



## A collage of images representing the University of Edinburgh. The collage includes: a modern building interior with large windows and a curved wooden counter; a student in a white dress standing at a counter; a student walking; the University of Edinburgh crest; and students studying. The images are overlaid with a blue and green color scheme.

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# Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

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# Introduction

The University aims to give research students an exceptional and distinctive experience that prepares them to make significant contributions to knowledge during and beyond their period of study.

This Code provides guidance and practical advice for research students to assist them in maximising their potential. It also provides guidance and practical advice to support supervisors in undertaking their crucial roles.

Since the University has a diverse research community with a variety of practices, this Code highlights common features and should be read along with School and programme-specific information.

Most aspects of the Code are relevant to distance programmes, however where different arrangements apply these will be highlighted in the relevant programme handbooks. The Code focuses primarily on students and supervisors of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) programmes and many aspects are also relevant to MSc by Research programmes. However some MSc by Research programmes may have different arrangements for supervision and assessment and these will be highlighted in the relevant programme handbook. Where students are studying on jointly delivered research degree programmes (for example

through Doctoral Training Centres), some of the arrangements for supervision, assessment and support may differ from those described in the Code.

The Code is not part of the University's formal regulatory framework. It should be read in conjunction with the formal requirements set out in the University's Postgraduate Degree Regulations, Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees, and other relevant University policies and regulations, many of which are referenced in the Code.



# 1. Roles and responsibilities

At the University of Edinburgh, each student is supervised by a team of at least two supervisors; a Principal (or “Lead”) Supervisor, and either a Co-Supervisor or Assistant Supervisor.

The nature of the research project and the best interests of the student will determine the makeup of the supervisory team and the key responsibilities of each member of the supervision team must be agreed by the team at the beginning of the student’s programme.

However the responsibilities are distributed, all supervisors are expected to take an active role in supervision and all have a responsibility towards the student.

## 1.1 Students’ responsibilities

All students are expected to comply with the University’s policies, regulations and procedures which along with their programme handbook, other programme information and the terms and conditions of admission, form the contract between the student and University during their studies.

[University Student Contract](#)

Research students have particular responsibilities for:

### The research project

- Fulfilling the requirements of their degree programme (PhD, MPhil, MSc by Research or taught professional doctorate) including any requirements for annual progression review.
- Taking advantage of the facilities and supervision offered by the University.
- Making themselves aware of relevant policies, regulations and guidance.
- Working as a professional, independent researcher accountable for the development of their own research.
- Maintaining ethical standards in the design, conduct and reporting of research.
- Working diligently and effectively throughout their studies.
- Following the rules of any other university, Associated Institution (see 1.2.4), company or other organisation that they are studying with as part of their programme.

## The thesis

The thesis may take various different formats, such as a portfolio (see 4.1). Throughout this document, the term “thesis” is used to represent the assessment submission.

- Submitting a thesis, or portfolio representing the student’s research and findings. The programme handbook will give details on what is expected to be submitted for assessment.
- Producing, on time, a thesis that meets the criteria set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations and Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.
- Taking full responsibility for the quality of the thesis submitted for assessment (while the supervisor may advise on whether they think work is ready for submission, their opinion carries no guarantee of success in the assessment).

## Supervision

- Making themselves available at times agreed and maintaining regular contact with their supervisors.
- Producing a record of key supervision meeting and forwarding it to their supervisor for agreement.
- Discussing any proposed employment with their supervisor to ensure it does not impede the successful completion of the students’ programme of study.
- Discussing any adjustments as agreed by the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS, see 6.3.6 below) with their supervisors and/or School or College where relevant.

## Training and development

- Taking advantage of available research skills training.
- Reflecting on their broader transferable skills and professional development, and engaging with appropriate training opportunities.
- Participating in any training that is a required part of the programme.

## Resolving problems

- Actively seeking advice and help from the sources identified in this Code if problems arise.
- Notifying their Principal Supervisor, or other relevant staff, of any adverse circumstances affecting their studies or assessment (see 5.4).

# 1.2 Supervisors’ responsibilities

## 1.2.1 Principal/Lead Supervisor

### Role

The Principal Supervisor, sometimes referred to as Primary or Lead Supervisor in a Co-Supervisory team (see 1.2.2 below), has the main responsibility for supervision arrangements and guidance for the student throughout their programme of study.

This includes taking overall responsibility for:

- The administrative aspects of supervision, for example submitting requests for leave of absence or interruption of studies and ensuring minimum contact requirements are met and recorded.
- Ensuring appropriate approval for any co-supervision arrangements is obtained from College.

- Ensuring the student's progress is reviewed for each year of study.
- Providing advice on pastoral support as well as academic matters.
- Ensuring the student's intellectual property is respected.
- Leading on initial and ongoing discussions with the supervisory team to negotiate and agree on roles and responsibilities for each team member.
- Ensuring the student is aware of the responsibilities of individual supervisory team members.
- Communication within the supervisory team.

### 1.2.2 Co-Supervisor

#### Role

A co-supervision model may be chosen when it is clear that the student's work involves interdisciplinary research. When this model is chosen, the Co-Supervisor will play a major role in supervising the research project. The division of responsibilities between the Principal or Lead Supervisor and the Co-Supervisor must be agreed upon at the outset of the co-supervisory arrangement.

### 1.2.3 Assistant Supervisor

#### Role

The Assistant, sometimes referred to as Second, Supervisor's role involves fewer responsibilities than the Principal Supervisor, but in some cases may include closer day-to-day involvement in the student's research. Assistant Supervisors may also provide complementary expertise, such as specialised knowledge of a particular technique, or depending on the work context, day-to-day supervision in some cases.

### 1.2.4 Supervisors in Associated Institutions

The University recognises as "Associated Institutions" a range of non-commercial and non-degree-awarding organisations with which it collaborates on teaching, research and services to the community. Staff working in Associated Institutions acting as supervisors for the University's students have the same responsibilities as University of Edinburgh supervisors, and the same requirement to attend the University's supervisor briefing sessions.

If the Principal Supervisor is from an Associated Institution, then the University Supervisor and School Postgraduate Director are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Associated Institution Principal Supervisor has read the University's regulations and policies.
- Ensuring student progress is monitored in line with the University's regulations and policies.
- Ensuring that any Associated Institution Supervisor has completed requisite institutional supervisory training.

#### Associated Institutions

### 1.2.5 Responsibilities of the supervisory team

The supervisory team should meet as soon as possible once supervisory arrangements are confirmed. At the first meeting, the team should discuss the following responsibilities and decide how to ensure that all of them are covered.

