a substantive piece of writing of approximately 5000 words. The first paper is considered by a panel composed of the two supervisors and two independent members of academic staff from the School of Law. The panel is normally chaired by the PGR Director. The format of the panel involves a discussion of the first year paper, with questions from each Panel member. This discussion can explore any part of the paper and the research project more generally. After the panel, students are provided with a report of the meeting and recommendations of the panel. Students who fail to satisfy the panel that sufficient progress has been made will be asked to resubmit their first year paper for a second review panel and their registration may ultimately be withdrawn in accordance with University regulations.

Following the first year panel, annual reviews are conducted by the supervisors at the end of the second and third year. Supervisors are also encouraged to informally speak to the PGR Director if they have concerns about the progress of a particular student. The PGR Director can then advise on potential action that may be taken, including the convening of an ad hoc progression panel.

Ms Ginny Spencer: Graduate Manager
School of Law

REC: 17.05.16
H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5F

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2017 and beyond

Executive Summary

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) are consulting on survey development. The consultation document (Appendix I) was circulated to committee members with a view to compiling a REC response to the consultation. Responses received are mostly in agreement with Questions 1 and 2 and definitely disagree with Question 6. However, there are some differing opinions in relation to Questions 3, 4 and 5. The deadline for consultation responses is 31 May 2016.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with University Strategic Plan Theme of Outstanding Student Experience and the Committee's strategic goal of enhancing the postgraduate research student experience.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to comment on Questions 3, 4 and 5 and confirm the REC response to the consultation.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

There are no actions for implementation related to the paper.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
Responding to the consultation will be met within existing resources.
2. **Risk assessment**
None.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
None.
4. **Freedom of information**
This Paper is open

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer
Academic Services
6 May 2016

PRES 2017 and beyond

Consultation on survey development

Action for REC

REC is invited to comment on the following consultation questions:

3. Develop a module within PRES to understand the engagement of research postgraduates (see page 4 in appendix I)
4. Enable improved relevance for universities where provision is through Doctoral Training Centres or Partnerships (see page 5 in appendix I)
5. Extend the publication of PRES scores to include sector and standard mission group quartiles (see page 6 in appendix I)

Summary of responses received from Careers Service and College of Science and Engineering

Q1 – Mostly agree : Some benefits to flexibility.

Q2 – Mostly/Definitely agree : Benefits of career development experience, but risk of lengthening/more complexity of survey.

Q3 – Mostly agree : Disagree on reflection on learning process. No benefit to adding to survey, tweaking language elsewhere could capture this.

Q4 – Difference of agreement : Value in capturing the DTP (Doctoral Training Partnership) experience, but problematic to know which institution responses refer to. Additional training not restricted to DTC (Doctoral Training Centre) students.

Q5 – Mostly/Definitely agree : Ease of benchmarking with other institutions. May detract from focus on best practice.

Q6 – Definitely Disagree/Neither : Data not robust, there is significant variance over subject areas. Experience and research culture variable and occurs at sub-School level.

PRES 2017 and beyond

Consultation on survey development



Introduction

Following the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2015 there have been requests from several parts of the sector for PRES to be amended to reflect changing needs. After discussion with the HEA Surveys Steering Group this consultation on the future of PRES was initiated. Given further research and evaluation is required for some proposals, some amendments may not be made until after PRES 2017.

Below is the background to the current PRES. Over the next few pages comments and feedback is invited on six specific proposals. There is then an opportunity to give any other comments and feedback on the PRES questionnaire and strategy. Responses are confidential, and are anonymous unless you choose to give your contact details on the final page.

You can respond to this consultation online. Just go to:
<https://heacademy.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/pres-2017-beyond>

Background

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) was launched by the HEA in 2007 and became the 'industry standard' for collecting information about the experience of the UK postgraduate research students. PRES 2015 took place in 123 higher education providers (HEPs) across the UK¹. The PRES covers a wide range of postgraduate research students including 'traditional' doctorates, professional doctorates, MPhil (with and without a transfer to PhD) and Masters by research. All PRES data have been collected using the BOS online survey tool², with administration devolved to institutions so that they can market and promote the survey as is appropriate to their context.

PRES is designed for enhancement, aiming to inform discussions and decisions about improvements to the experience of postgraduate researchers. Institutional-level results are confidential and cannot be used to inform any league tables. This gives institutions the freedom to treat survey results as useful but partial indicators of where things might be going well and not so well.

PRES participants have access to a number of benchmarking groups, enabling comparisons with peer HEPs and aspirational HEPs, while keeping individual results confidential. In 2015, the benchmarking groups were: Russell Group, 1994 Group, Million+, Small and specialist, Pre-1992, post-1992, GuildHE, University Alliance, Scotland and Wales. In addition, participants may set up their own custom groups for benchmarking against.

¹ www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/postgraduate-research-experience-survey-2015

² www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk

The PRES questionnaire was redesigned in 2013 in response to requests from the sector. Following a wide consultation and research programme it became shorter, more focused and more in line with Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (RDF).³ Details are in the 2013 PRES report⁴.

PRES covers the following areas of postgraduate research experience:

- 1. Supervision:** the supervisory relationship, including supervisor's knowledge and skills.
- 2. Responsibilities:** questions relating to student and supervisor responsibilities.
- 3. Resources:** questions asking about working space, library provision etc.
- 4. Research skills:** questions relating to tools, methodologies, creativity and research integrity.
- 5. Research culture:** questions on issues around departmental community and research ambience.
- 6. Professional development:** questions relating to project management and transferable skills.
- 7. Progress and assessment:** monitoring progress and procedures regarding the thesis.
- 8. Motivations and destinations:** motivations to study and intended destination after graduation.

1. PRES to run in a flexible survey window

Currently PRES runs within a fixed survey window. In 2015 this was from 2 March to 14 May. The proposal for future iterations of the survey is that the window will be flexible, as for other HEA Student Surveys. The survey window would be open from the start of February to mid-June, with participating providers choosing their launch and close dates within that window. The final benchmarking results will not be available until mid-June (currently mid-May).

The reasoning for this proposal is:

- Greater flexibility will allow HEPs to run the survey at a time suited to them, for example as part of a 'survey season', or within a timetable of graduate school feedback events
- Standardisation across HEA Student Surveys
- Timing of the survey has been shown to have little impact on evaluation in one-year programmes, and the impact of timing is expected to be lower for research postgraduates

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

PRES should move to a flexible survey window

Definitely
agree

Mostly
agree

Neither

Mostly
disagree

Definitely
disagree

Please give any comments or feedback on the proposal for a flexible survey window here

³ www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework

⁴ www.heacademy.ac.uk/postgraduate-research-experience-survey-pres-2013

2. Develop a module within PRES to better reflect the experiences of doctoral training and relevance to career

Professional Doctorate students are currently surveyed by both PRES and PTES nationally. The proposal is to develop a module of questions within PRES that will seek to better evaluate the experience of Professional Doctorate students. In particular, to evaluate the taught experience of research postgraduates and more closely assess the relevance of the experience to professional skills and practice⁵. Elements of this may also benefit the understanding of the MRES and first year PhD experience around structured taught provision, and the experience of career orientated PGRs. This proposal would extend the length, and possibly increase the complexity, of PRES.

The reasoning for this proposal is:

- There have been requests from sector representatives for PRES to better understand the experience of those taking Professional Doctorates or those on a similarly career orientated doctoral programme
- Although the numbers taking professional doctorates are expanding relatively slowly (see Appendix 1) there is increasing need to understand the experience of these students
- The experience of taught sessions is becoming increasingly relevant to all research postgraduates in their first year

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

PRES should contain a module focussing on the experiences of doctoral training and relevance to career of PGRs

Definitely disagree

Mostly disagree

Neither

Mostly agree

Definitely agree

Please give any comments or feedback on the proposal to introduce a module focussing on the experiences of doctoral training and relevance to career of PGRs generally, and Professional Doctorate students in particular

⁵ http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Doctoral_Characteristics.pdf

3. Develop a module within PRES to understand the engagement of research postgraduates

There are currently no questions within PRES to assess student engagement. The proposal is to develop a module of questions within PRES that will seek to better evaluate the engagement of research postgraduates with their studies, reflecting elements currently covered by the UK Engagement Survey (UKES⁶). The use of engagement measures is relatively unexplored at research postgraduate level. It would be expected many of the practices assessed at undergraduate level, such as critical thinking and reflection, would be commonplace at PGR level. However, engagement with other factors known to contribute to good outcomes, such as contact with peers and time spent on independent study, may be more variable. This proposal would extend the length of PRES.

The reasoning for this proposal is:

- Engagement with good learning practice would be expected to continue to benefit learning at research postgraduate level
- Given the importance of independent learning to research postgraduate students, enabling reflection upon their learning has the potential to be make a positive contribution
- An assessment of engagement would allow HEPs to better support good learning practices of their research postgraduates

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

PRES should contain a module investigating the engagement of PGRs with their study

Definitely
disagree

Mostly
disagree

Neither

Mostly
agree

Definitely
agree

Please give any comments or feedback on the proposal to introduce a module evaluating the engagement of research postgraduates

⁶ <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukes/>

4. Enable improved relevance for universities where provision is through Doctoral Training Centres or Partnerships

PRES is currently based around a model where the provision of the programme is located within a single institution. The proposal is to better establish whether the experience of a research postgraduate is located at one institution, or across multiple institutions. This is in addition to increased guidance on the surveying of research postgraduates in DTCs/DTPs, particularly to ensure that PGRs based at multiple institutions are only being surveyed once within each round of PRES. This proposal would extend the length, and possibly increase the complexity, of PRES.

The reasoning for this proposal is:

- As part of Doctoral Training Programmes, and similar, a research student may experience resources, support and training delivered from multiple institutions
- It is currently unclear which institution a student within a DTP may be referring to when evaluating their provision, and therefore difficult to establish where enhancement is needed
- It is currently difficult to gauge the provision across multiple institutions, and therefore it is difficult to establish whether enhancement is needed across a DTC/DTP
- The response from PGRs studying within DTCs/DTPs is growing significantly, up from 14.5% in 2013 to 24.1% in 2015

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

PRES should enable better understanding the student experience when students experience provision across multiple institutions

Definitely disagree Mostly disagree Neither Mostly agree Definitely agree

Please give any comments or feedback on the proposal of better understanding the student experience when students experience provision across multiple institutions, whether as part of a DTC/DTP or otherwise

5. Extend the publication of PRES scores to include sector and standard mission group quartiles

The publication of PRES results is currently limited to sector level averages. The proposal is to extend this publication to quartile scores for the sector and mission groups, where they exceed a threshold of members. See Figure 1 below for an example of what this might look like. Publication of results for individual HEPs will remain the decision of each provider.

The reasoning for this proposal is:

- The public availability of quartile and mission group scores will improve the wider understanding of the spread of provision in the sector
- Participating institutions will be able to publicly compare their results to mission group averages and sector quartiles, rather than just to sector averages as currently stands
- A greater visibility of scores and comparative data will increase discussion on enhancement for research postgraduates

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The publication of PRES results should include sector and standard mission group quartiles

Definitely disagree Mostly disagree Neither Mostly agree Definitely agree

Please give any comments or feedback on the proposal to extend the publication of PRES scores to include sector and standard mission group quartiles

Figure 1: Example of mission group quartiles and averages

	All HEIs	GuildHE	Million+ Group	GuildHE	Million+ Group
Supervision	86%	1	2	82%	76%
Resources	79%	1	3	68%	74%
Research culture	66%	4	3	68%	82%
Progression	79%	4	3	74%	68%
Responsibilities	79%	4	2	68%	74%
Research skills	86%	4	2	74%	82%
Professional development	78%	4	EXAMPLE		82%
Teaching	60%	1	3	76%	74%
Overall	82%	1	2	68%	71%
Response	50556	9 HEIs	16 HEIs	4545	4545

6. Extend the publication of PRES scores to include selected individual results for HEPs

The results of PRES are currently confidential to institutions. The proposal is to publish ranked selected measures (for example: Supervision, Research Skills, Overall) from the survey that identify individual institutions, making these selected results public. See Figure 2 below for an example.

The reasoning for this proposal is:

- The public availability of institutional scores will improve the wider understanding of the spread of provision in the sector and results published by individual HEPs
- Participating institutions will be able to fully understand their relation to specific competitor and comparator institutions, rather than just to sector averages as currently stands
- A greater visibility of scores and comparative data will increase discussion on enhancement for research postgraduates

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The publication of PRES results should include selected institutional results

Definitely disagree Mostly disagree Neither Mostly agree Definitely agree

Please give any comments or feedback on the proposal to publish selected institutional results

Figure 2: Scores and significance of institutions in selected areas

	Supervision	Research culture	Research skills	Overall	Response
Wossamotta University	71%	74%	71%	68%	529
Miskatonic University	74%	82%	76%	68%	370
Smithdale University	71%	74%	76%	68%	715
Banting University	68%	71%	76%	68%	1091
University of Edgestow	71%	82%	76%	71%	249
Manchester Medlock University	76%	EXAMPLE		74%	490
Sweet Valley University	82%	82%	68%	74%	1845
Poppleton University	74%	74%	76%	76%	319
Unseen University	71%	76%	74%	82%	270

7. Specific points about the questionnaire

We are interested in comments and feedback on the current PRES items, as well as suggestions for additions. We would be interested in what is found most useful for enhancement, as well as any issues. Please note that HEA Surveys are committed to preserve the trend data of PRES wherever possible, preferring to change item wording only when there is strong evidence to do so.

If you have comments or feedback on the design of the PRES questionnaire or items within it, please give them here.

8. Strategy for PRES 2017 and beyond

It is intended that PRES remains an enhancement focussed survey that applies to all students learning at PGR level, run every two years, with administration devolved to institutions and detailed results confidential to institutions.

If you have comments or feedback on the future strategic direction of PRES, on the above points or any other aspect, then please give them here. We would be interested in what is, or could be, useful, as well as current issues.

9. Your details

Please indicate which job role / area you are in:

Survey officer	Senior staff (e.g. PVC, Dean)	Academic role (including HoD)	Non-academic / support role	Student / student representative
----------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Other (please specify) _____

You may submit your response anonymously, however we may wish to follow up your responses to explore your experience of PRES and views on the future direction of the survey.

If you are willing to be contacted further about your response, please give your name and a contact email and/or phone number here:

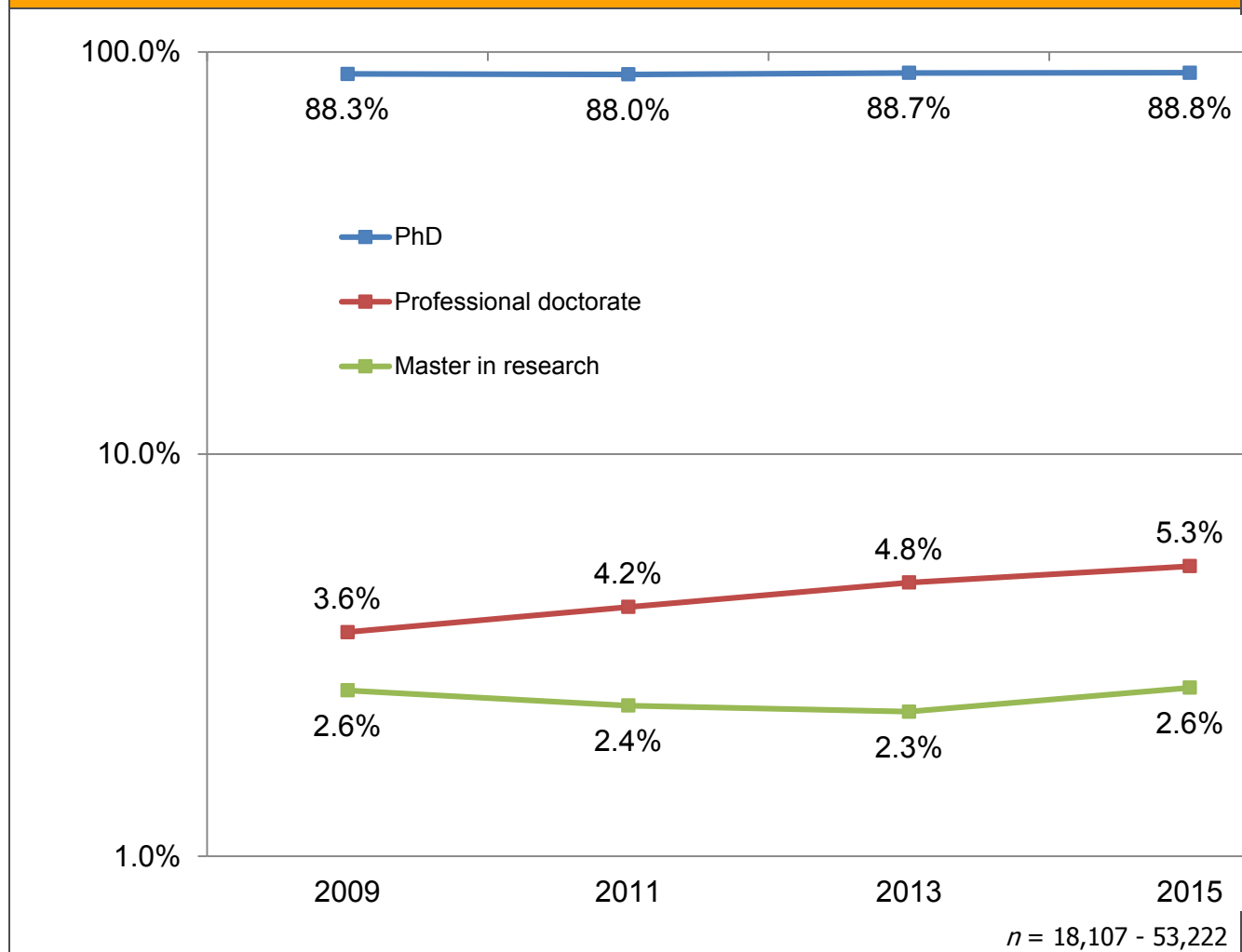
Thanks very much for responding
Please send your response to surveys@heacademy.ac.uk
by noon Monday 2 May 2016

A summary of feedback will be made available as the consultation is proceeding, to aid the sector discussion. To see any updates, please visit: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/pres/>

Appendix 1 – Trend in professional doctorate population

The trend in responses to PRES from students taking professional doctorates has gradually increased from 2009 to 2015. However, they are likely to be under-represented in the sample given some are included in the PTES sample, others surveyed by different means, and some may incorrectly indicate they are PhD students. Research by CRAC⁷ estimates the proportion of professional doctorates at 9%, finding a modest increase over time. The response from students taking a masters in research has shown no increase, though this cohort of students appear equally likely to be taking PTES.

