

## **Procedure for termination of supervision of Postgraduate Research students**

### **Background**

The Postgraduate Degree Regulations (43) include provision for exceptional situations where the relevant College wishes to request termination of a postgraduate research student's supervision:

In the event that the College considers that it is necessary to make changes to supervisory arrangements, and the College has not been able to provide alternate supervision despite having undertaken reasonable endeavours, the College may request that the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee consider terminating supervision of the student as set out in the Procedure for Termination of Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students.

In April 2017, Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (now Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee, APRC) approved a procedure for handling cases brought forward under this regulation. This procedure is set out below.

### **Procedure for handling cases involving termination of supervision**

APRC has agreed to delegate its powers to make decisions regarding requests to terminate supervision to a subgroup of its membership.

#### ***Composition***

The subgroup is to be constituted as follows:

- The Convener or Vice-Convener of APRC \* (Convener of the subgroup)
- One academic member of APRC from each of the Colleges (with the exception of the student's College)
- The Academic Services representative on the Committee (or delegate)
- Secretary to the subgroup (appointed by Academic Services)

\* In the event that the Convener and Vice-Convener are from the student's College, or that neither the Convener nor Vice-Convener are available for the hearing, the Secretary to the subgroup would identify an academic member of the Committee from a different College to convene the subgroup.

#### ***Operating procedures***

The Secretary of the group will write to the student, providing at least five working days' notice of the date of the subgroup's hearing into their case. This written communication will also contain all documentation which the student's College considers relevant, and will list any individuals that the College has asked to appear before the subgroup. At this stage, the student will be asked to provide any additional comments they might wish to make on the documentation in advance of the hearing, and to list any individuals that the student would like to appear before the subgroup. The student's comments will be incorporated into the documentation that the subgroup will consider. The student will be entitled to attend and to be accompanied by one other member of the University community (for example, an adviser from the EUSA Advice Place). The student may present their case directly, or may nominate the member of the University community to do so on their behalf.

A hearing of the subgroup will operate in the following way:

- The Convener will welcome all parties in attendance, and invite the student to make an opening statement;
- Following this statement, the subgroup will question the student, and any other individuals the student has asked to appear before the subgroup;
- Following questioning of the student, the subgroup will question a representative of the student's College and any other relevant individuals the College has asked to appear before the subgroup;
- After questioning has concluded, the Convener will invite any relevant individuals who have been called to appear before the subgroup to make any closing statements they might wish to make, each in turn;
- Following hearing closing statements from relevant individuals, the Convener will invite the student to make a closing statement, should the student wish to do so;
- At this point, the hearing will conclude and the subgroup will begin its deliberations;
- Following the end of the hearing, the student will be informed electronically via email of the outcome of their case within 1 working day of the close of proceedings. A detailed report of proceedings which outlines the subgroup's reasoning behind its decision will be provided to the student no later than five working days following the conclusion of the hearing.

On hearing a case, there are two outcomes open to the subgroup:

- Decide that supervision of the student will be terminated, and that the student will be required to withdraw from the University with immediate effect; or
- Ask the student's College to take further steps to attempt to identify appropriate supervisory arrangements.

The subgroup may hold physical hearings or virtual hearings. Whilst it is in the student's interests to ensure that they are available to attend a hearing in person, this will not always be possible. Decisions about the nature of the hearings will be made by the Convener and Secretary of the subgroup with due consideration of fairness, accessibility and the ability of all involved to participate fully. The subgroup may adjourn, continue, or postpone a hearing at its discretion. If the student does not appear on the date appointed and the Convener of the subgroup is satisfied that the student has been given due notice to appear, the subgroup may hear the case in the student's absence. However, the subgroup may not draw any adverse inference from the student's failure to appear.

### ***Appeals against decisions of the subgroup***

In the event that a subgroup decides that supervision of the student will be terminated, and that the student will be required to withdraw from the University, the student will be able to appeal under the University's Student Appeal Regulations. The grounds for appeal, deadline for submitting appeal, procedures for considering an appeal, and other provisions, will be the same as those that apply for appeals against exclusion.