- Introducing the student to the subject area, its facilities and procedures, and to other research students and relevant staff in the School. For distance PhD students these introductions may be virtual.
- Advising the student on the key milestones of the degree, drawing up a research plan and timetable for producing the thesis.

- Advising the student on research ethics and integrity, including obtaining ethical approval.
- Advising the student on facilities required for the research and supporting the student in accessing these.
- Advising the student on how to prepare for annual progression review and the viva voce examination.
- Agreeing the frequency of supervision meetings and the means of recording meetings (see 2.1).
- Organising regular meetings to discuss all matters relating to the student's research, including feedback on written work.
- Advising on the student's professional development needs at the start of the programme and reviewing these throughout the student's studies.
- Encouraging students to develop transferable skills and to attend appropriate training courses where possible.
- Advising the student on where to find appropriate sources of additional support and signposting University student support services details included in section 6.3.
- Ensuring the student is aware of relevant health and safety policies and procedures.
- Encouraging the student to become an active member of the research community, for example by advising on attendance at relevant conferences and supporting the student in seeking funding for such events.
- Implementing any agreed adjustments for students registered with the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS).
- Discussing any relevant Intellectual Property (IP) (see 6.13 below).



The supervisors should revisit the distribution of supervisory responsibilities again at the student's annual progression review and at other times as necessary.

## 1.3 The College Committee

Each College has a specific committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters. The committee's name may vary by College, but it will have overall responsibility for postgraduate research supervision, annual progression review decisions (based on recommendations from Schools) and authorising periods of leave or changes to study periods. In practice, Colleges may delegate some of these decision-making responsibilities to Schools (for example the Postgraduate Director or Head of Graduate School). The College Committee also acts as the Board of Examiners for postgraduate research degree awards. Throughout this document the term "College Committee" is used to refer to all these roles.



## 2. Student-Supervisor relationship

The student-supervisor relationship is vital to all research degrees. Therefore close contact between supervisors and students is essential.

Respect, trust, confidence and fairness are essential elements of the student-supervisor relationship. Most interpersonal problems between students and supervisors can be avoided if students and supervisors contribute responsibly and professionally to their working relationship by being respectful, courteous, punctual and conscientious.

The University's Dignity and Respect policy promotes a positive working and studying culture which every student and member of staff contributes to and within which they can fulfill their potential.

[Dignity and Respect](#)

### 2.1 Contact and supervisory meetings

Students rely on contact with their supervisors for guidance and intellectual input to their research. Supervision meetings provide time for discussing all matters relating to the student's research and development, including feedback on written work. Meetings and regular contact may take place face-to-face or online.

If the Principal Supervisor is absent for more than six consecutive weeks, the College will ensure alternative supervision arrangements are in place.

#### **Agreeing the purpose and frequency of supervisory meetings**

Students must maintain contact with their supervisor as required and at least twice in every three month period. Students on a Student visa should demonstrate active and consistent academic engagement with their studies at least every 30 days (as noted in the Sponsored Research Student Engagement Guidance). If possible, all meaningful engagement should be recorded and monitored, with a minimum of 12 engagement points during the active research phase of their programme.

[International Student Attendance and Engagement Policy](#)

It is important that both student and supervisory team agree, at the start of the programme, how often meetings will be held and the purpose of meetings. It is important that students can easily contact their supervisors for advice, so supervisors may also be available for additional non-scheduled meetings. Students can initiate meetings but supervisors need to ensure that the minimum contact requirements are met.

The amount of contact between student and supervisors will vary depending on the length of the programme, how the research is being done and how much support the student needs. For example, there may be more meetings in the first few months when the research project is being defined.

Sometimes supervision will be at distance, for example if the student is working away from Edinburgh or is on a recognised distance learning programme. The supervisory team and the student will need to make sure arrangements are in place to support distance supervision, for example internet access and consider any time differences at the student's location.

### **Keeping records of supervisory meetings**

Recording supervisory meetings helps the student and supervisory team keep track of actions and decisions. Therefore, students should provide their Principal Supervisor with a written note including:

- The date and purpose of the meeting.
- Any problems identified.
- Action points.



## **2.2 Changes in the supervisory relationship**

Changes to the supervisory relationship(s) may occur for a range of reasons, including, but not limited to: changes in scope or topic of project, supervisor(s) exiting the university, or a breakdown in the supervisory relationship. In cases where students feel they would be better suited with a different supervisor because of reasons connected to the topic or training needs, students should discuss this with their current supervisory team. If the issues remain unresolved, the student should contact their School Postgraduate Research Director.

If there are significant challenges within the supervisory relationship, students or supervisors can contact their School Postgraduate Research Director. If the issues remain unresolved, then the School Postgraduate Research Director, supervisor or the student can contact the College Postgraduate Office. University staff will respect confidentiality and limit disclosures to as few colleagues as necessary to resolve the problem.

If there appears to be a breakdown in the student-supervisor relationship and problems are not able to be resolved locally, the supervisor, the student and the School/Postgraduate Research Director should consider approaching College for additional support and advice. The University will always try to resolve conflict in a positive way. That means that the parties who are in conflict should give informed consideration to finding a mutually acceptable way of resolving the conflict. Schools can request assistance with this process from the College, for example through Deans of Postgraduate Research.

Support for students experiencing problems with the supervisory relationship is available from The Advice Place.

[The Advice Place](#)

## 3. Annual progression review

Annual progression review meetings provide an opportunity to monitor progress, identify challenges and support students in maximising their chance of successfully completing on time.

For students to benefit fully from annual progression reviews it is important that supervisors provide constructive criticism about the student's work.

Annual progression reviews provide a formal record of how the research project and thesis are going and recognition of student achievements. They also offer a structured opportunity to discuss students' professional development and career aims, and identify any training needs.



### 3.1 Annual progression review process

#### Timescale

The first review takes place within nine to 12 months of matriculation. By then students will have independently produced an identifiable body of work that can be assessed.

Progress is then assessed annually until thesis submission (or more frequently if recommended by the Postgraduate Director for an individual student - see below). The timescales are the same for full and part-time students.

#### Process

- The annual review process is supported by an online system which students can access via the MyEd portal and staff via the EUCLID system.
- The student is entitled to any adjustments if registered and agreed by DLSS.
- The process begins when the student is notified by a system-generated email that their annual review form report is ready to complete. Once the student has completed their part, the supervisors complete their sections.