Figure A1: Trend in proportion of PRES responses from postgraduates taking a professional doctorate



⁷http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/Independentresearch/2016/Provision,of,professional,doctorates/Professional_doctorates_CRAC.pdf

REC: 17.05.16
H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5G

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Postgraduate Research Space: Draft paper and recommendations for Space Enhancement Management Group

Executive Summary

The paper provides a review of progress to date on postgraduate research space developments. It also provides content and suggests recommendations for discussion by REC, for submission to Space Enhancement Management Group (SEMG).

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience and the Committee's strategic goal of enhancing the postgraduate research student experience.

Action requested

The committee is invited to discuss the paper and suggested recommendations for SEMG.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

There are no actions for implementation as the paper is provided for discussion only. Any subsequent action will be taken forward by SEMG.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
There are no resource implications for consideration by REC.
- 2. Risk assessment**
None.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**
None.
- 4. Freedom of information**
This Paper is **open**

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer
Academic Services
26 April 2016

Postgraduate Research Space

Draft paper and recommendations for Space Enhancement Management Group

Background

Following the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review 2011, space for postgraduate research students was identified as an area for development. The Senatus Research Experience Committee set up a Task Group to investigate this topic, which reported in 2012. In 2013, the teaching space management project was launched, to provide new postgraduate space. Pilots were run in the Schools of Mathematics and Divinity and feedback on the pilots was reported to REC in 2014/15 by Space Enhancement Management Group (SEMG) and the schools involved.

REC continued discussions with SEMG and subsequent to meetings in 2015/16, REC was asked to submit a paper with recommendations to SEMG. The paper will aim to ensure the needs of postgraduate research students are considered when space management decisions are taken by SEMG, and will draw on data from College responses to PRES 2015.

PGR space themes from College responses to PRES 2015

PRES results show a drop in satisfaction generally in relation to facilities (this includes computing resources). Space is a particularly challenging issue in the College of Humanities and Social Science. The survey results showed that across the three Colleges, the broad areas of lower satisfaction for students related to the working environment and issues when relocation was required.

Environment

Students raised concerns on the lack of natural light, quiet space and ventilation in their work spaces. Overcrowding was also highlighted, with concern in some areas that undergraduates were using space that had been specifically allocated to postgraduates. The lack of social space, particularly in Science and Engineering, was highlighted as having an impact on facilitating inter and cross-disciplinary discussion. Students also felt the lack of contact with other PhD students was an issue.

Relocation

Overcrowded working space, and the reallocation of postgraduate space for use by undergraduates were highlighted as concerns in relation to relocation. Students also expressed concern around relocation due to refurbishment work, particularly when it meant they were relocated away from their lab or supervisor. Some students who were relocated during their fourth year felt they did not have adequate facilities during the “writing up year”.

Out of hours access to buildings, inadequate IT and dissatisfaction with hot desking arrangements were also raised as concerns, although not all students were dissatisfied with hot desking arrangements.

Possible recommendations to SEMG

Some possible recommendations to SEMG are suggested below. REC is invited to discuss and agree recommendations to be submitted to SEMG:

- Consider the needs of PGR students when it is necessary to relocate due to redevelopment/refurbishment work. Comparable facilities should be provided when relocation is necessary.
- Ensure that PGR students are not disadvantaged by the requirements for teaching space/undergraduate space
- Protecting PGR space that has been designated for work and/or social activity.
- Providing adequate PGR work and social space in new developments and redevelopment of existing buildings.
- Ensure redevelopment/refurbishment work provides adequate natural light, ventilation and quiet space wherever possible.

Susan Hunter

26 April 2016

REC: 17.05.16

H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5H

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Special Circumstances – Postgraduate research students

Executive Summary

During 2015-16, the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) has undertaken a major review of the University's Special Circumstances Policy, the current version of which is a:

www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Special_Circumstances.pdf.

This policy is only relevant to taught courses including the taught components of research programmes; special circumstances for postgraduate research are usually dealt with through extensions and interruptions of study. However, student cases during 2015/16 have highlighted that the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students is not sufficiently clear regarding how special circumstances can be taken account of in the context of postgraduate research.

To clarify the process and emphasise the need for students to raise special circumstances with their supervisor, we propose to add the following new content to the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students:

4.2 Special Circumstances

Special circumstances are circumstances beyond a student's control which are exceptional for the individual student, are beyond that student's control and for which there is sufficient evidence to show that they had a significant adverse impact on research performance, attendance or assessment submissions. For example, significant short-term illness, or bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship, can be examples of special circumstances.

Students whose circumstances are affecting their ability to engage with their studies should discuss them with their Principal Supervisor in the first instance.

For postgraduate research students, students with special circumstances that are disrupting their studies can be supported by being offered authorised interruption or extension of study. However, there may be occasions when personal circumstances have an impact on assessment, such as annual progression review meetings or the oral examination. In these circumstances, it may be possible either to reschedule the progression review meeting or oral examination, or to make some adjustments to the format of the meeting. It may also be appropriate for the College Postgraduate Committee / Board to take account of these circumstances when considering the recommendations from a progression review or oral examination. Students should notify their Principal Supervisor in writing of any special circumstance before the meeting of the examiners or College Committee / Board meeting.

For taught components undertaken by postgraduate research students, the University's Special Circumstances Policy applies.

- [Special Circumstances Policy](#)

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

This aligns with the University's Strategic Goal of Excellence in Education and Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience. It is also consistent with the Committee's strategic goal of enhancing the postgraduate research student experience.

Action requested

REC is invited to discuss and approve the proposed addition to the Code of Practice.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Changes to the Code of Practice are communicated by Academic Services in the annual update on policies and regulations in June.

Resource / Risk / Compliance**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

None – the paper does not propose any significant changes to policy or practice.

2. Risk assessment

None – the proposed addition to the Code should mitigate any risk of confusion on process.

3. Equality and Diversity

An equality impact assessment will be carried out on the Code of Practice by Academic Services.

4. Freedom of information

*The paper is **open**.*

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer

Academic Services

25 April 2016

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

Executive Summary

The paper comprises updates to the Code of Practice for consistency with revised policies and regulations for 2016/17. Some minor content amendments have been made to clarify where arrangements may differ for online distance students and MSc by Research students. A new section on Special Circumstances has been added – see Paper H.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with University Strategic Plan Goal of Excellence in Education, Excellence in Research and Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience. It also aligns with the Committee's strategic goal of enhancing the postgraduate research student experience.

Action requested

The committee is invited to formally note the paper and approve the Code of Practice for publication.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

There are no actions for implementation as the paper does not make any changes to policy. Updates will be communicated through Academic Services' annual communication on policies and regulations in June.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
None as no change in policy or process is proposed.
2. **Risk assessment**
None.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
None.
4. **Freedom of information**
This Paper is **open**

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer

Academic Services

6 May 2016

Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	Scope of the Code of Practice	4
1.2	Research Degree Standards	4
1.2.1	Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes	4
1.2.2	Joint PhD Degrees	5 4
1.2.3	Prescribed Period of Study	5
1.2.4	The Thesis	5
1.3	Key Responsibilities	65 65
1.3.1	Supervisory Team	65 65
1.3.2	Principal Supervisor	65 65
1.3.3	Postgraduate Director	6
1.3.4	Subject Area Postgraduate Adviser	76 76
1.3.5	College Postgraduate Academic Management	76 76
1.3.6	Senate Committees	7
1.3.7	Support Staff	7
2	THE STUDENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY	87 87
2.1	Finding a Supervisor and Research Topic	87 87
2.1.1	Choice of Topic and Supervision	87 87
2.1.2	Appointment of Supervisor	87 87
2.1.3	Principal or Lead Supervisor	8
2.1.4	Co-Supervisors	8
2.1.5	Assistant Supervisor	98 98
2.1.6	Advisers	98 98
2.1.7	School Postgraduate Advisers	98 98
2.1.8	Collaboration with Other Institutions	9
2.1.9	Review of Topic and Supervisory Arrangements	9
2.2	Welcome and Induction of New Students	109 109
2.3	Supervision of the Research Project	10
2.3.1	Deciding on a Research Project	10
2.3.2	Responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor	114 114
2.3.3	Absence of the Principal Supervisor	124 124
2.3.4	Role of Assistant Supervisor	124 124
2.3.5	Role of Co-Supervisors	12
2.3.6	Supervisors in Associated Institutions	131 131
2.4	International Students	13
2.4.1	English Language Requirements	13
2.4.2	Immigration and Visa Advice	141 141
2.5	Facilities	141 141
2.5.1	Provision in Schools and Departments	14
2.5.2	Representation on Committees Dealing with Postgraduate Provision	154 154
2.6	On Being a Research Student	154 154
2.6.1	The University and the Student	154 154
2.6.2	Involvement in the Life of the University	15

2.6.3	Responsibilities of the Student	<u>1645</u>
2.6.4	Responsibility for the Quality of the Thesis	<u>1645</u>
2.6.5	Team Working	16
2.6.6	Proofreading	<u>1746</u>
2.6.7	Previously Assessed Material	<u>1746</u>
2.6.8	Producing Publications	<u>1746</u>
2.6.9	Intellectual Property	17
2.7	Support Services	<u>1847</u>
2.7.1	The Advice Place	<u>1847</u>
2.7.2	Student Counselling Service	<u>1847</u>
2.7.3	English Language Tuition	<u>1847</u>
2.7.4	Study Skills	<u>1847</u>
2.7.5	Library Collections and Services	<u>1948</u>
2.7.6	Computing Resources	<u>1948</u>
2.7.7	Disabled Students	<u>2049</u>
3	RESEARCH PROGRESS	<u>2149</u>
3.1	Contact between Students and Supervisors	<u>2149</u>
3.1.1	Keeping Records of Key Meetings	<u>2149</u>
3.1.2	Research Integrity and Ethics Approval	<u>2120</u>
3.1.3	Duty of Care	<u>2220</u>
3.2	Monitoring Student Progress	<u>2220</u>
3.2.1	Annual Progression Review	<u>2220</u>
3.2.2	Recommendations Following the Progression Review	<u>2422</u>
3.3	Absences, Interruptions and Extensions	<u>2423</u>
3.3.1	Leave of Absence	<u>2523</u>
3.3.2	Leave of Absence for International Students	<u>2523</u>
3.3.3	Vacation Leave	<u>2524</u>
3.3.4	Authorised Interruption of Study	<u>2524</u>
3.3.5	Extension to the Period of Study	<u>2624</u>
3.3.6	Continuation Fees	<u>2725</u>
3.3.7	Withdrawal from Study	<u>2725</u>
3.3.8	Exclusion from Study and Academic Performance	<u>2725</u>
3.4	Preparing the Thesis for Submission	<u>2826</u>
3.4.1	Notice of Intention to Submit	<u>2826</u>
3.5	Thesis Assessment	<u>2826</u>
3.5.1	Appointment of Examiners	<u>2826</u>
3.5.2	Assessment of Students who are also Members of Staff	<u>2927</u>
3.5.3	Appointment of a Chair for the Oral Examination	<u>2927</u>
3.5.4	Date of the Oral Examination	<u>2927</u>
3.5.5	The Submitted Thesis	<u>3028</u>
3.5.6	Responsibility for the Outcome of the Assessment	<u>3028</u>
3.5.7	Assessment Criteria	<u>3028</u>
3.5.8	Length of the Thesis	<u>3129</u>
3.5.9	The Thesis and Joint Publications	<u>3129</u>
3.5.10	Portfolio Material	<u>3129</u>
3.5.11	Supplementary Material	<u>3230</u>
3.5.12	Lay Summary	<u>3230</u>
3.6	The Assessment Process	<u>3230</u>
3.6.1	Supervisor Presence at the Oral Examination	<u>3230</u>
3.6.2	Organisation of the Oral Examination	<u>3330</u>
3.6.3	Examination Outside of the UK	<u>3334</u>

3.6.4	Examiner Preparation	<u>3334</u>
3.6.5	Examiner Recommendations	<u>3334</u>
3.6.6	Notification of Examiner Recommendations	<u>3434</u>
3.7	After the Examination	<u>3432</u>
3.7.1	Revisions to the Thesis	<u>3432</u>
3.7.2	Thesis Resubmission	<u>3432</u>
3.7.3	Final Submission of the Assessed Thesis	<u>3532</u>
3.7.4	Online Access to the Thesis	<u>3633</u>
3.7.5	Graduation	<u>3633</u>
3.7.6	Progress of a Typical Full Time PhD	<u>3633</u>
4	RESOLVING PROBLEMS	<u>3734</u>
4.1	Personal Concerns	<u>3734</u>
4.2	Working Relationships	<u>3734</u>
4.3	Decisions of the University Committees	<u>3835</u>
4.4	Recording Problems with Progress	<u>3835</u>
4.5	The Supervisor-Student Relationship	<u>3835</u>
4.6	Dignity and Respect	<u>3935</u>
4.7	Complaints	<u>3936</u>
5	STUDENT APPEALS	<u>3936</u>
5.1	Grounds for Appeal	<u>4036</u>
5.2	Information about Special Circumstances	<u>4036</u>
5.3	Role of the Supervisor in an Appeal Case	<u>4037</u>
5.4	Submitting an Appeal	<u>4037</u>
6	STUDENT CONDUCT	<u>4137</u>
7	PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING	<u>4137</u>
8	EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION	<u>4137</u>
9	APPENDICES	<u>4238</u>
9.1	Appendix I: Health and Safety	<u>4238</u>
9.1.1	The Safety of Postgraduate Students	<u>4238</u>
9.1.2	The University Health and Safety Policy	<u>4238</u>
9.2	Appendix II: Privacy of Personal Data	<u>4339</u>
9.2.1	Student Responsibilities	<u>4339</u>
9.2.2	Supervisor Responsibilities	<u>4339</u>
9.2.3	Consequences of Breaching the Data Protection Act	<u>4440</u>
9.3	Appendix III: University Codes of Practice, Regulations and Links to other Useful Information	<u>4440</u>
9.4	Appendix IV: Sources of Additional Advice and Information	<u>4544</u>
	College Offices:	<u>4544</u>
9.5	Appendix V: Summary of Responsibilities	<u>4743</u>
9.5.1	The Student	<u>4743</u>
9.5.2	The Supervisor	<u>4743</u>
9.5.3	The University, including Schools, Centres and Institutes where the student is based	<u>4743</u>

1 Introduction

The University aims to foster a vibrant, successful and interactive research community that generates ideas and discoveries, creates new fields of knowledge and makes a difference to the societal, cultural, environmental, health and wealth development of Scottish, UK and global communities.

Research students have a major role to play in these aims. To this end, the University seeks to provide research students with an exceptional and distinctive experience that prepares them to make significant contributions to knowledge during and beyond their period of candidature in the University.

1.1 Scope of the Code of Practice

In placing research excellence and student experience at the forefront, this Code provides guidance and practical advice for both supervisors and research students. It sets out the expected standards for both students and staff, recognising the diversity of contexts and practices across the University. The Code should be read in conjunction with the postgraduate regulations set out in

- [The University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#)
- [The Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

For MSc by Research degrees that include a significant taught element and that have their own Board of Examiners please refer to

- [The Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes The Taught Assessment Regulations](#).

The Code of Practice is consistent with the [QAA Code of Practice Chapter B11: Research Degrees](#).

1.2 Research Degree Standards

This Code of Practice sets out the University's standards for its research degree programmes. The University Degree Regulations provide further details about types of awards, their key characteristics, and the conditions for awarding the degrees.

1.2.1 Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes

This Code refers to Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes and includes all research-based postgraduate programmes offered by the University of Edinburgh:

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- MSc by Research
- Doctorates and other research degrees named according to subject.

[MSc by Research programmes may have different arrangements for supervision and assessment. Information will be available in programme handbooks.](#)

[Different arrangements and facilities may also be in place for distance students and information will be available in programme handbooks.](#)

Field Code Changed

- Every research degree programme is the responsibility of the relevant College Postgraduate Committee, referred to in this publication as the College committee.

1.2.2 Joint PhD Degrees

The University supports fully integrated joint degrees as agreed formally with partner institutions. These are degrees for which there is a single award between partner universities with equal quality assurance, standards, and examination procedures. -Joint PhD programmes enable doctoral students to embark on jointly-supervised research degrees (section 2.1.82-1.78). Students matriculated on jointly-awarded PhD programmes have access to two research environments and cultures, as well as training and facilities in two research-intensive universities.

Under certain circumstances, the University may also consider entering into dual award arrangements. These are set out in the University's dual award policy.

- Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy

1.2.3 Prescribed Period of Study

Students undertake their study over the period prescribed by the postgraduate research degree programme in which they are matriculated.

- Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study

Variations to the period of candidature are outlined in this Code, including how to apply for concessions such as interruptions of study and extensions to the prescribed period of study. The period of study begins from matriculation on the degree programme ~~in the University~~ and ends with the submission of the thesis for examination, though in the case of PhD and MPhil degrees the examiners may recommend that the student undertake a further period of study or a period to implement corrections after the examination.

1.2.4 The Thesis

The thesis is the final output of the research process, developed over the duration of the student's candidature. The form of the thesis depends on the research degree programme in which the student is matriculated, and will require one or more of the following:

- A written thesis or dissertation
- Assessed essays
- A portfolio of music compositions
- Artefacts, artworks and other practice-based outputs
- Design work including studies, sketches and maquettes
- Placement reports
- Documentary film
- A portfolio of publications

The research degree programme or supervisory team may also require students to undertake and pass some coursework, as outlined in the relevant Degree Regulations and Programme Handbooks.

Field Code Changed

Formatted: List Paragraph, Bulleted + Level: 1 +
Aligned at: 0.63 cm + Indent at: 1.27 cm

1.3 Key Responsibilities

1.3.1 Supervisory Team

The team should contain at least two members, a Principal Supervisor (in some cases referred to as the Lead Supervisor) and Co-supervisor or Assistant Supervisor depending on the supervision model. The supervisory team supports the student's candidature. In some cases several Co-supervisors will be appointed. For MPhil and PhD candidates the supervisory team will meet as a group with the student at least once a year as part of a progression review towards the end of the first year and at least once a year after that. This relationship continues from registration until the end of the student's candidature. Supervisors are responsible for supervision of the student's candidature until the final thesis is submitted fulfilling any requirements of the examiners. Supervisory arrangements for MSc by Research students may differ and details will be provided in the programme handbook.

1.3.2 Principal Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor is responsible for providing help and advice to the student on (see also section 2.3.2):

- Research training
- Choice of topic
- Organising the research
- Identifying any specific training needs
- Feedback on written work and any other component of the research
- Pastoral support.

The Principal Supervisor meets regularly with the student, leads the student through the process of producing the thesis and its examination, reminds the student of time constraints, and checks that the thesis conforms to the University's requirements. Meetings may be conducted online or via teleconferencing. The Supervisor will be able to offer advice and direct the student to sources of information about future careers. Comprehensive careers guidance is available from the Careers Service.

