# Code Of Practice For Research Degrees

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This Code sets out the University's mandatory policies and procedures which amplify and articulate the University's Senate Regulations.

## Contents

# 1    Introduction

Brunel University London is a research-intensive institution that provides a stimulating environment for students in which to undertake research. Research students are integral to the research culture of the University and the University is committed to continued enhancement of its research degree provision.

The University offers programmes of research leading to a PhD or MPhil.  The University also offers the Brunel Integrated PhD and professional doctorates.

This Code of Practice has been approved by the University Senate.  The Code sets out the University's mandatory policies and procedures which amplify and articulate the University's Senate Regulations.   Senate Regulation 5 governs all research degrees, and includes regulations relating to the minimum and maximum periods of registration for the various awards and the requirements for award.

This Code summarises the University's requirements for the management of postgraduate research degrees and is designed to provide clear and useful information for postgraduate research degree students and the staff involved in supporting them, both academic and administrative.  It sets out the duties and responsibilities of the student, their supervisory teams and the Departments and Colleges of the University.  It summarises and, where appropriate, provides links to information that enable staff and students to both understand their responsibilities to each other and what they can expect from one another.  The Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with information provided by Departments and Colleges.

All Higher Education providers are expected to have effective processes and procedures in place in relation to research degrees.   The UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B11: Research Degrees, sets out the Expectation which all providers of research degrees are required to meet:

> *Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees*

The Code of Practice applies to all Postgraduate Research students, whether they are studying at the University, at an institution which is part of a collaborative agreement with the University, or whether they are studying wholly or partially away from the University. This ensures that students receive a comparable experience wherever they are studying.

The Code of Practice will be reviewed regularly through the governance structures of the University to ensure that it remains current.

## 2    The Research Environment

The Brunel Strategic Plan 2012-17 has as a key objective to accelerate its research successes by:

- enhancing the quality and impact of research;
- effectively disseminating the outputs of research;
- engaging in innovative, including cross-disciplinary, research activities in line with national agendas;
- significantly increasing research income and diversifying revenue;
- enhancing the research culture for postgraduate research students and early career researchers;
- building critical mass where necessary.

Students are admitted to an environment which provides support for doing and learning about research and where excellent research is occurring. Examples of recognition of this include the University holding a European Commission HR Excellence in Research award for its commitment to supporting researchers, and the Athena SWAN Bronze Award for its efforts to promote the equal representation of women in science-related subjects:

http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/375-450781/UK-universities-receive-European- Commissions-recognition-for-researcher-development.html http://www.brunel.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/news-items/ne_209199 http://www.brunel.ac.uk/research

To celebrate the achievements of research students, the University currently awards a number of prizes, including Vice-Chancellor's prizes for Doctoral Research; Vice-Chancellor's travel prizes; Research Conference Prizes.

The University will give every research student registered with the University and studying in the University access to the following (or equivalent facilities for those based away from the Uxbridge Campus):

- A supervisory team which provides knowledge and experience and with whom the student is able to meet to discuss progress at regular intervals, and from whom he or she can expect good quality guidance and feedback;

- A safe environment in which to work (Universities UK issues guidelines on safety for research students, but Departments will also specify more detailed requirements where necessary);

- Adequate space in which to work and access without unreasonable delay to shared items of equipment;

- Access to all relevant facilities and appropriate research governance framework;

- Access to a programme of skills training as advocated by UK Research Councils, and formal training as necessary in his/her discipline;

- Support to maximise opportunities to present their work in order to enhance their reputation as researchers and build career opportunities;

- Regular opportunities to feed back on the supervision and training received.

Annual Leave

Annual leave should be arranged in consultation with the supervisory team. As guidance, full-time research students are entitled to 30 days annual leave (pro-rata for part-time students).

Reasonable Adjustments

Students with a disability or dyslexia should register with the Disability and Dyslexia Service, which will complete a support profile document to confirm any recommended reasonable adjustments whilst the student is studying, or during examination.

# 3 Expected Submission Dates and Modes of Study

Students can study for a PhD or MPhil/LLM (by research) either full-time or part-time. The Brunel Integrated PhD is studied in full-time mode only. Information regarding available modes of study for Professional Doctorates is published by the University.

Full-time study is suitable for those who are fully funded and/or those who do not anticipate having to pursue substantial periods of paid work during their studies in order to meet fees and maintenance costs. Full-time study should be regarded as being the equivalent of a full-time job.

Part-time study is suitable for students who anticipate having to pursue additional paid work during their studies, or who have other commitments that will limit their ability to study full-time.

Support is provided to students to assist them in completing their studies and submitting their thesis on time.