- The student prepares a presentation or report, including a forward plan of their work, before the meeting, with help from the supervisor(s) if needed.
- The review will be conducted by a panel which will normally include all members of the supervisory team and may include at least one reviewer or panel member external to the supervisory team as appointed by the School. Changes to panel membership may be made in exceptional circumstances, with the permission of the College.
- The student attends a review meeting where they may need to give an oral presentation and the panel will review the student's presentation or report. (Students studying at distance may choose to attend annual progression review meetings in person. If this is not possible meetings may take place online.)
- The panel will decide whether they think the student can progress to their next year, and will provide the student with feedback.
- The supervisors will advise the School Postgraduate Director (or Head of the Graduate School) regarding the formal progression recommendation for submission to the College Committee for its approval. The student, supervisors, reviewer and School Postgraduate Director, or Head of Graduate School, then sign-off the online report before the supervisors' and Directors' progression recommendation is submitted to the College Committee for its approval (students cannot participate in the progression decision-making process).
- If the panel identifies concerns about a student's progress following any review, then it can recommend several different ways forward (see 3.2).

## **What is reviewed**

Programme handbooks will give information on annual progression review arrangements but in addition to discussing progress on the student's thesis, some of the things that reviews may include are:

- A timetable for progress agreed by the student and supervisory team.
- A record of whether deadlines have been met.
- The results of any taught elements of the programme.
- The student's report on any programme of skills training they have undertaken to support their research and any transferable skills development they have undertaken.

## **Reviewing supervision arrangements**

Sometimes a student's research changes direction and may move away from the supervisors' expertise. The annual progression review lets supervisors consider their own capacity to deal with any new research area. It also provides an opportunity for the supervisory team to revisit the distribution of supervisory responsibility. If different expertise is needed to support the student, the School can recommend a change in supervisors to the College Committee.

## **Guidance and regulations**

Guidance for students on completing their online annual progression review is available on Student Systems' website.

[Postgraduate research annual review](#)



Guidance for supervisors on the annual progression review system and their role is available on Student Systems' website.

#### [PGR Supervision annual reviews](#)

The regulations on annual progression review, including the recommendations that can be made following a review, are in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

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

## 3.2 Problems with progress

Postgraduate research study is challenging and sometimes students may experience problems making progress. To help support students, it is important for supervisors and students to be open about any difficulties they foresee with successful completion. There are various options available to support students experiencing problems with progress and University student support services may be able to help with non-academic problems.

A supervisor who thinks that progress has been consistently unsatisfactory should discuss the problem with the student and follow this up with a written record of the discussion for the student. Unsatisfactory progress will also be noted in annual reports, and flagged for remedial action.

If a student is having difficulties making progress with their programme of study, this should be identified during the annual progression review. If the annual progression review panel identifies that

a student is not making satisfactory progress, then the Postgraduate Director or Head of Graduate School, in consultation with the supervisors may recommend one of the following:

- Deferment of a decision (part-time students' first year review only).
- That a further (repeat) review takes place within three months.
- Registration for a different postgraduate research or taught degree.
- Exclusion from study (when there are no other practical options).

Supervisors will provide students with a written explanation of their assessment in these cases.

The annual progression review may occasionally record serious problems, or recommend exclusion from study. If the supervisors and Director are recommending exclusion, the College will consider the recommendations in line with the University's Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Study (see Section 5.6).

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

#### [University Procedure for withdrawal and exclusion from study](#)

## 4. Thesis preparation and assessment

Writing up and submitting the thesis in line with the timescales set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations or programme handbook should be the priority in a student's final year.

### 4.1 The thesis

Students must submit a thesis representing their research and findings. Some submissions will be in alternative formats to the traditional thesis. The Postgraduate Degree Regulations and programme handbook specify any further requirements for designs, composition, artworks or performances and their display, presentation and documentation.

Additional guidance on some specific aspects of the thesis format and presentation, such as the requirement for a lay summary, completing the signed declaration, including publications in the thesis and thesis format is available on the University website.

[Academic policies and regulations for research students](#)

[Postgraduate Research Thesis Guidance](#)

### 4.2 Thesis preparation

In preparation for thesis submission, student and supervisor should agree a timetable for completing the thesis.

The maximum thesis length is set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations. While the University's regulations do not stipulate a minimum length, Schools or Colleges may have additional guidance on expectations which supervisors will be able to advise on.

Thesis regulations including notice of intention to submit, format, previously published material and the signed declaration are set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

More information on typical milestones and support in preparing the thesis is available on the Doctoral College webpages.

[Doctoral College](#)

## Thesis requirements

The criteria for the award of research degrees as set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations or otherwise agreed by the Senate Education Committee are that the thesis must:

- Be the student's own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised clearly on the declarations page of the thesis, and must not have been presented for any other degree except as specified on the declarations page.
- Present a coherent body of work.
- Make an original and significant contribution to knowledge in the field of study.
- Relate particular research projects to the general body of knowledge in the field and show adequate knowledge of relevant literature.
- Demonstrate critical judgement of the student's own work and that of other scholars in the field.
- Present the results of the research in a critical and scholarly way.
- Contain material worthy of publication.
- Demonstrate that any publications included in the thesis are the students own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised clearly on the declarations page.
- Be understandable to a scholar in the same field.
- Be presented in a clear, consistent and accessible format.

More information and advice on writing up your thesis can be found on the Doctoral College Postgraduate Researcher and Career Development website.

[Doctoral College](#)

## Additional information

More information on thesis submission, including thesis submission forms, is available on the University website.

[Doctoral thesis submission](#)

The University's [Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#)

## 4.3 Thesis submission

Students should complete a Notice of Intention to Submit form, along with a thesis abstract and Access to Thesis and Publication of Abstract form at least two months prior to submission. Pre-submission forms are submitted to the College Office. Once the thesis is ready for submission, the student presents it digitally to the College Office including the abstract and lay summary. Supervisors and Graduate Schools will be able to advise students how to submit their thesis. Thesis submission forms are also available online.

[Doctoral thesis submission](#)

## 4.4 Thesis assessment

Assessment regulations, including examiner roles and responsibilities, conduct of assessment, thesis regulations and assessment decisions are set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

[Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

All research degrees (apart from MSc by Research) are assessed in two stages; the initial report by the examiners followed by an oral exam or viva voce, often referred to as the "viva".

Each thesis is assessed by at least one External and one Internal Examiner, who are appointed by the College. Internal Examiners are members of University staff. External Examiners are from outside the University and have specialist knowledge relevant to the thesis.

### **Examiners' initial report**

Before the viva, the examiners are asked to assess the thesis on the grounds set out in the regulations and as part of their report to consider:

- Is the thesis an original work that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of study?
- 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?