1.3.3 Postgraduate Director

The University's teaching and research activity is organised into Schools. Each School has a Postgraduate Director (or Head of Graduate School) responsible for postgraduate matters in the School. Amongst other duties, the Postgraduate Director will:

- Monitor the progress of all research students within the School
- Engage with the formal annual review process for each student
- Ensure that research students receive the help and advice they require
- Help students and supervisors to resolve problems with student progress
- Consult with all supervisors in the School on issues as they arise
- Advance policies about postgraduate matters in the School.

1.3.4 Subject Area Postgraduate Adviser

Large schools may also have Postgraduate Advisers who are responsible for subject areas within the School. Postgraduate Advisers fulfil the Postgraduate Director's duties in the subject area and support the Postgraduate Director.

1.3.5 College Postgraduate Academic Management

Each School is positioned in one of the three Colleges of the University. Each College has a committee or board responsible for overseeing postgraduate research within the College and for maintaining academic standards. The College Postgraduate Committee or College Board of Examiners:

- Approves extensions and interruptions of study
- Approves concessions to the [application of](#) regulations such as the language the thesis is written in and the length of thesis
- Approves the appointment of examiners
- Approves any conditions recommended by the examiners
- Decides whether to accept the advice of the examiners on the awarding of the degree
- Considers policy issues that affect postgraduate education in the College.

The Committee or Board may also implement some of its responsibilities through subcommittees, a Dean or committee chair. The Committee or Board also offers advice to relevant Senate Committees.

1.3.6 Senate Committees

The Senatus Academicus (Senate) is the University's overarching academic body. The University's governance structure includes several Senate committees. Committees dealing with postgraduate research are:

- [The Senatus Researcher Experience Committee](#)
- [The Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee](#)
- [The Senatus Quality Assurance Committee.](#)

These committees include academic staff from all Colleges and representatives from the Edinburgh University Students' Association—(~~EUSA~~). They are convened by the Assistant Principal of Researcher Development, the Assistant Principal ~~of Learning and Development~~ [Academic Support](#) and the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance respectively.

1.3.7 Support Staff

Each School and College also has an administrative support team. Amongst other duties they are responsible for handling enquiries, admissions, record keeping, scholarship applications, and applications for interruptions and extensions. The administrative team also supports the role of the Director or Head of Graduate School. They also provide a point of contact to help with routine queries on pastoral support.

2 The Student's Relationship with the University

2.1 Finding a Supervisor and Research Topic

The nature of the student's research interests or the proposed project will affect the membership and composition of the supervisory team. School Postgraduate Directors assess and discuss applications with potential supervisors prior to the student's registration at the University. All students will have at least two supervisors, appointed by the College. If only one is appointed at registration a second will be appointed within two months of the programme start date.

2.1.1 Choice of Topic and Supervision

A Postgraduate Director, Postgraduate Adviser, supervisor, or potential supervisor will meet with the student to agree the topic area and identify supervisor(s) before or soon after the student's studies begin. This advice applies also to students who as part of their research degree undertake taught courses at the start of their candidature. Some students will have agreed their topic before recruitment.

2.1.2 Appointment of Supervisor

Academic staff who have already served as Assistant Supervisor or Co-Supervisor are eligible to serve as Principal Supervisors. Each student will work under the guidance of at least two supervisors appointed by the College Postgraduate Committee. There are two types of supervisory arrangement:

- Principal Supervisor plus Assistant Supervisor(s)
- Co-Supervisors, one of whom is designated the Lead Supervisor.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that supervisors and Co-Supervisors have sufficient time to meet their responsibilities as supervisors. In assessing the supervisory arrangement, Schools and Colleges will also take account of:

- Whether the supervisors are in part-time or full time employment
- The duration of staff contracts.

The University provides training and support for supervisors, and requires attendance every five years on a College or School supervisor briefing session.

2.1.3 Principal or Lead Supervisor

Supervisory teams will contain at least two people. The School will ensure that the supervisory team is in place within two months of registration. The Principal Supervisor (or Lead Supervisor if the student is co-supervised) must be appointed prior to the student's registration. The Principal or Lead Supervisor has the primary responsibility for supervision and if the student is co-supervised, the Principal Supervisor will also deal with the administrative aspects of supervision. Throughout the rest of this document the term "Principal Supervisor" will be used for both Principal and Lead Supervisor.

2.1.4 Co-Supervisors

The Co-Supervisor's role and responsibilities are equal to the Principal Supervisor's in supervising the student's work. This supervisory arrangement

is normally chosen when it is clear that the student's proposal involves interdisciplinary research.

2.1.5 Assistant Supervisor

The role of the Assistant Supervisor entails less responsibility than the Principal Supervisor, but in some cases may require closer day-to-day involvement in the student's research.

2.1.6 Advisers

In some research programmes other staff members will be involved in an informal advisory capacity, especially if specialised equipment is to be used. It is the duty of the Principal Supervisor to ensure that these informal advisers are prepared to undertake this work and to take responsibility for instruction and safety.

2.1.7 School Postgraduate Advisers

Schools may appoint an individual or group to support the Postgraduate Director in providing impartial advice to students and academic staff on:

- Issues relating to supervision
- Space and facility needs
- Complaints.

Such an advisory group will be proactive in identifying and resolving issues, and may include experts from outside the School. The group will also function as a means of introducing students to a wider cohort of staff in the School.

2.1.8 Collaboration with Other Institutions

In some cases research projects span across several Schools and Colleges in the University and involve other universities and organisations. The University of Edinburgh has collaborative agreements in several research disciplines with partners nationally and worldwide, not all of whom are eligible to award degrees. Agreements are confirmed by the University and managed by Schools and Colleges.

2.1.9 Review of Topic and Supervisory Arrangements

Students on postgraduate degree programmes that are longer than one year full time will undergo an annual progression review. The first progression review is held within nine to 12 months of matriculation and in subsequent years at nine to 12 months until thesis submission.

The student will present a ~~written~~ report as part of the review (see also section 3.2.1). The progression review provides the opportunity for the review committee and supervisory team to assess the candidate's potential as a researcher and the suitability of topic before confirming that the student can continue into the second and third years of their programme of study. It also provides an opportunity for candidates to assess their research and to develop and refine their research topic. The possible outcomes of this review include continuing with candidature, revising the report, repeating the review process, changing to another degree, or exclusion from study (see also section 3.2.1). Supervisors will provide written feedback to the student as part of the review process.

- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

2.2 Welcome and Induction of New Students

Induction events are run at the University, College, School and programme level. Induction arrangements may differ for distance students and the School will provide information on what is provided. As well as welcoming students, the University and College induction events provide an introduction to the institution and its student support services. For University induction events, students will be assigned to an induction cohort and invited to the next available University induction event.

School inductions compliment the University induction programme. Induction will introduce students to University and School provision. Induction events will be timetabled to occur at key entry points for the majority of students. Students will be assigned to the next available induction event.

Induction events inform students about:

- The University's administrative structures and how postgraduate research degree programmes fit into these
- University-wide support services, both academic and pastoral, available to postgraduate research students, including those offered by the Students' Association
- Academic support services, in particular library and computing services, and College or School arrangements for access and training in the use of these facilities
- Opportunities for further training and skills development
- Pastoral support within Colleges and Schools.

Local inductions introduce students to supervising staff, research colleagues, the learning and working environment, the Library and other resources. They also provide an opportunity for research students to ask questions about their programme.

Schools will carry out inductions for new students that will include:

- An introduction to the University's administrative structures and how the postgraduate research programmes fit into these
- An introduction to the work environment and relevant facilities
- An introduction to key staff
- An introduction to other students, including social opportunities which allow students to network
- An introduction to the University library system and relevant IT systems
- Health and safety training (see section [1.18-4](#)).

2.3 Supervision of the Research Project

2.3.1 Deciding on a Research Project

Students and supervisors will decide on the topic of research before the student commences their study at the University or in the early months of study. The project will depend on:

- The student's background and interests
- The student's motivation for the topic

Commented [HS1]: This section reviewed for distance students

Induction Team confirm no changes to this section

Field Code Changed

- The supervisors' areas of expertise
- Availability of the supervisors during important periods of the candidature
- Available resources
- Suitability for the research degree in which the student is matriculated
- Availability of relevant training
- Whether the project can be completed within the prescribed period of study
- Any requirements stipulated by studentship funders such as Research Councils and doctoral training centres or partnerships
- Conditions relating to study or examination specified in the letter of admission, for example the acquisition of computing skills or knowledge of a foreign language.

Close contact between supervisors and students is essential. The frequency of meetings will depend on the subject area, and the stage of the student's training. Meetings may occur weekly in the first few months of candidature in order to scope and define the research project. Part-time students should be prepared for a programme of frequent meetings at the initial stages particularly in light of scheduling constraints and the student's commitments outside of their research.

2.3.2 Responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor will:

- Ensure that facilities necessary for the project are available
- Facilitate contact with informal supervisors and advisers where necessary
- Arrange regular meetings with the student at which all matters relating to the student's research can be discussed, including feedback on written work
- Identify the student's development needs at the start of the degree and review and update these throughout the student's candidature
- Advise the student on drawing up a research plan, thesis structure and a timetable for completion of the work
- Help the student prepare for the progression review where required
- Complete and submit on time to the appropriate postgraduate contact according to College guidelines, and complete all relevant reports required by Research Councils and other funding bodies, and ensure their transmission (see also section 3.2 Monitoring Student Progress)
- Provide advice on pastoral support as well as academic matters so that problems can be identified early on and appropriate steps taken to obtain concessions where needed, such as interruptions of study, absences from the University, leaves of absence and extensions (see also section 3.3)
- Offer advice on other forms of output from the student's research, such as publication in journals and conference proceedings
- Advise on the final form of the thesis (see section 1.2.4) or any changes to the proposed form of the thesis
- Encourage students to develop transferable skills and to attend appropriate training courses.

The plan for completion of the research will include specific research goals, their timing, sequence, and interdependencies. The supervisor will monitor the student's progress against this plan, along with any revisions.

Pastoral responsibility includes being alert to problems that might affect the student's ability to work effectively. The supervisor needs to be aware of the facilities that the University offers for the support of students, such as the University Health Service, the Student Disability Service, the Student Counselling Service, the Advice Place, Careers Services, the Chaplaincy and the International Office (see also section 1.3.2).

2.3.3 Absence of the Principal Supervisor

Schools will make alternative arrangements for supervision in the event that the Principal Supervisor is absent for more than six consecutive weeks, including during University vacation periods. The student will be notified formally of any such arrangements.

2.3.4 Role of Assistant Supervisor

The role of the Assistant Supervisor is to:

- Support the approach to the main thesis topic addressed by the student and agreed with the Principal Supervisor (rather than offer an alternative approach), for example provide complementary expertise, such as specialised knowledge of a particular technique, or depending on the work context, provide day-to-day supervision in some cases
- Provide support and assistance if the Principal Supervisor is absent
- Meet with the student periodically
- Follow the student's progress
- Be fully involved in the annual reviews of the student's progress and comment on and sign the student's annual report form.

The role of the Assistant Supervisor will be regularised, agreed and understood by the supervisory team, the Postgraduate Director or Head of Graduate School and the student.

2.3.5 Role of Co-Supervisors

The School may decide that two supervisors are necessary to support the research. This will be agreed at the time of the student's admission to candidature or whenever it becomes apparent that the research requires interdisciplinary support. One of the supervisors will assume the role of Principal Supervisor. The Principal Supervisor and Co-Supervisor have equal roles and responsibilities for supervision, but the Principal Supervisor will be responsible for applications for concessions (for example interruptions and extensions), ensure that monitoring forms are completed, and meet other administrative responsibilities.

Both supervisors will assist the student to identify and define the topic of research, either before the student arrives at the University or soon after. If the interdisciplinary nature of the research topic develops later then the Principal Supervisor will consult with the student, identify an appropriate Co-Supervisor,

and arrange the terms of the working relationship. Where the Principal and Co-Supervisors are from different Schools, the Principal Supervisor will obtain approval for the arrangement from the Postgraduate Directors of both Schools.

The Principal and Co-Supervisor are jointly responsible to the Postgraduate Director in the School in which the student is matriculated for the duties set out in section 2.3.2 and both will meet regularly with the student.

2.3.6 Supervisors in Associated Institutions

Staff employed by Associated Institutions may serve as supervisors. An employee of an Associated Institution may serve as a Principal Supervisor if:

- The student is working full time in the Associated Institution
- The Co-Supervisor or Assistant Supervisor(s) are University employees
- The Principal Supervisor from the Associated Institution is prepared to take on supervisory responsibilities as if they were working within the University and complies with the roles and responsibilities outlined in this Code of Practice
- The arrangement is approved by the College Committee.

Supervisors employed by Associated Institutions are required to participate in the University's supervisor briefing sessions. The University Co-Supervisor and the Postgraduate Director will ensure that the Principal Supervisor from the Associated Institution has read the University's procedures and Codes of Practice. The University Co-Supervisor, Postgraduate Director and College committee with responsibility for postgraduate matters will monitor student progress through formal annual reporting. Students working in an Associated Institution have the same rights and responsibilities as those working in a University School. They will also be subject to any additional rules of the Associated Institution.

2.4 International Students

The University welcomes international students. Advice is available to assist international students adjust to life away from home, friends and families. The International Office, the Student Counselling Service, the Chaplaincy and the Advice Place provide confidential help and advice. Students can also seek advice from Supervisors, and students in Halls of Residence can also seek help and advice from the wardens.

2.4.1 English Language Requirements

The University requires all students to demonstrate sufficient English language competence to undertake and derive full benefit from their chosen programme of study. The written thesis and oral examinations of research degrees are in English (or Gaelic in some cases). Students must be able to communicate fluently with their supervisors.

The University may require students whose first language is not English to undertake a diagnostic English test in Edinburgh prior to registration to assess training needs. Students who are required to take this test will be notified by their College on admission. The Test of English at Matriculation (TEAM) may find that the student needs essential or strongly recommended English

Commented [HS2]: International Office
Content update provided by Euan Fergusson 24/2/16

language tuition. If so the student will be strongly advised to undertake remedial tuition. The Principal Supervisor will advise the student of the importance of remedial English language training and encourage the student to attend. The language test is rigorous to ensure that any remedial action specified is appropriate, to avoid serious problems in writing the thesis.

-All Tier 4 applicants must meet Home Office Tier 4 requirements, in order for the University to sponsor them.

2.4.2 Immigration and Visa Advice

Immigration advice is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. By law, immigration advice can only be provided by specifically named staff who meet the required competencies and work in accordance with the Code of Standards as defined by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. International students should only consult with staff in the International Office for visa and immigration advice. There are serious implications if a student needs to stay in the UK and fails to renew their visa before it expires, or if a student changes their circumstances (for example, changes of location of study, length of programme, or breaks in study). Adjustments to candidate status can take several months, so students requiring help should seek it well in advance of making the change. [Contact through visahelp@ed.ac.uk](mailto:visahelp@ed.ac.uk).

- [International Office](#)

2.5 Facilities

The University provides central library facilities, an email account, shared access to computers and network access for all [campus-based](#) students. Students can expect adequate lighting, heating and ventilation in the spaces in which they work. Schools are responsible for providing study accommodation and equipment.

2.5.1 Provision in Schools and Departments

Each subject area has its own provision, which **may** include:

- Bench space
- Dedicated study space
- A desk
- Shelving or space in a bookcase
- Filing space
- Lockable storage
- Local access to the computer network
- A collection point for mail
- Research data file store
- Research premises
- Specialised equipment
- Consumables.

Schools will also provide postgraduate research students with:

- A postgraduate notice board, information point or electronic information point

Commented [HS3]: Section reviewed for distance students

- Access to a shared photocopier, fax machines and telephone.

Students will have access to the facilities agreed with the School for the duration of their candidature. Facilities may be limited during periods of extensions to candidature due to resource constraints and to make space available for incoming students; facilities will differ for distance students. Schools will make clear to students, before they register on their degree programme, the provision of space and facilities that they can expect.

2.5.2 Representation on Committees Dealing with Postgraduate Provision

Schools will ensure that postgraduate research students are represented formally on relevant School committees and provided with the opportunity to communicate with committees through student forums. Students will be informed of the means by which they can make their views known to the School committees and School managers.

2.6 On Being a Research Student

2.6.1 The University and the Student

All students are members of the University community. The University invites research students to share in the strategic objectives of the University as an institution. The University aims to provide:

- A nurturing and stimulating intellectual and social environment
- The opportunity to develop critical and analytical skills
- Training in research methods and relevant technical skills
- Adequate facilities for research
- A professional level of supervision
- Personal, professional and career development advice and opportunities
- Pastoral support
- Efficient administration
- Fair treatment
- Clear regulations and assessment procedures
- Good, regularly updated documentation
- Timely information
- Understandable and effective complaints and appeal procedures
- Common institution-wide standards
- A nationally and internationally accepted qualification.

The University invites and encourages students to participate in the life of the University during their candidature and throughout their later careers as alumni, upholding and enhancing the reputation of the University. The University actively seeks the views of students, will respond to feedback from Student Representatives and those who participate in the ~~will respond to feedback and participates in the~~ Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

2.6.2 Involvement in the Life of the University

Supervisors will encourage students to play a part in the intellectual life of the School, the University and the wider community. Schools will provide information for distance students on how they can become involved. There are

Commented [HS4]: This paragraph reviewed for distance students

Commented [HS5]: EUSA provided comments 28/4/16

many University societies that support involvement in the University community. Research students are automatically members of the Edinburgh University Students' Association, who operate these societies in addition to providing a full range of other services, including advice and representation, peer support, and events and entertainment. For more details, consult the postgraduate guide provided by the association, visit eusa.ed.ac.uk or call into the Advice Pace at Potterrow or King's Buildings House. Association (EUSA) which produces a Postgraduate Survival Guide available from the Advice Place. See [EUSA](#)

- [Students' Association \(eusa.ed.ac.uk\)](http://eusa.ed.ac.uk)

2.6.3 Responsibilities of the Student

During candidature students are responsible for their own development as researchers and for developing their projects. Students will:

- Acquaint themselves with the standards expected of the relevant degree in their subject (PhD, MPhil, MSc by Research or taught professional doctorate)
- Undertake any training as recommended by their Principal Supervisor
- Take advantage of the facilities and supervision offered in the University
- Fulfil the requirements of their research degree programme
- Work diligently and effectively throughout the period of their candidature
- Work as a professional, independent researcher accountable for the development of their own research
- [Engage with student representation processes and elections so that Postgraduate Research Reps can work with them to improve their University experience and the Students' Association can adequately represent postgraduate research students](#)
- Acknowledge the work of other scholars and researchers on whom they draw (See also section 6 on plagiarism and cheating.)
- Produce a thesis that makes a significant contribution to knowledge
- Submit the completed thesis on time
- Ensure that the thesis is their own work and acknowledges sources correctly (See section [66](#) on plagiarism and cheating.)
- Actively seek advice and help from the sources identified in this Code if problems arise.