The table below sets out the minimum and maximum period of registration for each research degree and the University's expectations for the date of submission of the thesis. Students are not normally permitted to submit their theses after their registration period; late submission is allowed only in

exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and International).

| Degree and Mode | Minimum period of registration (*months*) | **Expected Submission Date** *(months)* | Maximum period of registration (*months*) *(Students are expected to be in their 'writing up' period if they have not submitted by the expected submission date)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Full-Time** | | | |
| PhD | 24 | **36** | 48 |
| MPhil/LLM | 12 | **24** | 24 |
| EngD/Brunel Integrated PhD* | 36 | **48** | 60 |
| DrPH | 30 | **36** | 60 |
| **Part-Time** | | | |
| PhD | 48 | **72** | 96 |
| MPhil/LLM | 24 | **36** | 48 |
| DrPH | 48 | **72** | 84 |

*\*Brunel Integrated PhD was formerly known as New Route PhD*

## 4    Fees and Funding

Matters relating to fees are governed by Council Ordinance 11.  Information regarding fees and other matters relating to financial support can be found at: https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/Pages/ForStudents.aspx.

Information regarding possibilities for research scholarships and studentships, as well as information about external sources of funding, can be found at: http://www.brunel.ac.uk/courses/pg/funding/scholarships-bursaries.

For students registering for Doctoral research degrees from October 2015, a standard tuition fee is charged up to the expected submission date.  Following this, students are charged a reduced fee until their maximum period of registration is reached, by which time they must have submitted their thesis. A

student submitting before their expected submission date must pay the full standard fee (equivalent to 36 months for full time and 72 months for part time study), unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example, transfer from another university).   For students registering for Doctoral research degrees prior to October 2015, the fees are charged per annum.  Students are charged a reduced fee following their expected submission date if they have not yet submitted their thesis.

# 5      Application and Admission

## Entry Requirements and General Principles

The University admissions policy states that students are admitted who have the ability to successfully complete their chosen course, whatever their background.   The general University entrance requirement for registration for a research degree is normally a First or Upper Second Class Honours degree and additionally, for a PhD, a Master's degree or equivalent.

Applicants need to have the necessary background and skills to obtain their research degree and also have determination and an understanding of what is needed to complete the degree on time, including the time and financial commitments required.

The University Admissions Office provides advice on the level of a wide range of academic and professional qualifications in order to assist decisions about whether or not to recommend admission.  Recommended levels of English Language competence are also published by the University.

Information is published by the University to inform applicants for research degrees about the specific requirements for an application to their chosen field.   Applicants are required to submit a statement (500-1000 words) about the broad area of study they are interested in as part of the application process.  The detailed project will subsequently be worked up jointly by the student and supervisors.

Specific information regarding the documents required for submission of an application can be found at:  http://www.brunel.ac.uk/courses/admissions/how-to-apply-for-research-courses.

Applicants are likely to be responding to an advertisement or to be writing speculatively based on their knowledge of the University.  It is the responsibility of the Vice-Dean (Education) to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to assess applications, conduct interviews and oversee all matters relating to the supervision and assessment of research

students.

In certain circumstances, students may have had informal contacts with members of staff and have discussed their ideas for their research degree prior to making a formal application.   Any informal contacts are not a guarantee of an offer of a place at the University.  Decisions to admit applicants are made by the relevant College on behalf of the University.

Admission of research students wishing to undertake their studies off-campus is covered in a separate policy, published by the University.

## Application Process

The Head of Department, or authorised member of staff (normally PGR Director), should give preliminary consideration to applications, liaising with potential supervisors.  A decision to reject an application should not be undertaken by one member of academic staff. Grounds for rejection would include, but are not limited to, factors such as: standard of written or oral English; inappropriate academic or professional background; quality of the proposal; insufficient expertise amongst the staff or inadequate/inappropriate resources available to the Department.  The reason for a rejection at any stage must be communicated clearly to the applicant and recorded on the relevant admissions forms.

It is University policy that following preliminary consideration, all applicants must be interviewed by at least two members of academic staff, one of whom should not be part of the proposed supervisory team. The panel will as a minimum consist of the Departmental PGR Director (or his/her delegated member of staff) and the proposed Principal Supervisor.

Interviews should be face-to-face, but in certain circumstances interviews may be undertaken via Skype or other electronic means.  In either case, the appropriate form must be completed as a record of the interview.

Interviews, in conjunction with the written application, need to establish:

- the candidate's potential to undertake original research  in the proposed field of study;

- the candidate's interest and enthusiasm for undertaking a PhD ;

- the applicant is likely to complete within the expected period of time;

- the statement of research interest is the applicant's own;

- the mode of study (i.e. full-time or part-time) is the appropriate one for the applicant;

- the candidate is appropriately qualified and has the necessary English language skills;

- the supervisor and Department has the requisite knowledge, skills, capacity and resources to provide the appropriate level of support and supervision.