### **The viva**

The expectation is that viva is normally held within three months of thesis submission, however the exact date will depend on:

- When the Notice of Intention to Submit form is submitted by the student.
- When the thesis is submitted by the student.
- How long it takes to select and appoint examiners.
- How long the examiners require to examine the thesis.
- When everyone involved is available to meet for the oral examination, including any visa restrictions on the student's availability.

The examiners and the student attend the viva. The Internal Examiner is responsible for ensuring the arrangements for the exam are made and for chairing the exam. Where a non-examining Chair has been appointed, the Internal Examiner will notify the student if this is the case. The role of the non-examining Chair is included in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees. The examiners may use the viva to establish a student's knowledge of their field of research, to establish the extent of any collaboration and to confirm that the work is the student's own.

The viva may be held in person in Edinburgh, or, with prior permission from the College, online or in hybrid format.

Where a student has adjustments agreed with DLSS, the relevant adjustments must be accommodated within the viva and by the examiners.

[PhD by Research oral examinations by video link](#)

[DLSS Viva good practice guide](#)



## Examiner recommendations

At the end of the viva, the examiners may, if they have agreed a recommendation, indicate their recommendation to the student. It is important to note that this recommendation is not final and is subject to approval by the College Postgraduate Research Committee, and examiners will make this clear to the student. Possible examiner recommendations after the viva:

- a) Award PhD/Doctorate
- b) Minor corrections needed (see 4.5)
- c) Additional oral examination needed – no further work on the thesis required, or stated minor corrections (see 4.5)
- d) Additional work on the thesis – no oral re-examination needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate (see 4.5)
- e) Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate (see 4.6)
- f) Award MPhil
- g) Award MPhil following Minor Corrections (see 4.6)
- h) Substantial Work on Thesis Needed before Resubmission and oral examination for MPhil (see 4.6)
- i) Award MSc by Research
- j) Fail

## 4.5 Thesis corrections

The Internal Examiner will assess corrections and the External Examiner may also ask to see corrections before the degree is awarded.

### Minor corrections

After the viva, the examiners may ask students to make minor corrections to the thesis. These may be editorial corrections or to address minor weaknesses before the award is confirmed. Corrections will need to be submitted for assessment within three months (or four if a further oral exam is recommended).

### Additional work

After the viva, the examiners may ask students to carry out additional work on the thesis, which may require further supervision. These corrections, which will be stipulated by the examiners, will entail more work than is required for minor corrections. The examiners will set the period within which this work must be submitted for assessment, but submission will normally be within six months. Failure to complete corrections will lead to a student not qualifying for their degree.

## 4.6 Thesis resubmission

Following the viva, the examiners may ask students to carry out further work on the thesis and to resubmit it for the same or a different degree. If resubmission for a different degree is recommended, the examiners may require minor corrections (see 4.5) or more substantial work on the thesis. Where more substantial work is required the examiners will stipulate what is needed and set a period for resubmission. Supervisors will guide students through the necessary steps to meet the examiners' requirements and continue to provide supervision as needed.

Students will get a clear written statement from the examiners, approved by the College Committee, of what revisions are required.

The examiners will assess the resubmitted thesis against the written statement on re-examination, and will not introduce any new criticisms of previously examined material.

The College Office will be able to advise on the resubmission process.

## 4.7 Final thesis submission

After students have successfully completed their thesis assessment, they must submit the final electronic copy of their thesis to the College Office within 30 days. An electronic copy must also be deposited with the Library. More information on final thesis submission is available from the College Office. Information on electronic submission is available from the Library.

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



## 5. Absences and concessions

Sometimes students may need to have time away from the University or from their studies.

This section gives advice on ways the University can support students through a variety of situations that may impact on their study.

### 5.1 Leave of absence

Students studying on campus in Edinburgh sometimes need to conduct part of their research away from Edinburgh. This is referred to as a leave of absence. Students who want a leave of absence should talk to their Principal Supervisor, who will be able to advise on obtaining permission.

A leave of absence should:

- Be related to the research programme.
- Not be detrimental to the research and the student's development and participation in the University's academic community.
- Not conflict with any other requirement of the student's programme of study.
- Not conflict with any obligations for the student to be available for on-campus activity.
- Have a working timetable agreed by supervisors and student.
- Be accompanied by an agreed method for submitting written work

and receiving feedback, and for supervisory meetings, established by the supervisors and student.

- Be consistent with any funder requirements.

Further information on how leave of absence is approved, and student support arrangements during leave, is available from the College Office. Leave of absence does not apply to students on recognised distance learning programmes.

### Leave of absence for international students

Student visa holders are normally expected to carry out all of their study on campus in Edinburgh. However, in some cases they may need to study at another location; for compulsory and optional activities related to their programme. In these cases, students should apply for a leave of absence. The University will continue to sponsor student visas during the leave of absence, providing it can maintain sponsor licence duties, and student Student visas will remain valid. Leave of absence for reasons that are not directly related to studies are not permitted under the conditions of Student visas. Advice is available from the Student Immigration Service.

[Student Immigration Service](#)

## 5.2 Interruptions of study

Authorised interruption of study, usually referred to as “interruption”, is available for students who are unable to study for a while. There are a range of reasons why a student may seek an interruption, including, but not limited to: family-related leave, health, internships, etc. Students should notify their supervisor as soon as the need for an interruption arises. Following discussion with their supervisor, students are responsible for completing and submitting a form to request the interruption. Interruptions will be authorised when there is good reason and examples of what is considered good reason are given in the University policy on authorised interruptions of study.

Information on how to request an interruption, important considerations and where to find further advice are available in the Authorised Interruption of Study Policy.

### [Authorised Interruption of Study Policy](#)

An interruption of study may have an impact on Student visa holders. Advice is available from the Student Immigration Service.

### [Student Immigration Service](#)

## 5.3 Extensions of study

The University expects that the thesis will be submitted for assessment within the period stated in the programme handbook. Extensions to this period are available in exceptional circumstances and must be agreed by the Postgraduate Director or Head of Graduate School and approved by the College Committee. For example, an extension may be available if unforeseen difficulties beyond the student’s control, have held up the research or completion of the thesis. A

strong case is required, including a plan for completion, and must be supported by the Principal Supervisor.

To request an extension:

- The Principal Supervisor submits the request.
- The academic reasons for the extension, are stated in the request.
- A plan of work towards submitting the thesis, with milestones and specific dates agreed with the Principal Supervisor is included in the request.