Commented [HS6]: EUSA addition 28/4/16

Field Code Changed

2.6.4 Responsibility for the Quality of the Thesis

Responsibility for the quality of the thesis ~~and the outcome of the submitted for~~ assessment resides with the student rather than the supervisory team or the University. ~~See p~~Possible examination outcomes [are](#) listed in the Assessment Regulations. After assessment, the examiners make recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee or Board, who then decide on the basis of the examiners' reports whether the thesis passes, or if further work is required.

- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

Field Code Changed

2.6.5 Team Working

The University recognises the substantial benefits of team working, including with other students and staff, and encourages joint publication. In the thesis submitted for assessment the examiners will need to be able to identify and assess the individual work of the candidate. It is the student's responsibility to

indicate clearly which parts of the thesis describe work done by others. See section 3.5.9 on the inclusion of joint publications in the thesis.

2.6.6 Proofreading

Supervisors may advise students to seek assistance from others who can aid with proofreading. Proofreaders should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English, but not advise on subject matter or argumentation. It is good practice to acknowledge any assistance provided in producing drafts and in the final thesis. [EUSA-The Students' Association](#) provides a peer proofreading service. Information is available from:

- [Advice Place – peer proofreading](#)

2.6.7 Previously Assessed Material

If the period of candidature includes individual work components submitted for assessment then the components must contribute to a coherent whole. Students may not reproduce material for assessment that has already been submitted for credit at this or another institution. In the case of doctoral and MPhil programmes for which there are coursework requirements, material from courses may be included in the final thesis, as these degrees are assessed on the quality of the final thesis only. Coursework submitted for an MSc by Research that includes a taught element contributing to credit for the degree may not be reproduced for assessment in another course.

2.6.8 Producing Publications

Students and supervisors need to discuss and agree strategies for producing publications, and whether they are to be authored singly or as joint publications. The student and the supervisors may collaborate to advance and disseminate the research, leading to joint contributions to seminars, workshops and symposia, and joint publications in academic journals. The *Code of Practice for Research* is available from Edinburgh Research and Innovation (ERI) and provides guidance on research practices within the University. The student and supervisor will discuss:

- Including text from publications in the thesis
- Including in the body of the thesis any verbatim published outputs or page proofs
- Including publications as an appendix to the thesis
- Providing an explanation in the thesis of the inclusion of co-authored text
- Any strategy for complying with Open Access requirements
- How best to indicate any portfolio element in the thesis.

The University encourages its researchers to produce outputs that are widely read, cited and used. For guidance see:

- [Open Access](#)
- [Code of Practice for Research](#)

2.6.9 Intellectual Property

The intellectual property (IP) represented by the dissertation or thesis remains the property of the student, as does the copyright of that material. Exceptions apply where prior agreements have been undertaken, for example, as part of the conditions of employment on an externally-funded project, or in other

Commented [HS7]: This paragraph reviewed for distance students
Proofreading service appears to be done electronically so should be available to distance students

Commented [HS8]: ERI confirm no changes to this para

sponsored research. Edinburgh Research and Innovation (ERI) is the University's wholly-owned company established for commercial development that assists with Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues. It provides general advice to students on interaction with industry partners. To avoid disputes, any issues relating to ownership of IP will be discussed with the supervisors, the student and ERI as soon as any potential issues become apparent. See the *Code of Practice for Research*.

2.7 Support Services

The University, Colleges and Schools provide a comprehensive range of support services to enable students to make the most of their time as members of the University community. The range of support services may be limited to online provision for distance students and Schools will provide information on access to support for distance students in programme handbooks.

2.7.1 The Advice Place

The Advice Place is home to EUSA's the Students' Association's professional advice team offering students free, impartial and confidential information on everything and anything that their members need to know.

Commented [HS9]: This para reviewed for distance students

EUSA provided comments 28/4/16

2.7.2 Student Representation

The Students' Association and Schools facilitate effective student representation across the University. If postgraduate research students think services and support should be improved, they should work with their Student Representatives who work in partnership with staff to improve the student experience.

Commented [HS10]: EUSA addition 28/4/16

Formatted: Heading 3

2.7.2.7.3 Student Counselling Service

The Student Counselling Service offers one-to-one counselling, workshops and consultation, and training for staff. The service aims to help students work through their difficulty, understand themselves better and find ways of managing their situation.

2.7.2.7.4 English Language Tuition

The supervisor will emphasise to the students the need for any essential, strongly recommended remedial English language training and encourage the student to attend. The student is responsible for attending classes as recommended by the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC). See section 2.4.1 above for more information.

2.7.2.7.5 Study Skills

The University, Schools and Support Services provide information, support and training for the development of research and transferable skills. These skills are vital for development as an independent researcher and important for progression beyond the degree. Skills can be developed as an integral part of supervision and may be provided through credit-bearing research methods courses. Additional support is provided through a variety of training courses, online resources and engagement with the research community, including tutoring and demonstrating activity.

Commented [HS11]: Fiona Philippi, IAD confirms no changes to this section

Colleges, Schools, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), the Careers Service, the Students' Association, Information Services, doctoral training centres and partnerships and other groups provide training in transferable skills and professional development. Resources for developing skills are also available online and in University libraries.

Supervisors will work with their students to encourage attendance on the appropriate training courses. The University encourages postgraduate students to take the initiative in their development and record their own portfolio of skills, including:

- Attendance on regular training and development opportunities in accordance with their personal development needs and the demands of their research
- Use of e-learning opportunities
- Use of the library and online resources
- Engagement with the research community including presenting at seminars, tutoring and demonstrating, producing publications and attending conferences.

2-7-52.7.6 Library Collections and Services

A wide range of library services, collections and study spaces are provided to support both taught and research elements of students' work. Collections include print and digital books and journals, rare books and special collections, artworks, images, museum items and archives. Digital and print library resources are available for students based in Edinburgh or undertaking online or distance learning. There is an Academic Support Librarian allocated to each School. Their role is to provide advice and assistance on using library services and collections, demonstrate the use of information resources by arranging subject-specific information skills sessions, give help with students' research by arranging one-to-one advice sessions, and advise on research data management.

~~University collections include print and digital books and journals, rare books and special collections, artworks, images, museum items and archives. Students can use of wide range of library services, collections and study spaces provided to support both taught and research elements of their work. Both digital and print library resources are available for students based in Edinburgh or undertaking online or distance learning. There is an Academic Support Librarian allocated to each School. Their role is to provide assistance on using library services and collections, demonstrate the use of information resources by arranging subject specific information skills sessions, give help with students' research by arranging one to one advice sessions, and advise on research data management.~~

- [Academic Support Librarians](#)
- [Library services](#)

2-7-62.7.7 Computing Resources

The University assumes that students will be computer literate and competent in use of the web and communication by email. All students are provided with a University email account and the University treats email correspondence via

Commented [HS12]: Library
Content provided by Richard Battersby 26/2/16

the student's University account as the official and sufficient means of communication. See:

- [Policy on the use of email for contacting students](#)

Field Code Changed

Schools will ensure that students have access to specialised computing facilities where required, and that students receive appropriate training. Training will cover the means of access to computing facilities and essential components of their use, as relevant to particular degree programmes and research projects. Information Services provides a wide range of advice on all aspects of computing and IT.

- [IS Computing Services](#)

2.7.72.7.8 Disabled Students

Commented [HS13]: This section reviewed for distance students

SDS provided updates to this section

The Student Disability Service provides information and advice to University staff, including Programme Directors, supervisors and support staff, as well as to disabled students. Amongst their range of services, staff in the Student Disability Service will:

- Recommend a range of support based on an assessment of the student's needs which Schools are expected to implement in line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010*
- Advise supervisors and support staff on how to support disabled students ~~to develop their study skills~~
- Advise on specific support adjustments to study, examination and assessment procedures
- Provide student support assistants who can proofread texts, assist in the library and act as notetakers
- Support students to apply for funding, if they are entitled to Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) or equivalent funding for international and EU students
- Provide training on request in response to the stated needs of academic and other University staff.

Students with impairments (this includes dyslexia, mental health problems, Asperger Syndrome, as well as physical and sensory impairments) that will affect study should contact the Student Disability Service as soon as possible in their candidature. See:

- [Student Disability Service](#)

* If a School believes that there is a valid, robust pedagogical reason which makes implementing recommended support problematic, then a representative from the School should engage in discussion with the Student Disability Service as soon as possible.

•

3 Research progress

3.1 Contact between Students and Supervisors

Postgraduate research students rely on contact with their supervisors for guidance and intellectual input to their research. Supervisors will maintain regular contact with their students. Students have a responsibility to make themselves available at times agreed with their supervisors. Supervisors may be available for consultation during office hours and outside of scheduled meeting times.

The first nine months of candidature are crucial in setting the agenda of the research. The University regulations specify that the student and supervisor will maintain frequent contact and meet at least twice in every three month period. The student can initiate meetings, but the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the requirement for the minimum number of meetings is met.

3.1.1 Keeping Records of Key Meetings

The University requires students and supervisors to back up guidance and decisions with written (or emailed) communication. The student and supervisor will keep a record of their key meetings. The student will produce a record of the meeting and forward it to their supervisor for agreement. This record is an essential part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement process and will include:

- Date of the meeting
- Purpose of the meeting
- Any specific problems identified
- Action points.

See also:

- [Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Reporting of Postgraduate Research Provision](#)

Commented [HS14]: Update provided from Quality Assurance Framework review

3.1.2 Research Integrity and Ethics Approval

The University is signatory to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, in which the University agrees to:

- Maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- Ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- Support a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- Use transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- Work with partners to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly.

See also:

- [The Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)

- [UKRIO Code of Practice for Research: Promoting Good Practice and Preventing Misconduct](#)

Students and supervisors are responsible for maintaining ethical standards in the design, conduct and reporting of research, and will need to follow any procedures for ethical approval laid out by their School research committees.

3.1.3 Duty of Care

The University has legal responsibilities to its students and staff for health and safety, equality and diversity, data protection and dignity and respect. Supervisors and students are covered by these policies:

- [Health and Safety](#)
- [Data Protection](#)
- [Equality & Diversity](#)
- [Dignity & Respect](#)

3.2 Monitoring Student Progress

3.2.1 Annual Progression Review

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring student progress and reporting annually to the Graduate Office and College postgraduate committee or board. Appropriate milestones for each year of study will be agreed between the supervisor and the student.

The University [provides an online annual progression monitoring system and](#) requires Schools and supervisors to review student progress within nine to 12 months for each year of full time or part-time study for doctoral and MPhil degrees. By this time the student will have produced an identifiable body of work that has been produced independently and that can be assessed. This will normally form the basis for confirmation of degree registration, or to progress.

- The first review will take place within nine to 12 months of the student's matriculation.
- Progress in subsequent years is assessed at nine to 12 month intervals until thesis submission.
- The student will attend a review meeting and is required to provide a presentation or report [prior to the meeting](#). The student may also be required to prepare an oral presentation.
- The student's [electronic](#) submission will include a forward plan of their work.
- An assessment panel will review the student's presentation or report. The assessment panel will include the supervisory team and at least one other person.
- After each review, [students are provided with written feedback will be provided by from](#) the assessment panel [to the student. The student, supervisors and School Postgraduate Director then sign-off the online report before it is submitted to the College. The student will acknowledge receipt of the feedback. The supervisors will also prepare](#)

Commented [HS15]: Student Systems commented 29/4/16

~~a written report on the student's progress, signed by all supervisors for submission to the College Office.~~

- g) Similar procedures apply to part-time students, and reviews of part-time students will also take place within nine to 12 months of their matriculation. The reviewers will make allowance in their assessment for the part-time status of the student's candidature.
- h) If the progression review indicates concerns about a student's progress, then a further review will take place within three months. (Only one repeat review may be undertaken before confirmation of registration.)
- i) If the assessment panel identifies a serious problem, or advises discontinuation, then the student will be interviewed. Students will not be discontinued until they are given an opportunity to respond to the assessment. See section [3.3.83-3.8](#) on discontinuation of study.

Field Code Changed

The progression review provides the formal report by the supervisor on the student's progress, although some Schools have additional requirements. The first progression review will:

- Form the basis for the decision to confirm degree registration
- Provide a record of achievements to date and confirm that any original conditions of registration have been met
- Indicate that the area of study has been defined.

Schools will explain to postgraduate research students the School's review requirements. ~~At the end of any year such The annual review documents~~ may include any of several components, such as:

- A timetable for progress agreed by the student and supervisory team
- A record of whether deadlines have been met
- The results of coursework examined by written tests or continuous assessment
- Assessments of presentations and reports of directed reading or specific project work
- The results of interviews about progress.

Students will also report on:

- Any programme of skills training required by their research
- Transferable skills development.

Supervisors will be frank about any difficulties that have arisen and will give their views on the prospect of successful completion. The supervisor will provide the student with a written report outlining these. Supervisors can recommend that a student matriculated for an MPhil re-register for a PhD if merited by the project and the student's performance, or that a student matriculated for a PhD might re-register for an MPhil, or discontinue study (see recommendations in section [3.3.83-3.8](#)).

Field Code Changed

Practices will vary according to School and discipline, but by the end of the second year a student in the social sciences, arts and the humanities will be expected to produce a substantial piece of writing beyond that submitted in the first year. In the case of practice-based research the student will have by the

second year assembled a substantial part of their portfolio and any relevant documentation.

3.2.2 Recommendations Following the Progression Review

In consultation with their Postgraduate Director, supervisors will recommend to the College Postgraduate Committee or Board the future of the student's candidature. The supervisors will provide written feedback to the student, but the student is not involved in the progression decision. ~~As part of the review, the supervisors and Postgraduate Director will decide on one of several options:~~

- ~~a) Confirmation of registration for the degree for which the student is matriculated (for example PhD, MPhil)~~
- ~~b) A repeat progression review to be held within three months~~
- ~~c) For part-time students only, deferment of the confirmation decision in the first annual review to the following annual review~~
- ~~d) Registration for a different degree such as MPhil or MSc by Research~~
- ~~e) Registration for a postgraduate taught degree (MSc) or diploma, which may include credit for courses already taken~~
- ~~f) Exclusion from study. (see section 3.3.8).~~

~~If a student is not performing at the required level then the supervisors and the Postgraduate Director will decide on option (c), (d), (e) or (f). Supervisors will provide students with an explanation in writing of their assessment. The recommendations available following the annual review are set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.~~

If the annual progress review indicates serious problems or requests for extensions to the period of study then the College Postgraduate Committee or Board will examine annual reports for:

- Indications of how the difficulties arose
- What steps were taken by supervisor and student to deal with them at an early stage.

Note that on behalf of the Committee or Board, the chair (or Postgraduate Dean) may undertake this assessment with advice from the Postgraduate Office.

If the student's research changes direction and diverges from the supervisors' expertise then the supervisors will review their own competence to deal with the new research area. In this case:

- The School can recommend a change in supervisors to the College Postgraduate Research Committee or Board.

(See also Section [3.3.83-3.8](#) Exclusion from Study and Academic Performance.)

Field Code Changed

3.3 Absences, Interruptions and Extensions

Absences, interruptions and extensions to study are concessions to the regulations for which students must have appropriate approval. Schools and

supervisors reviewing requests for interruptions and other concessions will consider any adjustments put in place for individual students.

3.3.1 Leave of Absence

~~Students must attend and participate as required in all aspects of their programme of study. Students, who are not on a recognised distance learning programme, may need to conduct some of their research for long periods in locations outside of Edinburgh, including overseas. Students can also apply for A leave from attendance and participation of absence to undertake studies, research or other activities which are not defined as a necessary part of their programme, but will enhance the student's career or is required for compulsory or optional activity, away from Edinburgh, that is related to the programme of study. Permission requirements for leave of absence are laid out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations. Colleges and Schools will authorise such changes if such a temporary move a formal request if it:~~

- Benefits the research programme
- Is not detrimental to the research and the student's development and participation in the University's academic community
- Does not conflict with any other requirement of the student's programme of study
- Does not conflict with any obligations to be available for on-campus activity
- Has a working timetable agreed by supervisors and student
- Has an agreed method and frequency for submitting written work and receiving feedback, established by the supervisors and student.

Colleges will provide further information on how leave of absence changes are approved and recorded, as well as how the student will be supported during the leave period.

3.3.2 Leave of Absence for International Students

Students who hold a Tier 4 visa are normally required to carry out all studies on University premises. ~~Where a study location change is required (in accordance with section [Error! Reference source not found.3.3.4](#)), the University will report to the Home Office informing them of the new location of studies, and the duration of the absence. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the University to withdraw sponsorship of the student's Tier 4 visa for the duration of the absence, and the student will need to make a new visa application if they return to the UK for studies. It is, therefore, important that Tier 4 students seek full advice from the International Office before proceeding with a leave of absence request. See section 2.4.~~

3.3.3 Vacation Leave

Students may be absent from their studies for up to six weeks of the year without applying for an interruption of study, and should notify their supervisors and the School Postgraduate Office of any such planned absences.

3.3.4 Authorised Interruption of Study

Students unable to study for a period of time can apply for an interruption to their period of study. Application for interruption of study:

Commented [HS16]: This section reviewed for distance students

Commented [HS17]: Euan Fergusson International office confirms no changes to this section

- Will be made formally to the School or College postgraduate office using the appropriate request form
- Will be made in advance of the period of interruption, not in retrospect
- Will have an impact on a student's visa - advice is available from the International Office.
- Should be accompanied by verification of need if applicable, such as a medical certificate.
- An interruption of study cannot be granted after the maximum period of study has elapsed.

~~Any single period of authorised interruption of study cannot exceed one year, unless authorised by the Head of College and the total period of authorised interruption of study will not exceed 100% of the prescribed period of full time study. Permitted periods of authorised interruption of study are set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations.~~ If the need for the interruption is sudden and unforeseen then the application must be made as soon as practical. In any case, the student will notify the supervisor as soon as the need for the interruption arises, or encounters a problem that will affect the progress of their study. An approved interruption of study postpones the date at which the student's total permitted period of study will end. Students applying for interruptions need to investigate how any alteration to their period of study will affect external conditions such as their funding, visa, or council tax arrangements. The Advice Place can ~~give advice~~advise on ~~the~~ funding and council tax implications of interruptions. Advice on the implication of interruption for a student with a Tier 4 visa is available from the International Office.

- [The Advice Place](#)
- [International Office](#)

3.3.5 Extension to the Period of Study

Students who are unable to submit their thesis within their prescribed period of study, plus any permitted submission period (see section ~~1.2.34-2.3~~) need to apply formally for an extension. The formal application will include:

- A statement outlining the academic reasons for the delay
- A plan of work towards submitting the thesis, with milestones and specific dates agreed with the supervisors.

Supervisors will monitor closely the student's plan for completion. Extensions to the period of study are exceptional and not automatic.

- Students can only request up to 12 months at a time.
- The maximum total period of extensions is 24 months.
- Students must submit their thesis within 12 months of the end of the prescribed period of study.
- If required, students must apply for extensions of study before the end of their maximum submission date (for example, within four years for a full-time PhD).