Interviews may also need to explore issues such as:

- whether any barriers exist should the applicant be required to work away from the University as part of his/her studies;

- the applicant's employment commitments, if any, and their possible effect on the decision regarding the appropriate mode of study.

Colleges will ensure that details of the interview process, including the names of interview panel members and justification for the recommended outcome are clearly recorded on the appropriate form.

The Vice-Dean (Education) and proposed principal supervisor are required to approve the outcome of the application assessment process. In doing so, the Vice-Dean (Education) is affirming that, as far as reasonably possible, the areas referred to above have been considered, that the necessary resources are available and that it is appropriate to admit the applicant to undertake a research degree.

Decisions regarding applications must be returned to the Admissions Office in a timely manner.

If a Department wishes a period of study undertaken by the applicant at another institution to contribute towards the period of study at Brunel, for example if the applicant wishes to transfer to Brunel from another institution, this should be indicated on the application form and supplemented by a case in support. Such applications require the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and International).

### Offer

The Admissions Office will issue a student number and formal offer of admission when notified of the decision of the Vice-Dean (Education). The offer letter contains information about the student's supervisory team; registration; accommodation; access to facilities and training; fees, funding and prizes and orientation (for international students). The offer letter will indicate the student's start date.

### Registration

Following acceptance of the offer, students will receive a welcome letter, which will confirm their start date and include important information about registration and the four week review (see section 9). It is important for students to register as soon as possible in order to have access to the full range of University services. Registration (and re-enrolment in subsequent years), involves students in completing an on-line registration task which covers all the necessary personal information and finance, including details of any sponsoring organisation. It also ensures that any relevant checks (e.g. Visa checks if necessary) have been made. The registration task includes information about the terms and conditions of the registration. It also registers students with the Union of Brunel Students, unless the student wishes to opt out, and triggers the setting up of students' network accounts.

Students may not normally be registered simultaneously for more than one degree, unless exceptional circumstances apply, for example where a student wishes to register for a programme of research before formal confirmation of the award of a taught postgraduate degree is available.

**The student's start date, which must be the first working day in a month, triggers a number of processes, including the regular supervisory meetings and reviews. It also 'starts the clock' in terms of the student's expected completion date.**

### Appointment of Supervisory Teams

Each student shall be assigned a supervisory team by the Head of Department before an offer of a place on a research degree programme is made.

Supervisory teams shall consist of:

- a Principal Supervisor, with main responsibility for the student;
- a further research-active member of academic staff who will provide supervisory support for the student ;
- a member of staff who is not directly involved in the supervision of the research and will be assigned the role of Researcher Development Advisor;
  external experts or industry representatives may be included as further additional members of the supervisory team where appropriate

All supervisors must be permanent members of the University academic staff or recognised by the University to supervise research students. Recognised supervisors may be appointed for students studying off-campus. Requirements for supervision of students located away from the University are set out in a separate policy regarding the admission and management of research students registered off-campus. All members of the supervisory team are expected to work together to provide appropriate support for the student and should, between them, have appropriate subject expertise and experience.

The names of the supervisory team will be recorded on SITS.

The principal supervisor should:

- be 'research active' according to the disciplinary norms

- have previous experience of a successful PhD supervision, as a Principal Supervisor or a member of a supervisory team.

Departments should give careful thought to the makeup of the supervisory team for each student to ensure an appropriate coverage of topic, methodological, transferable skills training and process/regulatory expertise. Researcher Development Advisors will be expected to make themselves familiar with the training opportunities within the College as well as central provision from the Graduate School and the Brunel Educational Excellence Centre (BEEC).

## Changes to Supervisory Teams

In cases where a Principal Supervisor leaves the University, the Head of Department should appoint another Principal Supervisor having taking into account the views of the student and other members of the supervisory team. This may be another member of the existing supervisory team. Where appropriate and feasible, the possibility of the Principal Supervisor becoming a Recognised Supervisor will be considered. It may be the case that the student wishes to register as a student at the institution to which the Principal Supervisor has moved. In such cases, the Department will take such action as necessary to facilitate this. As guidance, students who are within a year of completion would normally remain at Brunel, whereas students who are within their first year of registration would normally choose to follow their supervisor. However, in all cases, the most appropriate solution will be determined in consultation with the student.