Important things to consider when requesting an extension:

- It must be made before the end of the student’s maximum submission date (for example, within four years for a full-time PhD).
- It may have an impact on Student visa holders.
- It may have an impact on student funding.
- It may have an impact on council tax (for example discounts and exemptions).
- There are restrictions to the amount of time that can be requested for extension – these are set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations.

For further information and advice:

For Student visa holders – [Student Immigration Service](#)

[The Advice Place](#) – free, impartial advice for students

University [Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#)



## 5.4 Adverse circumstances affecting studies and assessment

Sometimes students will experience adverse circumstances beyond their control that significantly impact on their research performance, attendance or assessment submissions.

The University has an Exceptional Circumstances Policy which applies to taught components of a programme. However, for most postgraduate research students, the University offers other support mechanisms if they are experiencing circumstances that affect their ability to engage with their studies.

Students should discuss any circumstances affecting their ability to engage with their studies with their Principal Supervisor first.

Support for students with adverse circumstances that are disrupting their studies can be offered through authorised interruption or extension of study (see sections 5.2 and 5.3). However, there may be times when significant adverse circumstances affect a student's ability to participate in an assessment, for example annual progression review or oral examination. Where this occurs, it may be possible to reschedule or change the format of the meeting or exam.

The College Committee may also take into account any significant adverse circumstances when considering recommendations from an annual progression review or oral examination. Therefore, it is important that students notify their Principal Supervisor, Postgraduate Director or Postgraduate Adviser in writing of any significant adverse circumstance before the relevant assessment (for example annual progression review or oral examination) or the College Committee meeting.

Examples of circumstances that might have a significant impact include:

- Bereavement through the death of a close relative, partner or close personal friend.
- Serious short-term physical illness or injury; this includes sudden worsening or a flare-up of a chronic physical health issue.
- Serious short-term mental illness; this includes sudden worsening or a flare-up of a chronic mental health issue.
- Serious illness of a close relative (such as parent, child or spouse/partner) or a person who is dependent upon the student for their care.
- Victim of a crime whose impact upon a student is serious; this includes the experience of sexual or gender-based violence and harassment.
- Adjustments for a disability have not been made in time for a course assessment, where the student can demonstrate that the delay is not their responsibility.
- Exceptional personal circumstances, e.g. events that result in a serious impact on a student's ability to engage with academic work during the assessment period in question; this includes unexpected changes to caring responsibilities, and breakdown of a long-term relationship.
- For students in paid employment, an exceptional and significant change in their employment commitments, where this is beyond their control.
- Other exceptional circumstances that have affected, or will affect the student's ability to meet a deadline or complete an assessment. Such circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may include military service, military conflict, natural disaster or extreme weather conditions.
- Students taking part in elite level sporting events may be permitted to request extensions to coursework deadlines under the Performance Sport policy.



Examples of circumstances that are unlikely to be accepted include:

- A long-term or chronic health condition (including mental ill-health) which has not worsened recently or for which the University has already made a reasonable adjustment.
- A minor short-term illness or injury (e.g. a common cold), which would not reasonably have had a significant adverse impact on the student's performance in an assessment or ability to complete the assessment on time.
- Holidays, including getting married, attendance at weddings, festivals and similar events.
- Loss of work not backed up, computer or printing problems.
- Poor working practices such as:
  - o accidental submission of an incorrect document, wrong file type or a corrupted file;
  - o claim of technical issues on behalf of the University with no proof of an error message/ system failure on a University system (e.g. Learn);
  - o poor time management;
  - o misunderstanding of the examination timetable or instructions on assessment deadlines.
- Deadlines for work or exams being set close together.

For taught courses taken by postgraduate research students, the University's Exceptional Circumstances Policy applies.

[Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#)

## 5.5 Medical leave, emergency and compassionate leave

Some funders will provide paid medical leave for absences covered by a medical certificate for a specified maximum duration. Students with a stipend that is funded or administered by the University will be entitled to provision of medical leave on the same terms as UKRI-funded students. Additionally, some funders will provide paid or unpaid short-term time off for emergencies and/or compassionate leave, such as for (but not limited to) bereavement, pregnancy loss, baby loss, serious illness or injury of a dependent, to give or arrange care for a dependent with a long-term care need, or dealing with emergency situations. Students should refer to the terms and conditions of their scholarship for details of included provision and should discuss entitlement to paid leave with their Graduate School. Where appropriate, paid leave should be accompanied by an Authorised Interruption of Study (section 5.2).

## 5.6 Withdrawal from studies

Withdrawal from studies is a voluntary decision by the student. Any student may withdraw from the University at any point in the year. There may be situations where it is possible for students to return to study, however, before applying to withdraw, students are strongly advised to consult their Principal Supervisor and to consider the implications of withdrawal, including their eligibility for an exit award. More information is available in:

[Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies](#)

## 5.7 Exclusion from studies

While it is very rare for students to be excluded from study, there are some circumstances in which the University will consider this option. These include:

- Where a student has not demonstrated satisfactory academic progress at an annual progression review.
- Where a student has not submitted a thesis by the end of their maximum period of study.
- Where a student has not met any engagement requirements as set out in their programme handbook.

Depending on the reason for exclusion, a student who has been excluded may be eligible to apply for reinstatement on the same programme of study. A student who has been excluded for lapse of time, debt, non-matriculation, or lack of visa permission may ask the College to reinstate their registration at a later date to permit examination of a completed thesis.

More information about all the potential grounds for exclusion is available in:

[Postgraduate Degree Regulations \(45\)](#)



## 5.8 Vacation leave

Students can take up to eight weeks' vacation time in a year. Students should advise their supervisor and Graduate School when taking vacation leave. There is no need to apply for an interruption of study when taking vacation leave.

Vacation leave provides an opportunity for breaks throughout the year. Students who wish to use their full vacation leave entitlement for the year all at one time, for example to undertake an internship, placement or employment opportunity, are advised to discuss this with their supervisor.

## 5.9 Student maternity and parental leave

Students who are pregnant, about to become a parent or guardian, or adopt a child during their study should let their supervisor know so they can provide academic advice. Flexible arrangements, such as time off, modifications to attendance or interruption of study, can be put in place to support students who are to become parents and more information is available in the University student maternity policy.

[Student maternity and parental leave policy](#)

## 6. Other support and information

The University offers a wide range of support services, resources and information, including academic support, wellbeing resources and skills training,

### 6.1 Resolving problems

Supervisors are expected to be the first point of contact for students if any problems arise and will either be able to offer advice themselves or direct the student to other sources of advice. Students are expected to raise problems as they occur to allow their School to address them or provide support, rather than only raising concerns after an unexpected result, e.g. an unsuccessful viva.