Further information on periods of study is available in the Degree Regulations:

- [DRPS Study Period Table](#)

Field Code Changed

Field Code Changed

Students applying for extensions need to investigate how any alteration to their period of study will affect external conditions such as their funding, visa, or council tax arrangements. See

- [Authorised interruption of study or extension of study – Postgraduate Research](#)

Field Code Changed

3.3.6 Continuation Fees

Students continuing study beyond the period for which annual fees are payable are required to pay one matriculation fee during the submission period and then a continuation fee for every authorised extension until they submit their thesis. Continuation fees are charged pro rata for the full period of an approved extension. During the prescribed period of study, the matriculation fee is included in the tuition fee.

- [University continuation fee information](#)

3.3.7 Withdrawal from Study

Withdrawal from studies is a voluntary decision by the student. Any student may withdraw permanently from the University at any point in the year. However, a student may not voluntarily withdraw ~~after a Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) has decided~~ a College has decided to exclude the student ([see 3.3.8](#)).

Before applying to withdraw, the student is strongly advised to consult their supervisor in order to consider the implications of withdrawal.

3.3.8 Exclusion from Study and Academic Performance

Candidates unable to submit the thesis by the end of the maximum period of study, or the extended maximum period of study (including concessions), will be notified by the College postgraduate committee of impending exclusion from study.

Commented [HS18]: Check for consistency with withdrawal and exclusion from study policy. Some of this may be policy content?

Supervisors may recommend that a student already matriculated on the PhD, MPhil, MSc by Research or a professional doctorate is excluded from study. In this case the following procedure will be followed.

1. The supervisor recommending exclusion from study will inform in writing the Head of School, or their nominee (normally the Postgraduate Director).
2. The Head of School or nominee will notify the student that exclusion from study has been recommended.
3. If the Head of School or nominee disagrees with the supervisor's recommendation for exclusion from study, they will ensure that an appropriate framework is in place to allow the candidate to continue with their studies, including the provision of any conditions, targets or deadlines that the candidate must fulfil.
4. The College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters examines the recommendations of the Head of School or nominee before deciding whether to accept the recommendation.
5. The student will be given an opportunity to submit their views to the College committee before the decision is taken. This does not form part

of any subsequent appeal process nor does it affect the student's right to submit a case for appeal.

6. If the decision to exclude from study is approved by the College, the student has the right to submit a case for appeal if they feel they have grounds. See section 5 Academic Appeals.

3.4 Preparing the Thesis for Submission

MSc by Research students may submit a dissertation for assessment and information on preparation for submission is available in their programme handbook.

Commented [HS19]: MSc by Research – alternative content Dissertation submission

The student should agree with their supervisor the final form of the thesis (see section 1.2.4) and a schedule of dates for completing the elements of the final thesis ready for submission. The student will check the University guidance about the format of the thesis, binding requirements and electronic formats. See the Academic Services thesis submission web page.

- [Academic Services: thesis submission](#)

3.4.1 Notice of Intention to Submit

Students on doctoral and MPhil degrees should submit the thesis during the submission period, which begins three months prior to the end of the prescribed period of study. Students wishing to submit a thesis earlier than the submission period need to discuss this option with their supervisor and request permission from the College postgraduate committee before doing so.

The submission procedure begins when the student submits a Notice of Intention to Submit form to the postgraduate office no later than two months in advance of submission. The Notice of Intention to Submit form will be accompanied by an abstract of the thesis suitable for distribution to examiners or potential examiners.

3.5 Thesis Assessment

3.5.1 Appointment of Examiners

The choice of examiners will take into account:

- Their expertise in the discipline of the thesis
- Their ability to provide an impartial assessment of the submitted work
- Their availability to examine the thesis.

~~Members of associated institutions may serve as internal but not external examiners.~~

~~External examiners cannot serve if within the past four years they have:~~

- ~~• Held an appointment on the teaching or research staff at the University of Edinburgh~~
- ~~• Been a student of the University~~
- ~~• Held honorary status in the University.~~

~~In exceptional circumstances the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee may waive these restrictions. Regulations for appointment of~~

examiners are set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

~~The supervisor will approach potential examiners, and discuss with them their availability to examine the thesis. The student will notify their supervisor or the School Postgraduate Director if they have any concerns about a particular examiner appointment. The supervisor may consult with the student about potential examiners, but the decision is the University's responsibility. Following the notification of intention to submit the supervisor will identify and recommend for approval by the College postgraduate committee:~~

- ~~• One external examiner~~
- ~~• One internal examiner.~~

In the case of an interdisciplinary topic and on the advice of the supervisors, the College postgraduate committee may appoint a second external examiner.

3.5.2 Assessment of Students who are also Members of Staff

~~When the student is or has been a member of staff of the University during their research degree the College will appoint:~~

- ~~• two external examiners~~
- ~~• one internal examiner.~~

~~There is no requirement for students who are or have been tutors or demonstrators (or have undertaken similar roles) to have two external examiners. Regulations for assessment of members of staff candidates are set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.~~

3.5.3 Appointment of a Chair for the Oral Examination

~~The School will nominate a person to chair the oral examination. ~~¶This will be the Internal Examiner will chair the oral examination unless there is a Non-Examining Chair has been appointed.~~ The appointment of a Non-Examining Chair is compulsory if the Internal Examiner is an honorary member of staff or is examining a research degree at that level for the first time, or for the first time at the University. Where a Non-Examining Chair is appointed they will attend for the duration of the examination and chair the meeting. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure consistency between examiners and fairness to both the examiners and the candidate. The College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters will approve and appoint the Non-Examining Chair. The regulations governing appointment of Non-Examining Chairs are set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.~~

3.5.4 Date of the Oral Examination

The oral examination will normally be held within three months of thesis submission. The date of the oral examination depends on:

- The date the Notice of Intention to Submit is presented to the School or College postgraduate office
- The date the thesis is submitted by the student
- The time it takes to select and appoint examiners
- The period the examiners require to examine the thesis

- The availability of all parties to meet for the oral examination, including any visa restrictions on the student's availability.

3.5.5 The Submitted Thesis

The student is responsible for producing the thesis in the time allotted and to the required quality. The thesis will:

- Be the student's own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised clearly on the declarations page of the thesis
- Make an original and significant contribution to knowledge in the field of study
- Contain material suitable for wider dissemination
- Show adequate knowledge of the field of study and of the relevant literature
- Demonstrate critical judgement of the candidate's own work and that of other scholars in the field
- Present a coherent body of work.

Written aspects of the thesis will:

- Be satisfactory in literary presentation
- Include full and adequate references
- Present a coherent structure
- Make clear the intentions of the work, its background, methods and conclusions
- Be understandable to a scholar in the same field.

3.5.6 Responsibility for the Outcome of the Assessment

The thesis is the student's own work and the student is responsible for its eventual quality as assessed by the examiners. Approval by the supervisors is not a guarantee of a favourable assessment outcome. If the supervisors have any concerns about the quality of the thesis then they need to communicate this, in writing, to the student as soon as possible prior to the proposed submission date. Such advice may also include recommending to the College postgraduate committee that the student be re-registered for a different degree and the thesis is submitted for a different degree, for example an MPhil is submitted for examination as a PhD, or a PhD is submitted for examination as an MPhil.

3.5.7 Assessment Criteria

The criteria for assessment of research theses, the procedure governing the examination and the recommendations open to examiners are described in the regulations ~~and in the examiners' report forms.~~

- [Degree Programme Regulations](#)
- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

Field Code Changed

The examiners are asked to assess the thesis in terms of the grounds for the award of degree set out in the regulations. Examiners will arrive at their own assessment even if parts of the work have already been peer reviewed for publication. The purpose of the assessment is to allow the examiners to establish that the thesis is satisfactory. As part of their written report, examiners will be asked:

- Is the thesis an original work that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of knowledge?
- Does the thesis contain material worthy of publication?
- Does the thesis demonstrate adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature?
- Does the thesis show the exercise of critical judgement with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field?
- Is the presentation and style of the thesis satisfactory?

Examiners will also be asked if they think the student needs to make any corrections, amendments or major revisions to the thesis.

3.5.8 Length of the Thesis

The [Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#) specify the maximum length of the written thesis. ~~The maximum length applies to the length of the body of the thesis. This body includes the main text, preface material, footnotes and references, but does not include material in any appendices, bibliography, abstract or lay summary (see section 3.7.3).~~ Note that any appendices are examined at the discretion of the examiners. ~~If a longer thesis is required for adequate treatment of the thesis topic, the supervisor will seek the approval of the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters prior to submission.~~

- [Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#)

Formatted: Normal, No bullets or numbering

3.5.9 The Thesis and Joint Publications

Candidates are encouraged to publish their research during their candidature, and provision is made for articles and papers to be bound in the thesis. Where the thesis includes the results of team working the thesis will be more than a compendium of jointly authored articles, and will include information that makes it possible for the examiners to track the individual work of the candidate. Where the thesis includes collaborative publications this must be made clear in the thesis and stated on the signed declaration (section [3.7.43-7.3](#)):

Field Code Changed

- The candidate's role in any joint work.
- The nature of team involvement in any experimental procedures
- How the team involvement facilitated the findings of the research.

3.5.10 Portfolio Material

The Postgraduate Degree Regulations and ~~School postgraduate guidelines~~ [programme handbook](#) specify any further requirements for designs, composition, artworks, or performances and their display, presentation and documentation.

Where the body of the thesis is to consist in whole or in part of a portfolio of conference, workshop or journal publications or published book chapters (submitted for review, in press or in the public domain) then the thesis will demonstrate coherence by

- The choice and ordering of the publications in the thesis
- An introduction to the compilation, including a discussion of the relevance of any included publications to the whole thesis, and an

- explanation of any repetition of content across the publications
- In addition to any conclusion to and summary of the thesis, a conclusion to the compilation that ties together the themes of the publications with any other material within the thesis
- An introduction preceding each publication that explains the context, and any co-author or team contributions
- A single concluding alphabetically ordered reference list.

3.5.11 Supplementary Material

A candidate may wish to provide additional data or presentation material in electronic form. This electronic material may help the examiners to understand and assess the thesis. Electronic material may be provided as a file upload in the case of electronic submission, or on portable media ~~submitted in a pocket at the back of included with~~ the printed thesis. Such material will supplement the thesis and the examiners may choose to take it into account in their assessment.

3.5.12 Lay Summary

~~After examination the candidate will need to provide a lay summary to be included in the final thesis. It is not included in the thesis word count, and will be incorporated at the beginning of each copy of the thesis.~~ The lay summary is intended to facilitate knowledge exchange, public awareness and outreach. It should be written in simple, non-technical terms that are easily understandable by a lay audience, who may be non-professional, non-scientific and outside the research area. The lay summary is ~~submitted as part of the suite of submission forms included with the thesis submitted for assessment~~, although it is not assessed by the examiners, but can be discussed with the supervisor at any stage prior to the final thesis being lodged with the Edinburgh Research Archive. The lay summary is to be produced in a standard format. ~~After examination the candidate will need to provide a lay summary to be included in the final thesis. It is not included in the thesis word count, and will be incorporated at the beginning of each copy of the thesis.~~

- [Lay summary form](#)
- [Lay summary guidelines](#)

Formatted: No underline, Font color: Auto

3.6 The Assessment Process

~~If the examiners agree that it~~ The thesis is assessed by the examiners and is of the appropriate standard then they will indicate that an oral examination will be held (for doctoral and MPhil degrees). MSc by Research dissertations are assessed without an oral examination.

The examiners provide an initial report to the College before oral examination and The examiners will deliver their assessment and recommendations to the College postgraduate board after the oral examination. The College postgraduate board takes the final decision on the degree award.

3.6.1 ~~Supervisor Presence at t~~The Oral Examination

Supervisors may attend the oral examination as observers, if the student and examiners consent to this. On such occasions supervisors:

- may take notes
- will not comment during the examination
- will leave the examination room with the student
- will not participate in the discussion and decision of the examiners
- will absent themselves at any stage if the student requests this.

3.6.2 Organisation of the Oral Examination

An oral examination will be held to assess a student's PhD or MPhil thesis. Arrangements for the oral examination are the responsibility of the Internal Examiner, who also chairs the meeting of the examiners unless a Non-Examining Chair is appointed. These arrangements, including the date and place of the oral examination and the names of all participants, will be provided in advance to all those who are to be present ~~at the oral examination~~. Students staying overseas must be prepared to return to the UK for the examination, unless other arrangements are made as outlined in section ~~3.6.33-6.3~~.

Field Code Changed

3.6.3 Examination ~~Outside of the UK~~ away from Edinburgh

~~If it is convenient for all parties in the examination process, including the candidate, then the University permits examinations to be conducted remotely:~~

- ~~At a meeting venue outside of the UK~~
- ~~At a meeting where one or more of the examiners or the student are in synchronous communication via an electronic video link. The normal expectation is that the oral examination will be held in Edinburgh. However, in exceptional circumstances arrangements can be made for remote assessment by video link.~~

~~Such remote assessment~~ This requires agreement from the College postgraduate committee or board, the student, all examiners and any Non-Examining Chair. ~~Guidance is available from College Offices and on Academic Services' website:~~

- [Guidance on video linked viva examinations](#)

Field Code Changed

3.6.4 Examiner Preparation

The College is responsible for ensuring that the Internal Examiner and Non-Examining Chair are suitably prepared for the examination, that is:

- training is available to inexperienced internal examiners and chairs
- they are aware of their duties in the examination process
- they are familiar with the University's regulations
- they are familiar with the range of recommendations available to the examiners after the oral examination.

3.6.5 Examiner Recommendations

The examiners may recommend that the thesis pass without amendment or further work. In this case the candidate may not make further alteration to the thesis.

The examiners may specify minor corrections, to be completed without further supervision or further research, or more substantial further work requiring supervision. The examiners will also be required to specify the time frame in which further work is to be completed. Any corrections required by the

examiners to publications that are already in the public domain, will be indicated via corrections and revisions to the introductions and conclusions in the body of the thesis. In the case of a portfolio component to the thesis, examiners may also request that publications be removed from the thesis or replaced with alternative material.

Alternatively, the examiners may recommend the award of, or resubmission for, a different degree or a fail. Full details of examiner recommendations are available in the assessment regulations:

- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)
- [Guidance on Including Publication in Postgraduate Research Theses](#)

Field Code Changed

3.6.6 Notification of Examiner Recommendations

The examiners may tell the candidate what their views are at the end of or after the oral examination, and they will make clear that their view is a recommendation to the College committee ~~with responsibility for postgraduate research matters~~ and not a final decision. After inspecting the examiners' reports the committee reserves the right to modify or change the examiners' recommendation.

3.7 After the Examination

3.7.1 MSc by Research dissertations

~~Revisions to and resubmission of the MSc by Research dissertation are not permitted unless special permission is granted by the College.~~

~~3.7.13.7.2~~ 3.7.2 Revisions to the Thesis

The supervisor's role may continue after the examination. If minor corrections are required or the student needs to correct deficiencies in the thesis then these will be communicated to the candidate and to the supervisor. The supervisor will confirm the necessary revisions with the candidate. The examiners' joint report will be made available to the candidate and their supervisor for further guidance on the general quality of the thesis and level of the candidate's knowledge. The revised thesis is then ~~approved-checked~~ by the Internal Examiner, ~~and also by the~~ External Examiner ~~if may also requestedask to check the corrections.~~

~~3.7.23.7.3~~ 3.7.3 Thesis Resubmission

The examiners may recommend resubmission for the same, or a different, degree after a further period of study under supervision. The thesis will normally be re-examined by the original examiners, and a second oral examination may be held. ~~Alternatively, the examiners may recommend:~~

- ~~Re-presentation of a PhD thesis for MPhil~~
- ~~Re-presentation or resubmission of an MPhil for a MSc by Research~~
- ~~That the thesis or the student's defence of it in the oral examination are deficient in terms of the standards required of any of the research degrees available and that the thesis fails.~~

~~In the event of a resubmission the examiners will specify any corrections or revisions and the period for resubmission. A candidate is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit a thesis.~~ The supervisor should offer guidance to the candidate on the steps necessary to meet the requirements expressed by the examiners and will provide further supervision as appropriate. If resubmission is required:

- The candidate will be given a clear written statement prepared by the examiners and approved by the relevant College committee of the aspects that require revision.
- The resubmitted thesis may be assessed only against this written statement on re-examination, and the examiners will not introduce new criticisms of previously examined material.
- The written statement of the aspects of the thesis that require revision cannot subsequently be altered without the agreement of that committee.

If the College committee ~~with responsibility for postgraduate research~~ fails the thesis then the candidate will be provided with a written statement explaining the decision. In these circumstances the supervisor will discuss the outcome with the student. The College Postgraduate Dean is also available to talk with the student if requested.

- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

~~3.7.33.7.4~~ Final Submission of the Assessed Thesis

At the end of the assessment process all successful doctoral and MPhil candidates are required to submit the final version of their thesis to the University in electronic form in addition to one hardbound copy. Hardbound copies should conform to the [Regulatory Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis](#):

- [How to submit the final version of your PhD thesis](#)

~~Candidates should therefore hand in the following to their College postgraduate office:~~

- ~~i. One hardbound version of the thesis conforming to the Regulatory Standards, including
 - ~~a. a signed declaration~~
 - ~~b. one completed 'Access to Thesis' form (see below), which can be downloaded from the Academic Services website~~
 - ~~c. any supplementary data required for assessment. Datasets should be supported by good accompanying documentation which is appropriate to the subject discipline. The UK Data Archive (UKDA) offers some specialist advice in this area.~~
 - ~~d. a lay summary of the thesis (see section 3.5.12)~~
 - ~~e. one copy of the abstract~~~~
- ~~ii. An electronic version including
 - ~~a. a PDF version (for uploading to the Edinburgh Research Archive)~~
 - ~~b. the original document source files (where possible) for digital preservation purposes~~
 - ~~c.a. a completed thesis note indicating whether or not the candidate wishes to take up the option of restricting access to the electronic version of the thesis for a limited one year period. The~~~~

Formatted: List Paragraph, Bulleted + Level: 1 +
Aligned at: 0.63 cm + Indent at: 1.27 cm

Field Code Changed

Commented [HS20]: Content available in how to submit the final version of your PhD thesis

Commented [HS21]: Content moved to Thesis Binding guidance

form can be downloaded from the University's Academic Services website.

3.7.43.7.5 Online Access to the Thesis

Candidates should discuss with their supervisor the implications of publishing the thesis online in the Edinburgh Research Archive (ERA). The student can restrict access to the thesis or parts of the thesis if

- the thesis contains confidential or sensitive data
- the candidate intends to publish the whole thesis or extracts from it.

The candidate can restrict access to the electronic version of the thesis as indicated above in section 3.7.43.7.3. If the candidate wishes the electronic embargo to be longer than one year then this must be negotiated with the ERA administrators. ERA will release an embargoed thesis for download at the end of the restriction period.