It is essential to the success of students that they establish good working relationships with the supervisory team and that this relationship encompasses students' personal wellbeing as well as their academic progress and professional development. The Graduate School offers regular workshops on working effectively with your supervisor, and can also offer one-to-one advice. Where a student or member/s of the supervisory team has difficulty in establishing such a relationship, they should inform the Head of Department. Additional support or a change of supervisory team members may then be arranged with the agreement of all parties. Students may also approach the Vice-Dean (Education), through student representative structures if necessary to resolve problems regarding the quality of the support provided that cannot otherwise be resolved by the supervisory team or the Head of Department. If the student feels unable to approach staff within the Department or College, it is possible to seek the advice of the Advice and Representation Centre which is an independent service run by the Union of Brunel Students. There is also a mediation service which can be offered as part of the complaints procedure.

Changes to supervisory team members must be recorded on SITS.  This ensures that student records are kept up-to-date.   Reasons for the change must be included.

# 6    Induction

Information regarding induction for new students is provided by the Department and/or College and is tailored to particular subject areas and students.  In addition, central induction is also provided in the form of the Researcher Development Series I: New Researcher Induction, which is delivered twice per year for October and January starts.

As an expectation, the University requires the Departmental PGR Director and the student's supervisory team to devise an appropriate induction programme for the intending student or group of students.  Such a programme would normally include: orientation within the Department(s) and the University (e.g. location of offices of key staff, location of notice- boards, photocopier, fax, Library and Computing Services, UBS, Sports Centre, other University facilities); introduction to the Graduate School; induction tour of the Library; introduction to the University's computing network and its resources; meetings with supervisors, other research teams and other staff and research students (particularly the postgraduate research students' representatives) in the Department.  The International Student Services team can provide special support and advice for overseas students on arrival.   There will also be a detailed discussion with the student about any technical aspects of the proposed programme of work; health and safety; ethics and research integrity and the arrangements for facilities to be made available.

Where necessary, risk assessment training should be provided for students at an appropriate stage.

The Departmental PGR Administrator should contact the subject liaison librarian to notify them of new research students and their research topics so that the librarian can contact them from the outset to establish their needs and introduce them to services.

## Responsibilities of Students

As part of induction, students need to be made aware of their responsibilities whilst a registered student.  These include:

- taking responsibility for their own personal and professional development;
- maintaining (a joint responsibility with supervisory teams) regular contact with supervisors;
- engaging fully with progression reviews and annual reviews;

- setting and keeping to timetables and deadlines, including planning and submitting work and maintaining satisfactory progress with their research;
- making supervisors aware of any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect the progress of their work;
- attending any development opportunities (research-related and other) and training that have been identified as part of their supervisory meetings and progression/annual reviews;
- adhering to the University's regulations, policies and guidance.

## Ethics and Research Integrity

All staff and students have a responsibility to observe the highest standards of conduct in their research. The University's Research Integrity Code of Practice draws together the principles and supporting policies that apply to the ways in which research at the University is planned, conducted, interpreted and disseminated. This includes guidance and policy relating to Research Ethics, Research Data Management, Open Access and Publication and Authorship. Research Students should discuss research integrity and practice with their supervisory team in the first instance. Further information and access to training is available through Departments and from the Graduate School.

*Research Ethics and Research Data Management*

Research Ethics and Research Data Management must be considered during research planning, to ensure that the research complies with relevant regulatory requirements and ethical standards. Further information will be provided to students by Departments and supervisory teams, and is also available from the Graduate School.

Any research which uses human participants, the collection or study of their data, and/or the use of their organs and/or tissue, requires research ethics approval. Conducting such research without ethical approval is a breach of University policy and, in some cases, national legislation. The University publishes a Code of Research Ethics, which is part of the Research Integrity code.

The University Research Ethics Committee oversees all research ethics matters of research conducted by Brunel University London staff and students which involves human participants, their tissues and their data. It works to embed a culture and awareness of ethics in research within the University, with particular reference to training in research ethics. Some research will require approval by other bodies, such as the NHS Research Ethics Committee.

There are also many other instances where approval for undertaking particular research is required; for example, research which includes radiation or animal experimentation.

Research data generated by students on research degrees should be managed in in accordance with the University's policies, procedures and standards, and statutory and funder requirements.  The University publishes a Policy for Research Data Management, which is part of the Research Integrity Code of Practice.

# 7    Research and Skills Training

The importance of developing research and other skills during a research degree programme is well recognised by a range of stakeholders, including research funders, employers and doctoral graduates. These skills can help to facilitate timely programme completion, improve the quality of research outputs, contribute to future employability and encourage continuous personal, professional and career development.