Concerns and complaints can be directed to any member of staff, and they will be handled appropriately. If a student feels unable to confide in or raise matters with their supervisor or has concerns regarding their supervision itself, support can still be sought elsewhere. Each School may have a different structure, but students are encouraged to contact their Postgraduate Advisor if the subject area has one or alternatively to contact the School Postgraduate Research Director/Head of the Graduate School. Contact details of key School staff are available in doctoral student handbooks and local webpages.

If the issues cannot be resolved by the above, the student may then consult with the College Postgraduate Office. Supervisors can also seek help in resolving any issues by following the same routes.

If the student is still unsure of who to contact about a complaint,

the Complaints Team can also be contacted.

#### Complaints

Students can access free, impartial, and confidential advice from The Advice Place, run by the Students' Association.

#### The Advice Place

### 6.2 Doctoral student handbooks

The School Office will provide students with any relevant handbooks. Doctoral student handbooks are an important source of information for students. They are part of the University's academic governance framework and include programme-specific information on:

- Supervision arrangements.
- Thesis requirements.
- Research skills training.
- Professional development.
- Teaching opportunities.
- Research culture.

Handbooks also include information on programme organisation, assessment and feedback, key contacts and locations, student support services, opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experiences, attendance requirements, student representation structure, data protection, health and safety, and student wellbeing information.

## 6.3 Student support services

The University, Colleges, Schools and Students' Association provide a comprehensive range of support services to enable students to make the most of their time as part of the University community. Many student support units offer online as well as face to face services, although the range accessible to distance students may differ from those for on-campus students.

### 6.3.1 Students' Association

All students, including Postgraduate Research (PGR students, automatically become members of the Students' Association when they join the University. As members, PGR students have access to a wide range of activities and services including student representation, student-led societies and peer support groups, and our free and impartial Advice Place.

For more information, visit our Welcome Desk at Potterrow. Students can find information about student groups and peer support on the EUSA website.

#### EUSA

#### **The Advice Place**

The Advice Place is a free, impartial and confidential advice service open to all students and run by the Students' Association. Their professional advisors can offer advice and support on a range of topics including funding, accommodation, access to healthcare, and academic life.

#### The Advice Place

#### **Student voice**

The Students' Association supports over 1300 student representatives who ensure that students have a voice at the University and create positive change on

the issues that matter to students.

Each year, student representatives are elected or volunteer, and after receiving training from the Students' Association, they work with staff across the University to enhance their student experience.

PGR students are encouraged to engage with student representation – whether by volunteering as a representative, engaging in elections, or providing feedback to their representatives – to ensure that the Students' Association and the University are responding effectively to the concerns of PGR students.

#### Student Voice

### 6.3.2 Career development

Research graduates enter many different careers both within and out of higher education. To ensure students make satisfying, well-informed career decisions the University encourages PGRs to explore their career options, and to consider their career priorities in the context of professional and personal priorities, throughout their study.

Early engagement with career thinking will enable postgraduate research students to develop further as researchers, and prepare for future success, whatever their career trajectory. PGR students should be encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities they will have to gain experience, develop skills, access relevant training, engage with employers, and build their professional networks to prepare for their future career. Students are encouraged to reflect on and record their experiences so they can consider areas of strength and interest, which will help them to identify suitable professional development opportunities and to make a successful career transition.

Supplementing this with rigorous and ongoing reflection will help them appraise career options, and assess their own suitability in the context of skills, values and strengths.

The Development Needs Analysis (DNA) is a useful tool to help with this reflection and with setting individual goals for career development during a research degree.

#### Development Needs Analysis

PGR students can get support with every aspect of career management, culminating in a successful job search and application strategies. Students can expect: bespoke package of career management support and resources, tailored workshops and webinars, access to employer events and fairs, as well as individual career consultations.

#### Careers Services: PhDs and MRes Students

### **6.3.3 Academic language development**

English Language Education (ELE) provides a range of academic writing courses designed specifically for PhD students to develop their English academic language and literacies throughout their doctoral journey.

In the first year, a short course is available for PhD students working on the written component of their first-year review. In the second year, students can take short courses focused on areas such as reviewing literature or qualitative research. In the later stages of the PhD, further short courses are available for those working on later-stage qualitative thesis chapters or on scientific research.

Supervisors may refer PhD students to any ELE course if they would like them to be prioritised for places.

ELE also offers bookable one-to-one tutorials through its Graduate Writing Centre.

#### ELE Information

#### Courses for PGR students

#### Graduate Writing Centre

#### Referring a student

### **6.3.4 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. In addition to electronic resources, printed library materials are digitised where possible for students undertaking online or distance learning.

#### Library services

#### Using the Library for online learning

### **Academic Support Librarians**

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.
- Help students' with research by arranging one-to-one advice sessions.
- Advise on research data management.

#### Academic Support Librarians

### **Heritage Collections**

The University holds internationally-significant heritage and cultural collections of many different types, from medieval manuscripts to historic musical instruments to contemporary art, and more. Access is provided across several sites, including the Centre for Research Collections, School of Scottish Studies Archive & Library, New College Library, and St Cecilia's Concert Hall and Music Museum.

#### Heritage Collections



### 6.3.5 Computing resources

Information Services (IS) provides a wide range of advice on all aspects of computing and IT.

[IS information for students](#)

[IS information for researchers and teaching staff](#)

#### Email

All students are provided with a University email account and this is used as the official means of communication.

[University policy on the use of email for contacting students](#)

#### Computing facilities

Schools will ensure that students have access to specialised computing facilities where required, and receive appropriate training. Training will cover how to access and use computing facilities relevant to particular degree programmes and research projects.

The Research Data Service offers tools, support and training to students working with research data. Solutions for research data management and all of their data-related requirements.

[Research Data Service](#)

Research Support in the Information Services Group (ISG) offers everything students need to know about managing and publishing their research.

[Research support](#)

### 6.3.6 Disability and Learning Support Service

The Disability and Learning Support Service provides information and advice to disabled students and staff supporting disabled students. The Service:

- Determines a range of reasonable adjustments based on assessment of student needs.
- Supports students to apply for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) or University funding if funded support is required.
- Provides a range of student support assistants (for example notetaker, library assistant, proofreader, mental health mentor, Specific Learning Differences Tutor).
- Advises supervisors and professional services staff on supporting disabled students and specific support adjustments to study, examination and assessment procedures.