Field Code Changed

3.7.53.7.6 Graduation

Degree awards are conferred at graduation. ~~Graduation ceremonies are held in June July and November. Information about graduation ceremonies and how to apply to attend is available on the University website.~~

- Graduations

Formatted: List Paragraph, Bulleted + Level: 1 + Aligned at: 0.63 cm + Indent at: 1.27 cm

3.7.63.7.7 Progress of a Typical Full Time PhD

Figure 1: Progress of a typical PhD

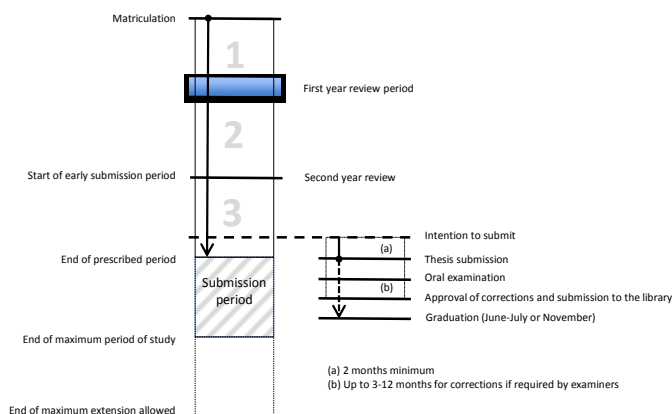


Figure 1. Diagram showing the progress of a typical full time PhD candidature with milestones, and prior to the inclusion of any periods of interrupted study or extensions. Note that prescribed period of study is reduced to two years for a full time MPhil and one year for an MSc by Research. MSc by Research students do not undergo a progression review and: Nor do they provide may not be required to provide an intention to submit form. Part-time MPhil and PhD candidates are required to undergo a progression review in their first year even though their prescribed period of study is longer than for full time candidates. See section 3.2.13-2.4.

4 Resolving problems

4.1 Personal Concerns

Students are encouraged to bring any concerns, including those of a social or medical nature, to the attention of supervisors especially if the problem is interfering with the student's work. ~~Students need to make their concerns explicit as supervisors may not notice until problems show up as lack of progress~~Supervisors will be able to advise on special circumstances (see 4.2 below) and how to apply for concessions if appropriate. Supervisors will also respect any student's request for such concerns to be treated confidentially. Schools may provide postgraduate advisers as well as supervisors who can discuss any concerns. School support staff also provide contact points for advice on available support services. ~~Full details of University student support services are available in section 8.4.~~

Field Code Changed

4.2 Special Circumstances

Special circumstances are circumstances beyond a student's control which are exceptional for the individual student, are beyond that student's control and for which there is sufficient evidence to show that they had a significant adverse impact on research performance, attendance or assessment submissions. For example, significant short-term illness, or bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship, can be examples of special circumstances.

Commented [HS22]: Content updated by TW 29/4/16

Students whose circumstances are affecting their ability to engage with their studies should discuss them with their Principal Supervisor in the first instance.

For postgraduate research students, students with special circumstances that are disrupting their studies can be supported by being offered authorised interruption or extension of study. However, there may be occasions when personal circumstances have an impact on assessment, such as annual progression review meetings or the oral examination. In these circumstances, it may be possible either to reschedule the progression review meeting or oral examination, or to make some adjustments to the format of the meeting. It may also be appropriate for the College Postgraduate Committee / Board to take account of these circumstances when considering the recommendations from a progression review or oral examination. Students should notify their Principal Supervisor in writing of any special circumstance before the meeting of the examiners or College Committee / Board meeting.

For taught components undertaken by postgraduate research students, the University's Special Circumstances Policy applies.

- Special Circumstances Policy

Field Code Changed

4.2.4.3 Working Relationships and Dignity and Respect

Most interpersonal problems will be avoided if the student, supervisors, and other members of the University community contribute responsibly and professionally to their working relationship by being respectful, courteous, punctual and conscientious. ~~See also section 4.6.~~

The University seeks to provide equal opportunities for its students and staff. Respect, trust, confidence and fairness are essential elements in the relationship between supervisor and student. The Dignity and Respect policy promotes a positive culture for working and studying to which every student and member of staff contributes and within which they are able to fulfil their potential. Breaches of the policy include, but are not limited to, harassment, bullying, discrimination and inappropriate remarks or behaviour, and all University staff and students will observe the obligations outline in the policy.

- Dignity and Respect Policy

All University staff and students will observe the obligations outlined in this policy.

Personal harassment is one of the concepts covered by the policy. Personal harassment encompasses sexual harassment and any behaviour unwelcome by the recipient on grounds such as gender, sexual orientation, race, and religion. Harassment can occur in either direction between staff and students, and irrespective of gender. The Dignity and Respect Policy contains advice both on seeking informal assistance in such cases, and on the procedures for making a formal complaint

- Dignity and Respect Policy

4.34.4 Decisions of the University Committees

If a student wishes to contest a decision of the College committee ~~with responsibility for postgraduate research matters~~ then as well as discussing the matter with their supervisors they may consult with the committee Convener (usually the College Postgraduate Dean) or Secretary. The Advice Place can also be approached at any stage to offer independent guidance and advice. (See also section 5 Academic Appeals.)

4.44.5 Recording Problems with Progress

Supervisors are required to provide constructive criticism about the student's work. Honest discussion can reduce conflict or prevent it arising. Supervisors and students are required to keep a record of their key meetings (see section ~~3.1.13.1.4~~). A supervisor who thinks that progress has been consistently unsatisfactory should notify the student in writing after discussing the problem with ~~him or her~~them. Unsatisfactory progress will also be noted in annual reports, and flagged for remedial action.

Field Code Changed

4.54.6 The Supervisor-Student Relationship

If for any reason students feel unable to confide in their supervisors they should approach the Postgraduate Adviser in their subject area, or the School's Postgraduate Director. As long as they have explored these avenues the student may consult with the Secretary or Chair of the College committee ~~with responsibility for postgraduate research matters~~. University staff will treat such information as confidential and will limit disclosures to as few colleagues as necessary to resolve the problem. Such avenues are also appropriate when the supervisor-student relationship seems to have broken down or needs to be amended (for example if the supervisor changes institution). In the event of

problems, supervisors may also approach the Secretary or Chair of the College committee ~~with responsibility for postgraduate research matters.~~

4.6 Dignity and Respect

~~The University seeks to provide equal opportunities for its students and staff. Respect, trust, confidence and fairness are essential elements in the relationship between supervisor and student. The Dignity and Respect policy promotes a positive culture for working and studying to which every student and member of staff contributes and within which they are able to fulfil their potential:~~

~~• Dignity and Respect Policy~~

~~All University staff and students will observe the obligations outlined in this policy.~~

~~Personal harassment is one of the concepts covered by the policy. Personal harassment encompasses sexual harassment and any behaviour unwelcome by the recipient on grounds such as gender, sexual orientation, race, and religion. Harassment can occur in either direction between staff and students, and irrespective of gender. The Dignity and Respect Policy contains advice both on seeking informal assistance in such cases, and on the procedures for making a formal complaint~~

-

4.7 eComplaints

The University aims to ensure that its teaching and support services provide positive experiences and opportunities for students. The University has a procedure for considering complaints and recognises that it can learn from them, enabling it to improve the quality of the student experience, and the quality and effectiveness of its services. Students are encouraged to try and resolve problems as early as possible and with assistance from appropriate staff. See

- [Complaint Procedure](#)
- [EUSA support and advice on complaints](#) ~~Students' Association support and advice on complaints~~

5 Student Appeals

~~The Student Appeal Regulations apply to student appeals against academic decisions; appeals against exclusion; appeals against decision of Fitness to Practise Panels; and appeals against decisions under the Code of Student Conduct.~~

~~Students may not use an appeal to challenge academic judgment. The fact that a student believes that they deserve a different outcome cannot constitute a ground for appeal.~~

~~An academic appeal is a request for a decision made by a Board of Examiners to be reconsidered in relation to marks, progression, degree classification or degree award.~~

Commented [HS23]: Jean Grier provided update to link and agreed content 26/2/16

Field Code Changed

Commented [HS24]: Content agreed with Stuart 26/2/16

- ~~Academic Appeals~~ Student Appeal Regulations

Field Code Changed

5.1 Grounds for Appeal

~~Under the University Student Appeal Regulations (T)~~ there are three formal grounds under which a postgraduate research ~~postgraduate~~ student may submit an appeal. These are

- Ground A: Substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the examination which for good reason was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken.
- Ground B: Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination. For this purpose conduct of an examination includes the conduct of a meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- Ground C: Evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence in the examination on the part of any of the examiners (for academic appeals only).

5.2 ~~Information about Special Circumstances~~

~~In the case of Ground A, candidates will bring to the attention of the examiners any factors that may have an adverse impact on their performance in an examination, such as personal illness or the illness of a close relative or partner immediately before or during the examination, by submitting special circumstances.~~

Commented [HS25]: Content included in Section 4 Special Circumstances

~~Special circumstances submissions can be discussed with the candidate's Principal Supervisor in the first instance. Candidates will notify the School or College postgraduate office as appropriate in writing (for example by email) of any special circumstances before the meeting of the examiners. In an appeal case students cannot claim as grounds for an appeal that they did not know of the requirement to notify the University of their special circumstances.~~

• ~~Special Circumstances Policy~~

Field Code Changed

5.3.2 Role of the Supervisor in an Appeal Case

The supervisor's pastoral role continues after an appeal has been lodged, even though the appeal might question the quality of supervision. The supervisor will decide, after taking appropriate advice, whether to assist the student in formulating the case for an appeal. If a full hearing of the appeal is to take place then the Appeal Committee may request the supervisor's written comments in advance of the hearing, and supervisors will usually be invited to give evidence at the hearing.

5.4.3 Submitting an Appeal

~~Students considering an appeal should contact an Academic Adviser at the EUSA Students' Association Advice Place for independent advice.~~

- Advice Place support on appeals

Formatted: List Paragraph, Bulleted + Level: 1 + Aligned at: 0.63 cm + Indent at: 1.27 cm

Appeals should be submitted in writing, with ~~an the~~ application form ~~that is~~ available on the Academic Services website, to academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk. ~~Further information on the University appeal procedure and details of the University Student Appeal Regulations can be accessed on the~~ are available on Academic Services' website.

- [Academic appeals](#)

Field Code Changed

~~Further information on the University appeal procedure and details of the University Student Appeal Regulations can be accessed on the Academic Services website. Students considering an appeal should contact an Academic Adviser at the EUSA Advice Place for independent advice.~~

- ~~[Advice Place support on appeals](#)~~

Formatted: Normal, Justified, No bullets or numbering

6 Student Conduct

Commented [HS26]: Ailsa confirms no changes to this section 2/5/16

Matriculation is the process by which ~~you will be~~ students are formally admitted to the University of Edinburgh. By matriculating, students are automatically subject to the University's Code of Student Conduct. There are detailed regulations governing University examinations, libraries, the use of computing facilities, accommodation, and the use of automatically processed data and matters concerning health and safety. In the unlikely event of students being subject to University disciplinary procedures, advice is available from ~~the~~ [The Advice Place](#) ~~Students' Association~~. The University's Code of Student Conduct ~~can be found on the University website~~ is available on [Academic Services' website](#):

- [The Advice Place](#)
- [Student Conduct](#)

Formatted: Underline, Font color: Hyperlink

Field Code Changed

7 Plagiarism and Cheating

Commented [HS27]: Ailsa confirms no changes to this section 2/5/16

As outlined in section ~~3.5.53-5.5~~, a thesis must be the student's own work, except where clearly stated, and make an original and significant contribution to knowledge. Also see section ~~3.1.23-1.2~~ on research ethics and integrity. Plagiarism and cheating are counter to this ethos, and are offences against University discipline. The full text of the University's regulations on academic misconduct, and specific guidance on plagiarism for research students ~~and supervisors can be found at~~ are available on [Academic Services' website](#).

Field Code Changed

Field Code Changed

- [Academic Misconduct](#)
- [Advice Place support on plagiarism and academic misconduct](#)

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0.5 cm, Hanging: 0.63 cm

8 Edinburgh University Students' Association

Commented [HS28]: EUSA provided comments 28/4/16

Edinburgh University Students' Association (~~EUSA~~) is the body which represents [all](#) students at the University and provides a number of valuable services and support mechanisms which are confidential and independent of the University.

If you have been experiencing specific difficulties during your studies which you are not sure how to address, or you have not been able to resolve these issues to your satisfaction, you can contact the Advice Place. Their experienced staff will be able to advise you on University procedures, practices and ways of resolving difficulties as well as accompanying you to meetings and acting as your advocate should this be required. For full details

on the range of advice on offer, which includes emergency loans, funding and tenancy advice visit:

- [The Advice Place](#)

If you wish to raise specific policy or school issues you can do this via your school postgraduate representative. For details of your representative please contact your School Postgraduate Director or [EUSA Students' Association](#). ~~The Association Sabbatical Officers and postgraduate representatives also represent students on many University committees. Get in touch on EUSA sabbatical officers and Postgraduate Convener also represent students on many University committees. They can be contacted by emailing: postgrad@eusa.ed.ac.uk.~~

~~Find out more about everything your Students' Association has to offer in your [postgraduate guide](#) or at eusa.ed.ac.uk~~

9 Appendices

~~9.1 Appendix I: Health and Safety~~

~~The University has a duty to support the health and safety of all employees and students while at work, and of all visitors to University premises. The University Health and Safety Policy contains the University Court's Health and Safety Policy statement and advice on general precautions as well as on precautions pertaining to specific hazards. The successful implementation of the University Policy requires the support and co-operation of all employees and students. The Policy also contains a summary of how staff can meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974). The UK Health and Safety Executive can bring criminal proceedings against the University or any individual for a breach of any duty under the Act or its Regulations.~~

~~9.1.1 The Safety of Postgraduate Students~~

~~The University's Health and Safety Policy requires academic staff to pay attention to the health and safety of those under their supervision, in particular:~~

- ~~• Those students who conduct their research in laboratories, clinics, farms, workshops, studios, exhibition and performance venues and in other sites in the University where special training may be required~~
- ~~• Supervised fieldwork and University work carried out elsewhere in the UK or abroad~~
- ~~• Taking account of the level of training and expertise of the staff or students being supervised.~~

~~A named person will be available to ensure that health and safety procedures are continued if the Programme Director or dissertation supervisors are absent.~~

~~9.1.2 The University Health and Safety Policy~~

~~The Policy is published in eight parts, each of which relates to specific aspects of University work. All employees and students will observe those parts of the Health and Safety Policy that are relevant to their own work, and take account of other health and safety guidance. Any questions or problems about matters~~

Commented [HS29]: Appendix deleted – content now included in Programme Handbooks

of health and safety can be taken up initially with the School Health and Safety Adviser. The Director of Health and Safety, the University Radiation Protection Adviser, the Biological Safety Adviser and other professional members of the Health and Safety Department are also available to help. The current edition of the complete University Health and Safety Policy is available on the University website.

- ~~University Health and Safety Policy~~

9.2 ~~Appendix II: Privacy of Personal Data~~

The Data Protection Act of 1998 regulates the use of personal data. Personal data includes all recorded information about a living, identifiable individual. Staff and students using personal data for University purposes must comply with the University's data protection policy, procedures and guidance published on the Records Management Section website. The ~~Statement on the Processing of Personal Data by Students~~ deals with cases where:

- The University is responsible for a student's use of personal data
- The student is personally responsible for using such data.

In either case staff and students will comply with the responsibilities below.

9.2.1 ~~Student Responsibilities~~

Before using personal data as part of their studies, students will:

1. Become familiar with
 - a. ~~Data Protection Guidance for Student Research Projects~~ if they are using personal data as part of their programme of study, or
 - b. ~~Research and the Data Protection Act~~ if they are carrying out research for an established University research group.
2. Seek data protection guidance about their responsibilities from their supervisor.
3. Discuss the data protection implications for their studies with their supervisor.
4. Gain written approval from their Programme Director or dissertation supervisor for the proposed use of personal data before they begin using personal data.

When using personal data as part of their studies, students will:

1. Only use personal data in accordance with the approval given by their supervisor.
2. Comply with the data protection guidance supplied by the University.
3. Raise any issues about compliance with their supervisor in a timely manner.

9.2.2 ~~Supervisor Responsibilities~~

Supervisors of students who are using personal data as part of their studies will:

1. Provide data protection guidance before a student begins using personal data, and discuss with them the data protection implications for their studies.
2. Only approve the use of personal data by students if
 - a. the use is necessary and proportionate;
 - b. they are satisfied that the proposed use complies with the Data Protection Act; and

Commented [HS30]: Appendix deleted – content now included in Programme Handbooks

~~c. the student has received data protection guidance and understands their responsibilities.~~

~~3. Monitor regularly their student's use of personal data to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act.~~

9.2.3 Consequences of Breaching the Data Protection Act

~~Failure to comply with the responsibilities above is an offence against University discipline, and could lead to a breach of the Data Protection Act. A data protection breach can cause distress to the people the information is about, and can harm relationships with research partners, stakeholders, and funding organisations. In severe circumstances the University could be sued, fined up to £500,000, and experience reputational damage.~~

9.39.1 Appendix III: University Codes of Practice Policies, Regulations and Links to other Useful Information

~~[Alcohol Abuse of by Students – Code of Practice](#)~~

[Assessment Regulations](#)

[Complaint Procedure](#)

[Computing Regulations](#)

[Conduct, Student Code](#)

[Contacting Students by Email Policy](#)

[Data Protection - Use of Personal Data by Students](#)

[Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#)

[Dignity & Respect Policy](#)

[Disclosure of Information about Students - Guidelines](#)

~~[Drugs, Abuse of by Students – Code of Practice](#)~~

[Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

~~Available from EUSA~~ Available from the Students' Association:

~~Edinburgh University Students' Association, *Postgraduate Guide*~~
A range of guides about welfare and other issues are available from the Advice Place:

- [The Advice Place - Guides](#)

[Glossary of Terms](#)

[Library Regulations](#)

Field Code Changed

Field Code Changed

[Mental Health, Student - Code of Practice](#)

[New students' website](#)

[Plagiarism guidelines](#)

[PGR Annual Review Form software help \(PGR Supervisors\)](#)

[Research - Code of Practice](#)

[No Smoking - University Policy](#)

[Social Media, University Guidelines](#)

[Student Information Pages](#)

~~9.4 Appendix IV: Sources of Additional Advice and Information~~

Commented [HS31]: Appendix deleted – content now included in Programme Handbooks

~~Academic Services~~

~~Old College, South Bridge~~

~~Tel: +44(0)131 650 2138~~

~~Email: Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk~~

~~The Advice Place~~

~~Potterrow, Bristo Square~~

~~Tel: +44(0)131 650 9225 or 0800 206 2341~~

~~King's Buildings House~~

~~Tel: +44(0)131 651 5822~~

~~Careers Service~~

~~3rd Floor, Main Library Building, George Square~~

~~Tel: +44(0)131 650 4670~~

~~Weir Building, King's Buildings~~

~~Tel: +44(0)131 650 5773~~

~~Chaplaincy Centre~~

~~1 Bristo Square~~

~~Tel: +44 (0)131 650 2595~~

~~College Offices:~~

- ~~• College of Humanities & Social Science~~

~~David Hume Tower, George Square~~

~~Tel: +44(0)131 650 4086~~

- ~~• College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine~~

~~Chancellor's Building, 49 Little France Crescent~~

~~Tel: +44(0)131 242 6460 or +44(0)131 242 6461~~

- ~~• College of Science and Engineering~~

Weir Building, King's Buildings
Tel: +44(0)131 650 5737

Edinburgh University Students' Association
Potterrow, Bristo Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 2656

English Language Teaching Centre
Tel: +44(0)131 650 6200

Health and Safety Department
9-16 Chambers Street
Tel: +44(0)131 651 4255

Health Service
Richard Verney Building, 6 Bristo Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 2777

Information Services

Institute for Academic Development

International Office
57 George Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 4296

Library Online Catalogue

Records Management Section
Email: recordsmanagement@ed.ac.uk
Tel: +44(0)131 651 4099

Student Accommodation Service
Pollock Halls of Residence
Tel: +44(0)131 667 1971

Student Administration
Old College, South Bridge
Tel: +44 (0)131 650 2845
Email: infopoint@ed.ac.uk

Student Counselling Service
3rd Floor Main Library, George Square
Tel: +44 (0)131 650 4170
Paterson's Land, Moray House
Tel: +44(0)131 651 6200

Student Disability Service
3rd Floor, Main Library, George Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 6828 (voice)

Tel: ~~+44(0)131 650 9371 (text)~~

9.59.2 Appendix V: Summary of Responsibilities

This section sets out the responsibilities of each of the three parties contributing to the education and training of a postgraduate research student. These are the student ~~him or herself~~, the student's supervisor(s) and the University.