Research students are expected to take responsibility for shaping, managing and directing their research training (taking advice from their supervisory team). The 3D Researcher Development Tool© has been developed by the University to provide a common framework to support all Brunel research students to reflect upon, plan and document their development as researchers. All new research students must complete a self-evaluation using the 3D Tool within 4 weeks of their initial registration.  Compulsory and recommended training, including if applicable in-sessional English, will be agreed at the student's 4-week review and may be agreed at any further reviews.  Every research student must document substantive training or development activity for each sub-category of the Brunel 3D Researcher Development Tool © over the course of the doctoral research degree.

The University recognises that researchers will have individual development needs, which will vary depending on their research background, their individual research focus and career aspirations.  However, the University also recognises that there are some fundamental skills which all research students should be supported to develop during the early stages of their programme. The University has therefore agreed mandatory training requirements for research students in their first year, to apply to all new students registering from 1 October 2015.  This includes the Research Integrity on-line course plus associated Health and Safety training; Research Methods training, including methods for conducting a literature review, either via a bespoke training course in Department/College (if available); via blended learning; or via on line module only.   Further information is contained in the Researcher Development Handbook.

In addition, all students registering from 1 October 2014 are required to complete the Research Integrity on-line course and all students registered prior to October 2014 are strongly encouraged to complete the course.

All research students involved in supporting teaching must complete appropriate training prior to commencement of their duties. Research students can access formal training in learning and teaching via the Brunel Educational Excellence Centre (BEEC).

Research students are expected to reflect regularly on their progress and agree ongoing developmental objectives with their supervisory team.

A wide range of training workshops and developmental opportunities are provided at Departmental, College and University level to support researchers

in the achievement of their agreed developmental objectives. The University's Researcher Development Programme, coordinated by the Graduate School, includes the annual Researcher Development Series (which all research students are strongly encouraged to attend) as well as an extensive programme of workshops and a growing portfolio of online courses. The programme is aligned to the nationally recognised [Researcher Development Framework](#) as well as to the categories of Brunel's 3D Researcher Development Tool. Details of the programme and a link to online booking can be found at [http://www.brunel.ac.uk/services/graduate-school/training-development-and-](http://www.brunel.ac.uk/services/graduate-school/training-development-and-) [support/research-students/researcher-development-programme](#)

The Graduate School also offer one-to-one training and development advice by appointment and a statistics drop-in clinic in collaboration with the [ASK](#) service based in the Bannerman Centre. ASK also provides general advice on academic writing and mathematics.

English language support is provided by the International Pathways and Language Centre. Pre-sessional English language courses are provided as well as courses designed to improve general and academic English whilst studying. [http://www.brunel.ac.uk/international/iplc/english-language-courses.](http://www.brunel.ac.uk/international/iplc/english-language-courses.) The identification of any need for English language support is an important part of supervisory meetings with students.

Research students are important members of the University's academic community. Part of research training is to build networks with other researchers within and outside the subject area. Departments arrange programmes of seminars where visiting speakers and Brunel staff discuss their research and the latest developments in the field; research students are expected to attend these and participate in research discussions.

Research students are also expected to present their own research findings to their peers both within the University and externally. Within the University opportunities to practice research dissemination, receive developmental feedback and network with other researchers include departmental seminars and research student conferences, College research student conferences and the University's annual [Research Student Conference](#).

Research students are also strongly encouraged to present at external conferences; limited funding may be available within Colleges to support this or research students can apply for a [Vice Chancellor's Travel Prize](#) which provides funding competitively on the basis of research excellence.

In addition, the University Inaugural and Professorial Lectures provide an opportunity to hear leading researchers within the university describe their contributions to knowledge in their discipline. Students are encouraged to attend such events, even if they are outside their specialist area: they prove an opportunity to share in the successes of other researchers and may provide inspiration.

# 8    Supervision

## Responsibilities of Supervisory Teams

Supervisory teams are responsible for providing guidance on:

- the nature of research in the discipline concerned;
- the standard of work expected in relation to the qualification aim;
- adhering to the Code of Practice for Research Degrees;
- the planning of the research programme, to meet the expected submission deadline;
- sources, methods and techniques, and specialist research skills required;
- possible career options;
- the development of professional skills;
- health and safety
- ethics, intellectual property,  research integrity and the implications of research misconduct;
- the drafting of the thesis.

Regular meetings and contact between students and the supervisory team are important to ensure that adequate guidance and support is provided to students and that student progress is appropriately reviewed.  Good quality supervision helps to ensure that students get high quality research training, and also successfully submit their thesis by the expected date.

## Supervision Meetings

During the first few months, contact with supervisors is likely to be frequent and perhaps as often as weekly. These meetings will reduce in frequency as the student becomes more confident in their work, but the importance of the student and supervisor 'touching base' on a regular basis should remain as the cornerstone of supervision.