Students with conditions that will impact on study should contact the Disability and Learning Support Service as soon as possible. (\*Includes dyslexia, long term mental health problems, students on the autistic spectrum, as well as physical and sensory impairments.)

[Disability and Learning Support Service: support we provide](#)

[Disability and Learning Support Service: information for students](#)

Regulations on “Reasonable Adjustments” to assessments for disabled students are included in the University’s assessment regulations.

[Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

## 6.4 Wellbeing support services

Postgraduate research study can be stressful at times. To support students to manage their wellbeing, the University provides a variety of services:

- Chaplaincy: for all faiths and none, who offer a variety of wellbeing support including mindfulness, tai chi, a PhD book club and the Listening Service
- Disability and Learning Support Services (DLSS) (see above)
- Student Counselling Service for all students short-term counselling
- Student Wellbeing Service with a dedicated Wellbeing Adviser in your academic area that you can access through your School or by self-referral
- An NHS University Medical Centre and independent pharmacy on central campus

### Student Wellbeing Services

#### 6.4.1 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 difficulties, understand themselves better and find ways of managing their situation. Options are available for meeting online, by phone or email, and in person over multiple campuses.

### Student Counselling Service

#### 6.4.2 Health and wellbeing

Details of a range of services provided for students by the University and throughout Edinburgh for physical and mental wellbeing are available on the University's Student website and follow our Instagram.

### Health and wellbeing

## 6.5 Research and skills training and support for students

The University's Doctoral College is a coordinating structure for all postgraduate researchers (PGRs), supervisors and relevant staff, designed to enhance and support the postgraduate student experience. You can find out more about the Doctoral College from the web pages.

### Doctoral College

The University provides information, support and training for research, digital and transferable skills. These skills are vital for development as an independent researcher and important for life and career after the degree.

Research, digital and transferable skills are often developed as an integral part of supervision and engagement with the research community. Some students may also be able to access credit-bearing research methods courses and in some cases these are a required part of a student's programme of study.

Digital, transferable and professional skills development training is provided by Colleges, Schools, the Institute the Doctoral College, Careers, Skills and Student Development, the Students' Association, Edinburgh Innovations and Information Services Group. More information on the range of support available can be found on the Doctoral College web pages.

### Doctoral College

Students whose programmes of studies are delivered in partnership with other universities (for example via Doctoral Training Centres) may also have access to training opportunities delivered through those partnerships. Students also have access to online and University Library skills development resources, and digital skills development resources through LinkedIn Learning, an online skills development service.

### University LinkedIn Learning information pages

Students are strongly encouraged to take the initiative in their own development and record their 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 online training to develop research, digital and transferable skills.
- Use of the library and online resources.
- Engagement with the research community including presenting at seminars, tutoring and demonstrating, producing publications and attending conferences.

The University provides resources, training and support for students on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, which all students should review

### Equality and Diversity

The Doctoral College webpages also provide useful information and resources for postgraduate researcher skills development.

### Doctoral College

Annual progression reviews take account of what training and development opportunities students have undertaken and offer an opportunity to discuss future needs.

## **6.6 Training and support for supervisors and examiners**

The University provides training and events to support supervisors in maintaining expertise needed to perform their supervisory role. New supervisors are required to complete the online course, 'Fundamentals of PhD Supervision' and this should be renewed every five years. Additionally, supervisors are expected to attend a College or School specific session to

discuss local level information and scenarios. Further information on the course is available online and more information about School or College sessions can be found by contacting School Postgraduate Research Administrators or Directors.

### Fundamentals of PhD Supervision

There is also an online resource, 'Fundamentals of PhD Examination' available to support PhD examiners in developing their understanding of the examination process and their role.

### Fundamentals of PhD Examination

The Academic Development Team runs a number of supports for PGR supervisors, including: optional workshops and events, UKCGE supervisor accreditation support, and various toolkits and resources.

### Academic Development Team PGR Supervision

The Academic Development Team also offers a University-wide research supervisor community of practice (CoP). This is an optional community for supervisors to share resources, stay up to date on events, and build community over their supervision practice.

### University-wide Research Supervisor Community of Practice

The Disability and Learning Support Service runs regular online Mental Health Training sessions for staff and the Student Counselling Service hosts a range of support materials, training videos and e-learning for all staff.

The Doctoral College web pages provide further information on the range of support for supervisors.

### Doctoral College supervisors and examiners

## **6.7 Students working during study**

Work benefits both student and employer, but good self-management is needed to make sure students meet their research commitments. It is also important for students to maintain a good work-life balance.

The University will employ full-time postgraduate research students for no more than an average of 9 hours per week across the academic year (this is University policy), and recommends that students also apply this limit to work with other employers. Students should discuss any proposed employment with their Principal Supervisor.

If students get funding for their research, they must also check whether there are any restrictions or conditions on the amount of work they are allowed to do. Most funders allow some part-time work, particularly in areas relevant to the students' research, and encourage a common sense approach to other paid work.

For Student visa holders, there are additional limits on employment set by the UK Home Office. More information on visa implications for students is available on the University website:

#### Part-time work during studies

More information on combining part-time work with study is available on the Careers Service website:

#### Build experience

The University's Policy for tutors and demonstrators is also available online:

#### Tutors and demonstrators

## 6.8 Fees and funding

### 6.8.1 Paying fees and fee status

Student fees and tuition costs are paid to the University Finance Department and more information on paying fees is available on their website. Tuition fee status and discount information is available on the Scholarships and Student Funding website.

#### Student Academic Fees – Finance Department

#### Tuition fees – Scholarships and Student Funding

### 6.8.2 Scholarships and funding

Information about scholarships and financial support for research students is available on the Scholarships and Student Funding website.

#### Funding for UK students

#### Funding for international students

#### Scholarships and Student Funding

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is the organisation which brings together the seven UK Research Councils. Their website includes links to UKRI research funding information.

#### UK Research and Innovation

## 6.9 Degree and assessment regulations and other University policies

Postgraduate research degrees are governed by the University's Postgraduate Degree Regulations. These include regulations on study and submission periods, leave of absence, interruptions, extensions and withdrawal from study. Supervision regulations and the grounds for award of doctoral degrees are also here, as well as additional programme specific regulations.

The Postgraduate Degree Regulations are in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) website.

#### DRPS

Research degrees are assessed under the University's Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees. These regulations cover the conduct of assessment, including annual progression reviews, thesis assessment and viva, thesis regulations and assessment decisions.

Some research degrees may contain taught elements and these will be assessed under the University's Taught Assessment Regulations.

#### Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

#### Taught Assessment Regulations

In addition to these regulations, students must follow all the other University regulations, policies and procedures. The University's student contract encompasses the policies and regulations that support the partnership between students and staff. Students should familiarise themselves with these documents, particularly those that are most likely to be relevant to postgraduate research study.

#### The student contract

## 6.10 Student appeals

An appeal is a request for reconsideration of a decision that has been taken in relation to academic decisions, exclusion, Code of Student Conduct, fitness to practice, support for study and refusals of applications for authorised interruption of studies. The submission of an appeal does not alter a student's status, pause, or prevent the application of any decision being appealed against. An appeal will not prevent graduation from taking place and can still be considered following an award. An appeal cannot be used to delay or stop a Board/Committee from implementing an academic decision; if a student is required to resubmit work or to be transferred to another programme or award, this will remain unchanged even if an appeal has been submitted and is under consideration.

The Appeal Committee does not remark work, change academic decisions, nor can it overturn University regulations. The only possible outcome of an upheld appeal is for the original decision makers to be asked to reconsider.

The Appeal process is separate to the Complaint Handling Procedure and cannot investigate complaints against the quality of supervision. The appeal process is not intended for retrospective consideration of historical matters and students should not wait to disclose matters such as supervisory concerns or health/disability impact only after an assessment is submitted or a result is known. It is good practice that students raise any concerns at the time they occur.

### **Supervisor role in appeals**

Appeals are handled outside the Schools and Colleges so are external to a supervisor's remit. A supervisor's pastoral role continues after an appeal is lodged, even when the appeal might raise concerns over supervisor conduct. After taking appropriate advice, supervisors can decide whether to support the student in making their appeal. Supervisors may be asked to provide additional information to the appeal team but are not typically informed of outcomes. A supervisor's support does not guarantee an appeal will be upheld.

### **Research students' responsibilities in appeals**

Students must read and be familiar with relevant University policies, regulations, codes of practice and handbooks. Ignorance of information within relevant University policies or regulations is not a ground for appeal.

It is the student's responsibility to submit a piece of work capable of satisfying the relevant examiners and they are solely responsible for the academic quality of their work. Following the guidance of a supervisor carries no guarantee of success in an assessment and therefore, comments of approval or absence of criticism do not constitute grounds for appeal.

If a decision has been made in compliance with the relevant policy, regulation or procedure, a student may not challenge academic judgement simply on the basis of disagreement or disappointment in a decision.

#### Appeals



## 6.11 Complaints

If something goes wrong within the University's responsibility or if you are dissatisfied with the service, students are encouraged to inform us as early as possible by raising a complaint directly with your School or College with a relevant staff member. These are referred to as Stage 1 or frontline complaints. Early notification will allow your School/College to review concerns, respond and possibly provide mitigation or support. If Stage 1/frontline does not resolve matters, you can submit a complaint form (see below) to request that your concerns are investigated at Stage 2 of the procedure by an investigator outside of the local School or College as relevant.

Complaints should be raised within 6 months of the event/reason to complain, otherwise exceptional reasoning must be evidenced for any delay after this 6-month period. It is not good practice for students to only raise issues once an unexpected academic outcome is known as Schools/Colleges should be given the opportunity for early intervention when possible. The complaints process is not intended for historical matters. A complaint cannot be used to challenge or achieve an academic outcome.

The submission of a complaint will not pause, prevent, or circumvent academic decision, award decisions, visa requirements, fees, or other student responsibilities or actions from being required to take place.

Students are encouraged to talk to The Advice Place before submitting a complaint.

[The Advice Place](#)

[Complaints](#)

## 6.12 Student conduct

Advice on expected conduct is also available on the University website.

[Student conduct](#)

### 6.12.1 Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct, including plagiarism and cheating, is covered by the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures and the Code of Student Conduct. More information is available on the University website.

[Academic misconduct](#)

### 6.12.2 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Guidance and advice on the use of AI for PGR students is available on the University website.

[Generative AI Guidelines for Postgraduate Research Students](#)

## 6.13 Intellectual Property (IP)

Intellectual Property (IP) refers to the legal rights relating to the outputs generated by individuals through research, including research carried out by students. These outputs may have the potential to be exploited for commercial or other value. The most common IP rights include copyright, design rights, patents and trademarks. The University's default legal position is that PGR students retain all IP rights over work completed and results generated during their research. However, there are occasions where the University expects to take ownership of IP, including when it is a requirement of a funding agreement, when the research is part of an internship with a collaborative partner, or when the research is part of a larger study or programme of work. Under these circumstances, the student may be asked to assign their IP to the University with appropriate legal support. It is important that PGR students and supervisors consider IP at an early stage of the research with regular discussion throughout the duration of study.

The Supervisor and Research Student IP Checklist has been developed to support supervisors and PGR students. It is expected that conversations are initiated by the supervisor at the start of the PhD period and revisited at least with each annual review. Further guidance is available on the University webpages.

[Policy on Student Intellectual Property Rights](#)

[Intellectual Property Guidance for PGR Students](#)

[IP Checklist for PGRs and Supervisors](#)

## 6.14 Links to useful resources

Alphabetical list of links to University regulations, policies, guidance and other useful information.

[Academic Development PGR Supervision](#)

[The Advice Place](#)

[Assessment regulations](#)

[Authorised Interruption of Study Policy](#)

[Careers Service for PhD and MRes students](#)

[Complaint Procedure](#)

[Computing: Acceptable Use Policy](#)

[Conduct, Student Code](#)

[Contacting Students by Email Policy](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study \(DRPS\)](#)

[Digital Skills and Training](#)

[Dignity & Respect Policy](#)

[Disclosing student information](#)

[Edinburgh University Students' Association](#)

[Equality & Diversity](#)

[Glossary of Terms for Degree Regulations](#)

[Health and Safety](#)

[Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Heritage Collections](#)

[Publications within PGR Research Theses guidance](#)

[Lay Summary guidance](#)

[Library Regulations](#)

[Mental Health \(Student Strategy\)](#)

[New Students website](#)

[No Smoking Policy](#)

[Open Research](#)

[Participatory research and the library](#)

[PhD by Research oral examinations video link](#)

[Plagiarism guidelines](#)

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

[Research support](#)

[Research Data Management Policy](#) [Research](#)

[Data Service](#)

[Research data training and skills](#)

[Research ethics & integrity resources](#)

[Social Media guidelines](#)

[Student website](#)

[Student Appeal Regulations](#)

[Student information pages](#)

[Submitting your final thesis](#)

Wellbeing resources:

[Togetherall](#)

[Sorted App](#)

[Student Counselling Self-Help Resources](#)