9.5.19.2.1 The Student

1. Upholds the standards of professional behaviour expected of all University members.
2. Conforms to the conditions of their funding and the regulations of the University.
3. Takes charge of and dedicates themselves to their own development and completion of their degree.
4. Makes the best efforts to achieve agreed goals and timetable.
5. Acknowledges their sources of funding and the work of others in all publications and presentations.
6. Shows respect to all University members, whether students, academic staff, administration or support.
7. Respects the intellectual property that belongs to others.
8. Keeps supervisor and University informed of absences and issues that affect the student's ability to progress.
9. Keeps the University and supervisor informed about contact details.
10. Lets the University know of issues that affect the safety, well-being and performance of other University members.

9.5.29.2.2 The Supervisor

1. Upholds the standards of professional behaviour expected of all University members.
2. Provides advice that is in the best interests of the student and ~~his or her~~ their training, ability to progress and career development.
3. Ensures that the student has all agreed resources needed for their training.
4. Respects the student as a part of the University community.
5. Respects the intellectual property that belongs to the student.
6. Meets regularly with the student.
7. Provides prompt feedback on the student's work.
8. Keeps the University informed about issues that affect the student.

9.5.39.2.3 The University, including Schools, Centres and Institutes where the student is based

1. Ensures appropriate supervision and training arrangements, including independent pastoral care.
2. Provides all agreed resources, including workspaces, equipment, supplies, supervision, training opportunities.

3. Provides a high-quality and safe researcher training experience for the student.
4. Ensures prompt and fair assessment of the student's work, including progression reports and thesis.
5. Ensures that the student receives periodic (for example at least annually) review and feedback on progress.
6. Ensures that academic standards of behaviour and performance are upheld.
7. Keeps the student informed about issues that affect the student's ability to progress.
8. Treats the student courteously and fairly irrespective of gender, age, race, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, year of study.
9. Involves student representatives in decision-making situations that affect students.
10. Provides accurate information about the degree programme, the student's matriculation, performance, and assessment status.
11. Provides student support resources, including health care, counselling, advice, career, academic and transferable skills. The provision of student support services will differ for distance students.
12. Provides access to the University cultural, social, and sporting facilities and opportunities. Access to facilities and campus-based opportunities will differ for distance students.
13. Provides the administrative support needed for smooth delivery of the student's training.
14. Provides complaints and appeal mechanisms.

REC: 17.05.16
H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5J

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees – Update

Executive Summary

The paper comprises updates to the Handbook. This provides additional content in paragraph 9 Expected Standards for Postgraduate Research programmes of study, to link to specific guidance on the inclusion of publications in the thesis. Additional content is also included in paragraph 18 External Examiner Comments Reports – Part III Forms, incorporated from the review of the Quality Assurance Framework.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with University Strategic Plan Goal of Excellence in Education.

Action requested

The committee is invited to note the paper and approve the amendments.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

There are no actions for implementation as the paper does not make any changes to policy. Updates will be communicated through Academic Services' annual communication on policies and regulations in June.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
None as no change in policy or process is proposed.
2. **Risk assessment**
None.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
None.
4. **Freedom of information**
This Paper is open

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer
Academic Services
22 April 2016

Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Purpose of Guidance

The handbook provides guidance and practical advice on external examining of research degrees. It sets out the expected standards and best practice for both External Examiners and University staff, recognising the diversity of contexts and practices across the University.

Scope: Guidance is not Mandatory

It sets out the expected standards and best practice for both External Examiners and University academic and support staff,

Contact Officer Susan Hunter Academic Policy Officer Susan.Hunter5@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Approved:
03.03.15

Starts:
03.03.15

Equality impact assessment:
N/A

Amendments:

Next Review:
March 2016

Approving authority

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

Consultation undertaken

College Postgraduate Office staff, College postgraduate committees with responsibility for research degrees (including Graduate Schools), support services, External Examiner Project (taught), Researcher Experience Committee.

Section responsible for guidance maintenance & review

Academic Services

Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees
http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/PGR_AssessmentRegulations.pdf
Postgraduate DRPS
<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>

UK Quality Code

UK Quality Code Chapters B7 and B11

Guidance superseded by this guidance

None – this is new guidance

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 2138.

Keywords

External examiner, viva examiner, PhD examiner, MPhil examiner, PGR examiner, postgraduate research examiner, PhD examining, MPhil examining, PGR examining, postgraduate research examining, viva examining



Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees

THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Policy

Introduction.....	2
1 Welcome Statement.....	3
The External Examiner.....	4
2 Role and Key Responsibilities.....	4
3 Summary of Key Responsibilities.....	4
4 Induction and Briefing.....	4
5 Terms of Appointment.....	4
6 Summary of What the External Examiner can expect from the University.....	4
7 Qualifications and Expertise.....	5
8 Conflicts of Interest.....	5
9 Expected Standards for Postgraduate Research programmes of study.....	6
10 Participation in Assessment and Examination Procedures.....	6
The Examining Process.....	7
12 Nomination and Appointment of Examiners.....	7
13 Preparation of Examiners' Independent Reports in Advance of Examination – Part I Form.....	8
14 Oral Examination (Viva Voce).....	9
15 Submission of Examiners' Post-Oral Report Forms – Part II Forms.....	10
16 Re-Examination.....	11
17 Return of Thesis.....	12
18 External Examiner Comments Reports – Part III Forms.....	12
19 Confidentiality and Intellectual Property.....	12
20 Examiners Fees and Expenses.....	13
21 Notification of concerns.....	14
22 College contact information.....	14

Introduction

This handbook provides guidance and practical advice on external examining of research degrees. It sets out the expected standards and best practice for both External Examiners and University staff, recognising the diversity of contexts and practices across the University. It is divided into two parts; the first part “The External Examiner” covers the responsibilities and expectations of this role, and the second part explains the External Examining Process.

The handbook does not supersede the University’s regulations and should be read in conjunction with the postgraduate regulations set out in

- [The University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study \(DRPS\)](#)
- [The Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.](#)

The handbook is consistent with the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B11: Research Degrees](#)



Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees

THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Policy

1 Welcome Statement

1.1

Thank you for agreeing to act as an External Examiner at Edinburgh. The University fully appreciates the commitment that you have shown in agreeing to undertake this role. Edinburgh strongly adheres to the precepts of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B11: Research Degrees (June 2012); recognising that External Examiners play a vital role in the maintenance of academic standards, and in ensuring rigorous and fair assessment processes.

1.2

This handbook sets out to provide essential information to External Examiners to allow them to carry out their duties at Edinburgh. It provides information on the role and responsibilities of External Examiners and guidance on administrative and business processes regarding arrangements for thesis assessment, submission of reports and payment of fees and expenses.

1.3

This handbook is intended primarily for the information of External Examiners, but is also relevant for staff involved in postgraduate research assessment and administration.

1.4

External Examiners are appointed to provide impartial and independent assessment and advice on postgraduate research degrees. External Examiners also provide invaluable independent feedback to the University on its postgraduate research assessment procedures.

1.5

External Examiners for postgraduate research degrees are appointed by the relevant College. The University's regulations set out the requirements for the appointment of External Examiners for postgraduate research degrees, details of which have been summarised in this document.



The External Examiner

2 Role and Key Responsibilities

External Examiners are a fundamental part of the postgraduate research degree assessment process. They assess the written thesis against the criteria set by the University (see also section 9) and attend and participate in the oral examination (viva voce). Feedback to the College or School on the assessment process is also a key element of the External Examiner's role.

3 Summary of Key Responsibilities

- Assess the written thesis
- Attend the oral examination
- Complete and submit examiner report forms
- Provide an assessment of examination process
- Assess the resubmitted thesis, if required
- Attend the oral re-examination, if required
- Complete and submit re-examination report forms
- Provide an assessment of the re-examination process

4 Induction and Briefing

4.1

On approval, the External Examiner will receive a formal letter of appointment from the College or School, indicating the name of the candidate, School, degree, Internal Examiner(s) and Supervisor. A copy of the letter is sent as appropriate to the Internal Examiner and Supervisor for information.

4.2

The College will ensure that each Examiner is sent a copy of the thesis, together with information on how to access the appropriate regulations, guidance and report forms.

5 Terms of Appointment

The External Examiner is appointed for the period of assessment of the candidate's thesis. External Examiners are involved once a student has submitted their thesis until the final award recommendation is made to the College.

6 Summary of What the External Examiner can expect from the University

Responsibility for provision of the information is stated in brackets after each category.

- Information and guidance on the University's assessment procedures and regulations (College Office, School Postgraduate Administrators)
- Key contact information (College Office)
- Information on the arrangements for the oral examination (Internal Examiner, College Office, School Postgraduate Administrators)
- Information and guidance on the relevant forms for completion in relation to the assessment, examination and expenses (College Office)



- Prompt payment of fees and expenses, once the necessary, complete paperwork has been provided (College Office)

7 Qualifications and Expertise

7.1

External Examiners should normally be experienced members of the research/scholarly community. External Examiners must have the requisite experience to examine the degree programme at the level at which it is offered. They need to meet the responsibilities set out by the relevant College Committee and comply with quality and standards requirements as set out in the University's degree regulations.

7.2

The relevant College Committee will specify responsibilities and requirements to Examiners.

7.3

It is the responsibility of the College Committee to ensure that the External Examiner is competent to assess the degree. The External Examiner is appointed for his or her specialist knowledge, whereas the Internal Examiner may be a generalist or an expert in only part of the subject matter of the thesis. Guidance for inexperienced External Examiners is available from the Internal Examiner and/or Non-Examining Chair of the oral examination.

8 Conflicts of Interest

8.1

No External Examiner shall be involved in any assessment or examination in which ~~she or he has~~ they have any private, personal or commercial interest, for example a current or previous personal, family or legal relationship with a student being assessed. On nomination, the proposed External Examiner has the opportunity to declare any conflict of interests that would compromise their role as External Examiner. If a change in an External Examiner's circumstances during the term of appointment gives rise to any conflicts of interest, the External Examiner may need to resign or the contract may need to be terminated unless the conflict of interest can be resolved. The External Examiner must keep the College informed of any changes in circumstances that may give rise to a conflict of interests so that appropriate action can be taken.

8.2

If there is a potential conflict of interest the relevant College Committee will decide whether a conflict of interest exists and what, if any, further action needs to be taken. Relevant information can be found in the University's policy on conflict of interest.

- [The University's Policy on Conflict of Interest](#)



Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees

THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Policy

9 Expected Standards for Postgraduate Research programmes of study

The grounds for the award of Postgraduate Research degrees are set out in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Studies. [Guidance is also available on the University's expectations when students choose to include published articles in a thesis.](#)

- [DRPS](#)
- [Including Publications in Postgraduate Research Theses](#)

10 Participation in Assessment and Examination Procedures

10.1 Thesis assessment

The normal expectation is that Examiners will read the thesis and submit their pre-viva report within three months. External Examiners are required [to](#) submit their initial, independent pre-viva report (Part I) form to the College after assessing the written thesis and within the timescale indicated. (see also section 13)

10.2 Oral Examination (Viva Voce)

External Examiners have an examining role in the oral examination and are expected to attend (see also section 14).

10.3 Re-Examination

When required, External Examiners also have a role in the re-examination process (see also section 16).



The Examining Process

12 Nomination and Appointment of Examiners

12.1

Each candidate undertaking a research programme must be examined by at least two Examiners, one of whom must be an External Examiner. *If a candidate is a member of staff of the University then at least two External Examiners must be appointed.* A second External Examiner may also be appointed in particular cases, for example if the thesis topic is interdisciplinary.

12.2

The recommendation for the appointment of External Examiner(s) for the degree should be initiated by the Head of School in the organising School or Institute, in consultation with the student's Supervisor(s). Schools should make nominations for the appointment of Examiners using the appropriate form which is available online.

- [University Examiner forms](#)

12.3

Schools should submit nomination forms to the College at least four weeks prior to the date of submission to allow time for the proposal to be approved by the relevant College Committee and for the appropriate correspondence to be sent to the Examiners. The College or School office will confirm appointment to the Examiners.

12.4

External Examiners for research degrees are treated as self-employed and universities are not required to deduct tax or national insurance – provided that the whole of the work is performed under a contract for services (that is, the External Examiner is treated as self-employed) in less than twelve months.

12.5

Non-EU External Examiners will need to obtain a visa in order to visit the UK and the University will be able to advise on this. More information on the Permitted Paid Engagement route for visitor visas is available on the University website.

- [Visitors and Permitted Paid Engagement](#)

12.6 Notifying Candidates of their Examiners

Supervisors advise candidates of the names of proposed Examiners. Candidates can notify their Supervisor if any problems are likely to arise if particular Examiners are appointed. Any comments will be taken into account but candidates have no right to determine the Head of School's eventual recommendation, and therefore have no right to veto any particular appointment.



12.7

The Examiners are asked specifically to assess the thesis in terms of the grounds for the award of degree set out in the Regulations. The purpose of the examination is to allow the Examiners to establish that the thesis is satisfactory in the following regards:

- it is an original work making a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of study and containing material worthy of publication;
- it shows adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature;
- it shows the exercise of critical judgement with regard to both the candidate's work and that of other scholars in the same general field;
- it contains material which presents a unified body of work such as could reasonably be achieved on the basis of postgraduate study and research during the prescribed period of study;
- it is satisfactory in its literary presentation, gives full and adequate references; and
- it has a coherent structure understandable to a scholar in the same general field with regard to intentions, background, methods and conclusions.

13 Preparation of Examiners' Independent Reports in Advance of Examination – Part I Form

13.1

The College or School Office will notify examiners of the date on which the oral examination will be held. Examiners are expected to complete and return their Part I reports by the deadlines specified by the College or School Office.

13.2

At the University of Edinburgh, doctoral and MPhil degrees are examined through a two-stage process in which each Examiner, acting independently, submits an initial (Part I) report on the thesis before the oral examination is held. University template forms should be used to prepare examiner reports and reports should be submitted within the timescale indicated by the School or College. The report forms are available online.

- [University Examiner report forms](#)

13.3

Each Examiner, having read the thesis, should prepare a preliminary, independent report in advance of the oral examination. Examiners should not consult on their pre-viva reports at this stage. The report should cover all relevant issues arising from the candidate's thesis that the Examiner wishes to highlight. The report should be prepared on the pre-viva (Part I) form provided. The Examiners should discuss their independent reports before the start of the oral examination.

13.4

Exceptionally, if the Examiners do find it necessary to consult before writing their pre-viva reports, this fact and the reason(s) for it must be noted in their reports.

13.5



The reports must be sufficiently detailed to enable members of the relevant College Committee (after the oral examination) to assess the scope and significance of the thesis and to appreciate its strengths and weaknesses. They must be expressed in terms that are intelligible to those who are not specialists in the particular field of the thesis.

13.6

The expectation is that Examiners will complete their preliminary reports (Part I) within three months of receipt of the thesis.

13.7

The pre-oral examination report should be completed and returned to the College by five working days prior to the date of the oral examination.

14 Oral Examination (Viva Voce)

14.1

The oral examination may be used to establish a student's knowledge of the field of ~~his or her~~their research, to establish the extent of any collaboration and to confirm that the work is the student's own. Through the oral examination, the Examiners are assessing jointly whether the thesis, and the student's defence of it, satisfy the requirements and regulations for the award of the degree. Further details on the operation and regulation of oral examinations are available in the [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

14.2

The Internal Examiner is responsible for making all necessary arrangements for the oral examination. The Internal Examiner is also responsible for ensuring that the External Examiner is properly consulted on these arrangements.

14.3

Examiners are not expected to wear academic robes for oral examinations.

14.4

An oral examination is required for all doctoral and MPhil candidates. The Internal Examiner is responsible for chairing the oral examination. Where the Internal Examiner is acting for the first time, or is a member of honorary staff, the College will appoint a Non-Examining Chair to attend the oral examination and ensure that due process is carried out.

14.5

Supervisors may attend the oral examination as observers with the consent of the candidate and examiners. If the Supervisor does attend they may not comment and must leave the examination with the candidate. Supervisors do not participate in the discussion and decision of the examiners.

14.6

Although there is no formal limit, oral examinations normally last for around two to three hours and should be a positive experience for the candidate.



14.7

At the end of the oral examination, and if they have agreed a recommendation, the Examiners may tell the candidate what their views are. However, they must stress that their view is a recommendation to the relevant College Committee and not a final decision. The College Committee acts as the Board of Examiners for postgraduate research degrees and has the power to modify or, exceptionally, to overturn the Examiners' recommendation.

14.8

The oral examination will be held in Edinburgh, and the Examiners, Non-Examining Chair (where appointed) and the candidate are required to be physically present. However, under exceptional circumstances, the oral examination may be conducted using technology such as video conferencing, enabling the student or an Examiner to participate but not be physically present at the University. Students must be accompanied by an Examiner or approved authority when the oral examination is conducted by video link. Such remote assessment must have the written permission of the relevant College Committee, the student, all Examiners and any Non-Examining Chair. The authority for any such decision lies with the College Committee. The University guidance on video linked oral examinations is available online.