## Formally Recorded Supervision Meetings

**Formally recorded supervision meetings should take place at least every six to eight weeks for students on all modes of study.  There should therefore be 8 formally recorded meetings each year, including during any period of corrections/revisions following examination.**

Formally recorded supervision meetings may be used as the 'contact points' to satisfy UKVI requirements.

The expectation is that these meetings will be face-to-face, unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent this.  In such cases the 'meetings' may be carried out by other means, but the process described below must be followed.

<u>Process</u>

Meeting dates are managed via the MyResearch facility in e-vision.

Prior to the meeting, the student should access the appropriate e-vision task and prepare a summary of progress, any issues and proposed targets for the next period.  Supplementary information can also be uploaded via the e-vision task if appropriate to help inform the meeting.

Following the meeting, the Principal Supervisor will be responsible for commenting on and agreeing the student's summary.  The Principal Supervisor will also comment on the targets, plans for further work and how any identified issues should be resolved.

The Principal Supervisor must also, via the e-vision task, record:

- whether or not the student attended the meeting;
- which members of the supervisory team attended.

PGR Managers, on behalf of the Vice-Dean (Education), will monitor student and supervisor engagement with the above process.

### Formal meetings with Supervisory Teams

Supervisory teams (all members) must meet with full-time students formally at 4, 14, 25 and 35 months to discuss progress against targets and development needs.  Part-time students should also meet with their full supervisory teams on an annual basis.  These meetings are also an opportunity to discuss training needs and career aspirations (refer to table in section 9).

## 9    Progression through the Research Degree

### Introduction

Ongoing monitoring of research student progress is essential to encourage timely submission and to ensure appropriate levels of support for students throughout their registration. The schedule of monitoring described in this document aims to create a balance between supportive, developmental review and more formal progression steps. The design is intended to be as light touch as possible in terms of the demands on students and staff, while maintaining sufficient rigour to enable the University to be confident that research students are receiving appropriate guidance and support on their progress and to identify any issues or concerns in a timely manner.

The table below specifies the main events relating to the progress of students registered for a full-time **doctoral award from 1 October 2014:**

| Months | Event | Who | Purpose | Documentation Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (*4 weeks from start date)* | Progression Review | Supervisory Team | Meeting with Supervisory Team<br>Ensure student is engaging with their studies | Research plan (1500 words)<br>3DResearcher Development Plan |
| 4 | Formal Meeting with Supervisory Team | Supervisory Team | Discuss progress against targets; identify issues of concern; discuss training needs and career aspirations | Supervisory records<br>Updated 3DResearcher Development Plan |
| 9 | Progression Review | Progression Panel | Determine suitability for PhD registration | Progress report<br>Updated 3D Researcher Development Plan<br>Substantive piece of written work (see below) |
| 14 | Formal Meeting with Supervisory Team | Supervisory Team | Discuss progress against targets; development and training needs; career aspirations | Supervisory records<br>Updated 3DResearcher Development Plan |
| 20 | Annual Review | Progression Panel | Formal check of progress and discuss plans to meet expected submission date<br>Confirm PhD registration | Progression report<br>Thesis Plan<br>3D Researcher Development Plan |
| 25 | Formal Meeting with Supervisory Team | Supervisory Team | Discuss progress against targets; development and training needs; career aspirations | Supervisory records<br>Updated 3D Researcher Development Plan |
| 30 | Annual Review | Progression Panel | Formal check of progress against expected submission date<br>Confirm PhD registration | Progression report<br>Updated and detailed thesis plan or draft chapters<br>3D Researcher Development Plan |
| 35 | Formal Meeting with Supervisory Team | Supervisory Team | Discuss progress for submission<br>Discuss training needs and career aspirations | Draft thesis chapters<br>Supervisory records<br>Updated 3DRDev Plan |
| 36 | **EXPECTED SUBMISSION** | | | |
| 40 | Annual Review | Progression Panel | Formal check of progress against submission before registration lapses | Draft thesis chapters |
| 48 | MAXIMUM PERIOD OF REGISTRATION | | | |

The table below specifies the main events relating to the progress of students registered for a **part-time doctoral award from 1 October 2014:**

| Months | Event | Who | Purpose | Documentation Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (*4 weeks from start date*) | Progression Review | Supervisory Team | Meeting with Supervisory Team<br>Ensure student is engaging with their studies | Research plan (1500 words)<br>3DResearcher Development Plan |
| 4 | Formal Meeting with Supervisory Team | Supervisory Team | Discuss progress against targets; identify issues of concern; discuss training needs and career aspirations | Supervisory records<br>Updated 3DResearcher Development Plan |
| 14 Then annually | Formal Meeting with Supervisory Team | Supervisory Team | Discuss progress against targets; development and training needs; career aspirations | Supervisory records<br>Updated 3DResearcher Development Plan |
| 18 | Progression Review | Progression Panel | Determine suitability for PhD registration | Progress report<br>Updated 3D Researcher Development Plan<br>Substantive piece of written work (see below) |
| 30 Then annually | Annual Review | Progression Panel | Formal check of progress against expected submission date<br>Confirm PhD registration | Progress report<br>Updated and detailed thesis plan or draft chapters<br>3D Researcher Development Plan |
| 66 | Annual Review | Progression Panel | Formal check of progress against expected submission date<br>Confirm PhD registration | Progress Report<br>Updated and detailed thesis plan or draft chapters<br>3D Researcher Development Plan |
| 70 | Formal Meeting with Supervisory Team | Supervisory Team | Discuss progress for submission<br>Discuss training needs and career aspirations | Draft thesis chapters<br>Supervisory records<br>Updated 3D Researcher Development Plan |
| 72 | **EXPECTED SUBMISSION** | | | |
| 78 | Annual Review | Progression Panel | Formal check of progress against submission before registration lapses | Draft thesis chapters |
| 90 | Annual Review | Progression Panel | Formal check of progress against submission before registration lapses | Draft thesis chapters |
| 96 | MAXIMUM PERIOD OF REGISTRATION | | | |

Students registered from 1 October 2014 for a research masters award will be expected to have a four week progression review, a 9 month (full-time)/ 18 month (part-time) progression review and annual reviews until submission of a thesis.  Formal meetings with supervisory teams should also take place on an annual basis.

Full-time and part-time students registered for a **Doctoral Award prior to 1 October 2014**

| Event | Who | Purpose | Documentation Required |
|---|---|---|---|
| Formal Meeting with Supervisory Team | Supervisory Team | Discuss progress against targets; development and training needs; career aspirations | Supervisory records |
| Timing | | Full-Time<br><br>14, 25, 35 months | Part-Time<br><br>Annually, with a meeting at 70 months |
| Annual Review | Two independent academic staff and second supervisor | Formal check of progress and discuss plans to meet expected submission date. To confirm registration for intended award | Progress report<br>Thesis plan<br><br>At 30 months (full-time) and 66 months (part-time) (see timings below) and at any subsequent reviews, the student must also provide a detailed thesis plan or draft chapters |
| Timing | | Full-Time<br><br>Annually, on anniversary of previous review.<br><br>30 months<br>40 months if not submitted by 36 months | Part-Time<br><br>Annually, on anniversary of previous review.<br><br>66 Months<br>78 and 90 months if not submitted by 72 months |
| Please note that should a normally scheduled annual review on the anniversary of a previous review fall two months either side of the 30 month or 66 month review, it will not be necessary to hold an additional review. | | | |

## Progression Reviews

### 4 Week Review (for FT and PT students registered from 1 October 2014

#### Purpose

The 4-week review enables the student to formally meet with the full supervisory team and also enables the University to ensure that the student is engaging with their studies.  As well as fulfilling the requirements set out below, it is also an opportunity to discuss matters such as research ethics and data management.   It is the first formal progression point, meaning that students can, should they not engage with the review, be de-registered.

#### Process

The date of the 4-week review will be determined by the student's start date (i.e. the date notified to them in the admissions letter). The meeting will be notified via e-vision.

The student is required to upload a 1000-2000 word research plan, which may be a variant of their original research statement submitted as part of their application.  Students should be able to clearly and concisely articulate:

- the research question to be addressed;
- why it is important;
- methodology to be used;
- timeline.

The student should also upload the 3-D Researcher Development Plan.

The meeting date and the student's attendance will be confirmed on e-vision.

If the student does not engage with the review and complete the associated tasks as required, this will be recorded and the student will be e-mailed to inform them that they will be de-registered.

### 9 Month Review (18 months for PT students) – Students Registered from 1 October 2014.

#### Purpose

The 9-month progression review is a key point during the lifecycle of a research student which formally considers the student's progress and plans for them to meet the expected date for submission of their thesis.  This confirms or otherwise the student's continued status as being registered for their intended award.   The progression review can recommend that the student be required to do further work before a decision can be made regarding their progression; downgraded to an MPhil (if on a PhD route);  or be required to withdraw.

**Process: Progression Panels** are appointed by the Head of Department to undertake the **progression review** and annual reviews. Panels are made up of an Independent chair, who should be the Departmental Director (PGR) or their nominee, an independent research-active member of the academic staff and the student's Researcher Development Advisor. The supervisor may attend at the invitation of the student, but must not be part of the decision-making.