- [University guidance: PhD by Research oral examinations by video link](#)

15 Submission of Examiners' Post-Oral Report Forms – Part II Forms

15.1

Following the oral, the Examiners are asked to submit a joint (Part II) report on the thesis. The Chair of the Oral Examination is responsible for sending the Part II report to the relevant College Committee. Examiners' recommendations are specified in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees and detailed on the post-viva examiner report form (Part II), supplied to the External Examiner by the College.

- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

15.2

The completed Examiners' pre-oral examination (Part I) reports and Examiners' Recommendation (Part II) report form must together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the University to satisfy itself that the criteria for the award of the degree have been met.

15.3

The post-oral examination (Part II) report includes a "Critique for the student", which must be completed except where recommendation (a) – no corrections – is made.

15.4

The post-oral report must be completed and returned to the College within two weeks of the oral examination.



15.5

The Chair of the oral examination should ensure that the post-oral examination report gives a full account of the Examiners' views. In the event of the Examiners failing to reach a consensus, this should be stated on the Examiners' post-viva report along with an indication of the area of disagreement. In the unlikely event of Examiners failing to reach agreement, separate recommendations may be made and will be subject to arbitration by the relevant College Committee.

15.6 College Committee confirmation of decision

The relevant College Committee will consider the reports and recommendations from the Examiners and, on the basis that the requisite criteria are satisfied, will recommend that the degree is awarded.

16 Re-Examination

16.1

Where the Examiners recommend that resubmission of a thesis is required, they must write a detailed statement of the aspects which require revision. The resubmitted thesis is judged only against this written statement. A student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit his or her thesis.

16.2

When a resubmission recommendation is confirmed by the relevant College Committee, the College Office must ensure that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis and the timescale for completing the revisions as set by the Examiners. The Supervisor is responsible for confirming with the student his or her understanding of any revisions to be made.

16.3

The candidate is responsible for presenting the resubmitted thesis to the College Office for transmission to the Examiners. At the appropriate time, the School or College Office will provide each Examiner with a copy of the revised thesis. Having read the thesis, the Examiners should prepare new independent reports on Examiner's Report Resubmission (Part I) form and complete further Examiners' Resubmission Recommendation (Part II) and Assessment of Examination Process Examiner's comments (Part III) form at the appropriate time.

16.4

No further criticism of other material or aspects of the thesis passed as satisfactory at the first examination can be introduced at a later stage. The written statement and the aspects of the thesis which require revision must be approved by the relevant College Committee and cannot subsequently be altered without the agreement of that Committee.



17 Return of Thesis

Following the completion of the examination and the submission of the part two reports, the Examiners should return their copies of the thesis to the College Office. Examiners should not retain electronic copies of the thesis.

18 External Examiner Comments Reports – Part III Forms

External Examiner comments are sought after the conclusion of the examination process via the Assessment of Examination Process (Part III) form. ~~These comments are valuable to the University's quality assurance (QA) monitoring and are included in School's annual reports to the College on QA for postgraduate research.~~ Comments are requested on the examination process generally and Examiners are also invited to comment on any other relevant aspects. Any major themes or trends arising from Part III forms, and from schools' review of data on research student progression and completion, should be considered for inclusion in the school annual quality assurance report to Senate Quality Assurance Committee. ~~Colleges in turn report on key themes to Senate Quality Assurance Committee in their annual quality assurance and enhancement report and to other Senate committees as appropriate.~~

Commented [HS1]: Addition from Quality Assurance Framework review

19 Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

19.1

The student holds copyright as author of all work submitted for examination. Each student must grant the University the right to publish the thesis, abstract or list of works, and/or to authorise its publication for any scholarly purpose with proper acknowledgement of authorship.

19.2

The University and the student reserve the copyright and all other intellectual property rights on both the thesis and the abstract. During the examination the Examiners must hold the thesis and the abstract in strict confidence.

19.3 Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The Examiners' initial, independent (Part I) reports remain confidential to the College but can be requested under Freedom of Information (see also section 13). However, Examiners should note that students receive post-viva (Part II) reports after the meeting of the relevant College Committee.

19.4

External Examiner reports and any correspondence engaged in by the External Examiner in connection with their external examiner duties are disclosable in line with the University's freedom of information obligations.



19.5

Requests for the disclosure of any restricted reports made directly, and separately, to the Head of College or the Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance will be judged on a case-by-case basis in line with the University's freedom of information obligations.

- [Freedom of Information](#)
- [Data Protection](#)

20 Examiners Fees and Expenses

20.1

External Examiners of research degrees are responsible for any income tax due in respect of the fee through HMRC Self-Assessment. It is essential that, on appointment, all UK tax-paying Examiners provide their Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) which is issued by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) when registering for Self-Assessment.

20.2

Information concerning expenses for examining research theses is set out within the University's Guidelines for Reimbursement of Expenses. The College Office will be able to provide advice on fees and claiming expenses.

- [Guidelines for Reimbursement of Expenses](#)

20.3

The University pays fees in pounds sterling to the External Examiner's bank account within 30 days of receipt of the Assessment of Examination Process (Part III) forms, along with completed forms for the UTR (see also section 12.5) and bank account details. These forms are available from the College Office. The College is responsible for instructing Accounts Payable to arrange to pay the fees.

20.4

Reasonable expenses incurred in connection with an External Examiner's duties, including travel, accommodation and/or subsistence costs, should be itemised on an expense claim form. Expense claims will not normally be accepted in any other form and certainly not without all receipts attached. Bank account details are required in order to pay expenses. The Examiner expense claim form is available from the College Office.

20.5

Expenses are processed by the College Office. They are normally processed immediately upon receipt of the Assessment of Examination Process (Part III) form, so long as the expense form is completed fully and correctly and the appropriate receipts are attached.



Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees

THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Policy

21 Notification of concerns

21.1

The External Examiner may raise concerns regarding the examination process with the Internal Examiner, the School or College Office. The Assessment of Examination Process (Part III) form also provides a mechanism for reporting on the examination process.

21.2

If concerns are unable to be resolved within the scope of the examination process for an individual thesis, the External Examiner may raise these with the relevant Head of College or with the Convener of the Senatus Researcher Experience Committee.

22 College contact information

- [College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences](#)
- [College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine](#)
- [College of Science and Engineering](#)

~~3 March~~ ~~XX May~~ 2016~~5~~

REC: 17.05.16

H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5K

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Review of supervisor training

Executive Summary

This paper sets out information on compulsory supervisor briefings and details recent enhancements and proposals for further enhancement of practice.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

University strategic goal: Excellence in research. REC strategic priority 2015/16: Review supervisor selection and training arrangements. A review of completeness, effectiveness and regularity of supervisor training was identified as a recommendation in the 2015 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) outcome report¹. It also aligns with recommendations in the report from the REC Flexible PhD task group (March 2016).

Action requested

The Committee is invited to formally note the paper.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Enhancements to the compulsory supervisor briefing events for 2016/17 will be discussed between IAD and the College Postgraduate Dean (or equivalent) and the individual Graduate Schools where relevant as part of the annual planning process. Other proposed enhancements will be considered by and discussed with relevant parties and progress reported to REC in due course.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Most of these enhancements will be met through existing resources. Other proposed projects will have potential resource implications.

2. Risk assessment

Not included

3. Equality and Diversity

Has this been considered? Yes

4. Freedom of information

The paper is open

Key words

Supervision, examination

Originator of the paper

Elizabeth Scanlon, Researcher Development Project Officer, Institute for Academic Development.

Fiona Philippi, Acting Head of Researcher Development, Institute for Academic Development

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Edinburgh/University-of-Edinburgh-ELIR-Outcome-15.pdf>

Current practice and expectations

All new supervisors at the university are expected to attend a supervisor briefing before they start supervising a student. All continuing supervisors should renew this once every five years. This requirement is set out in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students².

Individual Schools hold responsibility for identifying the training needs of their supervisors and ensuring that all members of staff with supervisory responsibilities have attended an appropriate supervisor briefing event.

Currently, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) works with the three Colleges to organise compulsory supervisor briefing events at both School and College level throughout the academic year. The IAD has a responsibility to provide unbiased reporting on attendance at these events for the purposes of ELIR and for internal reporting to Colleges and Schools.

Format and content of supervisor briefings

Each supervisor briefing runs for approximately three hours and includes talks from the College Postgraduate Dean (or equivalent), administrative procedures from the College Office and/or Graduate School, case studies, an experienced supervisor's talk from the School and an IAD overview.

Review and Enhancements

IAD has recently reviewed the content and feedback from these sessions and met with College Postgraduate Deans to discuss enhancements and methods of sharing good practice across the institution. This has resulted in the following actions:

1. A checklist of content to be covered in all briefings has been drawn up to ensure that the training remains relevant, important, timely and practical as well as provides a consistent message across the Colleges. This will be shared with Colleges and Schools. This checklist can be found at the end of this paper.
2. IAD is currently developing a share point through OneDrive which gathers relevant information, presentations and case studies and will provide a place for Colleges and Schools to share items of good practice.
3. IAD is looking into ways to coordinate development of training and support for supervision of distance PhD students

Proposed enhancements

1. The wording relating to supervisor training and renewal in the Code of Practice and other relevant documentation should be reviewed to ensure that expectations are made sufficiently explicit.
2. The development of an automated record of attendance at supervisor briefing sessions incorporated into EUCLID should be considered (at present this is entered manually by IAD, shared with Schools/Colleges and kept as a central spreadsheet)
3. It is proposed that following the compulsory supervisor briefing, attendees should be able to access the materials presented and complete an on-line test (based on the Code of Practice as well as School or College specific questions) to reinforce the briefing and confirm understanding of key points.

² <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Codes/CoPSupervisorsResearchStudents.pdf>

4. The overview of internal examining regulations and practicalities should be included in the programme of supervisor training.
5. A clear emphasis and particular importance should be placed on the matter of setting realistic timeframe for PhD projects by supervisors and their timely completion.

Checklist of content to include in compulsory supervisor briefings

Theme	Description of content	Information
Introduction & overview	An overview of the UoE context and some of the challenges for the institution and the College.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an Edinburgh PhD? (REC discussion) • PRES results • Different modes of study, recruitment, funding, duration of PhD Projects, timely completion
Regulations & expectations	Links to University-level regulations and Code of Practice are emailed out in advance (by IAD). Attendees are expected to familiarise themselves with the content and bring questions to the session.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DPRS) • PGR Assessment Regulations (and updates) • Key Changes to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2015/16 • Code of Practice for Supervisors and PGR Students • Including publications in theses • Examiners report forms • NEW for 15/16 Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees
	Highlight key changes in regulations during the session and signpost to support for specific queries (some of these may come out through discussion of case studies).	
	Explore the roles and expectations of the student and supervisor (according to the Code of Practice including any College slant) and the training expectation.	
	Emphasise the importance of establishing expectations and structuring a project so that it can be completed within given time constraints.	
	Explore the role and expectations of the internal examiner.	
Procedures & processes	Introduce School and College support and administrative procedures including where to find further information and who can be contacted for support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUCLID online annual review (software workflow Prezi) • Attendance monitoring • English language requirements • School/College specific guidelines • OneDrive could be suggested as a way to share documents and keep records of regular meetings
	Emphasise the importance of monitoring progress regularly and keeping written records. Raise awareness of key milestones and information flow. There should also be a detailed (local) induction for new academics focusing on practicalities.	

Experience & challenges	Reflection and group discussion on the process of supervising research students. Using a range of case studies highlighting various challenges led by experienced supervisors with School and College input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full set of case studies as examples
Developing your skills & support available	Highlight support available for supervisors and services they can signpost students to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate School, College Office, PG adviser, webpages, wiki, contacts • IAD (provision for Doctoral researchers, Tutors and Demonstrators and Supervisors). • Disability service (Helping distressed students – a guide for University staff) • Mental health issues – EUSA and the UoE Code of Practice • Student counselling • EUSA, Advice place • Careers service • International office (training for staff on Tier-4 PGR students)
	Encourage continued professional development and signpost to further sessions and online resources.	
Time for Q&A		

REC: 17.05.16

H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5L

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

Executive Summary

Report to University Court from the Knowledge Strategy Committee meeting on 11 March 2016. Key points include: Student Systems Roadmap, Student Data Dashboards, EDINA and Digital Curation Centre, and Learning Analytics Project – progress report.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with University Strategic Plan Goal of Excellence in Education.

Action requested

The committee is invited to note the paper which is provided for information only.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

No actions for implementation as the paper is provided for information only.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

No resource implications for consideration by REC.

2. Risk assessment

None – the paper is provided for information only.

3. Equality and Diversity

There are no equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

4. Freedom of information

This Paper is open

Key words

Student Systems roadmap, student data dashboards, EDINA, digital curation, learning analytics project

Originator of the paper

Dr Lewis Allan

Head of Court Services

UNIVERSITY COURT**25 April 2016****Knowledge Strategy Committee Report****Committee Name**

1. Knowledge Strategy Committee.

Date of Meeting

2. The Committee met on 11 March 2016.

Action Required

3. Court is invited to note the key points discussed at the meeting.

Key points**4. *Student Systems Roadmap***

The Director of Student Systems presented the high level priorities to be used to establish the detailed priorities in the Student Systems Roadmap 2016-19, namely:

- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to support student recruitment and the admissions phase of the student lifecycle;
- Enhanced use of student data to support learning & teaching, student experience and operational effectiveness;
- Enhanced student digital experience;
- Student & academic administration – faster delivery to support efficiency and effectiveness in Schools;
- Scanning the external environment for possible alternative providers in the medium term.

Members discussed an ongoing consultancy project on digital transformation of student systems; the running costs of the existing modular student records management system (SITS) and alternative options; links with the Service Excellence Programme; work to ensure Data Protection requirements are met, including likely new EU requirements; and, requests for CRM systems across the University, with the Vice-Principal Planning, Resources & Research Policy convening a working group to ensure a joined-up approach.

5. *Student Data Dashboards*

An update on the Student Data Dashboards project was received, including a demonstration dashboard prototype developed using data supplied by the School of Mathematics.

Strong demand from Heads of School as well as senior management for clear presentation of School-level data in a dashboard format and for predictive analysis was noted. The importance of building an adequate data architecture, with a data architecture team now established in Information Systems Group, was noted. Other projects to enable better use of data were discussed, with an update on wider Business Intelligence/Management Information (BI/MI) initiatives to follow at a future meeting.

6. EDINA and the Digital Curation Centre (DCC) – Initial Approach

The Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University provided an initial briefing on the approach to adopt for future funding sources for EDINA (a UK data centre based at the University of Edinburgh) and the Digital Curation Centre.

Expected reductions in the annual grants for the centres from Jisc (the UK Government funded body providing leadership in the use of IT for further and higher education) and work to grow subscription income from service users and external research funding grants were noted. The Chief Information Officer advised that a five year business case examining three options (continued operation using alternative funding streams; a joint venture; winding down or transfer of services) is being developed and will be presented at a future meeting.

Members commented on the strong track record of both centres, links with the University's strategic ambition to be a world leader in data science and growing overseas subscriber numbers.

7. Learning Analytics Project – Progress Report

The Vice-Principal Digital Education updated the Committee on the learning analytics project involving online Masters programmes and courses, in partnership with Civitas Learning International. The use of anonymised historical data to understand key factors leading to student success with the intention to enhance student experience and success in future courses was noted. The potential to offer Continuing Professional Development courses to those exiting Masters programmes prior to completion and to allow credits to be gradually earned over a number of years before the award of a qualification was suggested, with many online mature students wishing to study particular courses rather than undertake a full Masters degree.

The progress update was welcomed and the Committee formally thanked Professor Haywood at his last Knowledge Strategy Committee meeting prior to retirement for his service to the Committee and to the University more widely.

8. Other Issues

The Committee received updates on the following projects and activities: Information Security Audit; Enterprise Architecture; Business Intelligence/Management Information; Distance Education Initiative; Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs); and WorkTribe Research Management. The Committee reviewed key performance indicators for the draft Information Services Plan 2016-19, approved updated guidelines for Colleges and Support Groups regarding the approval process for IT and library expenditure in excess of £200,000, noted the role description for the post the Assistant Principal Digital Education and discussed lecture capture technology.

Full minute

9. The full minute and papers considered are available [here](#).

Further information

11.	<u>Author</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
	Dr Lewis Allan	Ms Doreen Davidson
	Head of Court Services	Convener, KSC

REC: 17.05.16

H/02/26/02

REC 15/16 5M

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

17 May 2016

Senate Committee planning – approach for next session

Executive Summary

This paper sets out the framework that the Senate Committees will take to planning next session, and highlights the key points in the session at which the Committees will be able to input into the planning.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan Goal of Excellence in Education.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to note these plans.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

College and EUSA representatives on the Committee are encouraged to highlight to their constituencies this future approach to planning.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

The paper will assist the University to use its resources strategically.

2. Risk assessment

Since the paper sets out a future approach to making decisions on planning and does not recommend a specific set of plans, it is not necessary to undertake a risk analysis.

3. Equality and Diversity

Since the paper sets out a future approach to making decisions on planning and does not recommend a specific set of plans, it is not necessary to undertake a risk analysis.

4. Freedom of information

For inclusion in open business

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 25 April 2016

Senate Committee planning – approach for next session

This paper sets out the framework that the Senate Committees will take to planning next session, and highlights the key points in the session at which the Committees will be able to input into the planning.

Background

During March / April 2016, the four Senate Committees discussed the priorities for 2016-17. The annual Senate Committees Symposium on 27 April 2016 subsequently commented on these plans. Senate will be invited to endorse the agreed plans at its meeting on 1 June 2016.

The recent Light-touch Governance Review of Senate and its Committees indicated that, while the Senate Committee members were broadly satisfied with the approach to planning, that Review also identified a potential disconnect between the timing of prioritisation of Senate Committee activity and the timing of the University's annual planning processes.

Approaches to future planning cycles

In order to address this issue and misalignment with institutional annual planning processes, in March / April the Committees agreed that, from next session, the Senate Committees' planning would involve two distinct stages:

- In Semester One, the Committees would be invited to identify any major strategic developments that may require additional resources, which could then be considered during the planning round; and
- In Semester Two, the Committees could undertake a broader discussion of priorities for the coming session.

Timescales for 2016-17

Stage One (identifying any major strategic developments that may require additional resources)

- Learning and Teaching Committee – 16 November 2016
- Researcher Experience Committee – 15 November 2016
- Curriculum and Student Progression Committee – 22 September 2016
- Quality Assurance Committee – 20 October 2016

Stage Two (broader discussion of priorities for the coming session which could be delivered within existing resources)

- Learning and Teaching Committee – 15 March 2017
- Researcher Experience Committee – 14 March 2017
- Curriculum and Student Progression Committee – 6 April 2017
- Quality Assurance Committee – 19 April 2017