A student should submit the following:

- a progress report, including a statement from the Principal Supervisor
- an updated 3D Researcher Development Plan
- a substantive piece of written work (10,000 – 15,000 words excluding references for those registered for a Doctoral award; 5 – 10,000 words for a research masters) which should typically include a critical review of the literature; description of methods; results/outcomes achieved and proposed further work.

The student will be invited to formally present their work to the Panel and answer questions regarding their work and progress.

On the basis of the submitted documentation, presentation and oral examination, the Panel will assess the student against the following criteria:

The student is able to:
- demonstrate an appropriate level of engagement with research training and personal development activities;
- articulate a clear research question which, if appropriately investigated, should allow the candidate to make a meaningful contribution to knowledge of the discipline within the required period;
- demonstrate critical engagement with relevant research literature to inform and justify the refinement of their research topic and approach;
- articulate and justify an appropriate and achievable approach to conducting their research and provide evidence for an appropriate level of competence in, and understanding of, relevant research techniques and methodologies;
- produce a piece of academic writing which is indicative of their potential to produce a successful written thesis within the required period.

The Panel will make a recommendation regarding the student's progression or otherwise. Should the Panel's recommendation be to withdraw, re-grade or provisionally progress the student pending further review, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Vice-Dean (Education) for their formal decision. The student's status is updated in SITS following the outcome of the review.

The Panel will provide written feedback to the student following the progression review. Should the student wish to appeal the outcome of the progress review, they should follow the University's [Academic Appeals process.](#)

## Annual Reviews

### Purpose

**Annual reviews** are a formal check of progress and help to ensure the student is being appropriately supported to allow them to meet the expected submission date  They also confirm the continued registration of the student for the intended award and are an independent check of progress and targets. The reviews can result in a recommendation to downgrade the student to an MPhil (if on a PhD route).

### Process

Annual review is undertaken by the progression panel on an annual basis, starting at 20 months from the student's start date, until the student submits. The supervisor may attend at the invitation of the student, but must not be part of the decision-making.

Documentation to be submitted for the review is as follows:

- Progress report
- Thesis plan
- Updated 3D Researcher Development  Plan

At the late stage annual reviews, at 30 (and if required 40 months) draft thesis chapters must be provided (refer to tables above).

The Panel will make a recommendation regarding the student's progression or otherwise, which may include re-grading.  Should the Panel's recommendation be to withdraw (exceptionally), re-grade or provisionally progress the student pending further review, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Vice-Dean (Education) for their formal decision. The student's status is updated in SITS following the outcome of the review.

The Panel will provide written feedback to the student following the review, with a copy kept with the student's SITS record.

### Enrolment

Students must enroll on an annual basis when prompted to do so by the University.   Such enrolment must include updating, where necessary, all necessary information including addresses and contact details to ensure that student information is correctly maintained.

# 10 Preparation and Submission of Thesis

The thesis is the presentation of original work by the student. Whilst the supervisory team offers guidance before the submission of the thesis, the ultimate responsibility for the content must rest with the student.

Whilst any advice or opinions offered by the supervisory team will be provided in good faith and to the best of the team's judgement it must be clearly understood that the supervisors are not empowered to predict the outcome of assessment of the thesis. This judgement can only be made by examiners.

Senate Regulation 5 specifies that the thesis must have been completed during the candidature with the University, under supervisory arrangements approved by the University. Work carried out prior to registration, or for another degree, may not be included in the thesis except under exceptional circumstances, such as the transfer of registration from another university. The thesis may include material contained in papers published by the candidate, but these must be acknowledged in the text. Prior publication by the candidate and his/her supervisor(s) of papers or patents arising from the research being undertaken will not prejudice the assessment of the thesis by the Examiners. All work that is not the candidate's own must be clearly described and appropriately acknowledged.

The University publishes information regarding [plagiarism and good academic practice](#) and supervisory teams must ensure that students receive appropriate advice and guidance throughout their study. All theses (and all progression documents) may be analysed for homology with published works. The Library Research Services provides [information and](#) [guidance relevant to thesis submission.](#)

The University does not issue guidance regarding the length of theses for different types of research degrees. It is left to the supervisory team to guide the student regarding the appropriate length or typical word count and/or page limit for the thesis, which will be determined by the subject-matter and topic. However, the thesis should be as concise as is consistent with a full description of research, and would not normally be expected to be more than 100,000 words in length. Examiners may require an overly long thesis to be condensed. The thesis must be in English.

## Presentation of Thesis

The order of the introductory pages of the thesis should be: *title page, abstract, contents*.

- The thesis must be produced using 1.5 line spacing, with 1 inch margins and Arial 11 or 12 font size (or similar).

- The title page must be laid out as in the following example:

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE LITERACY OF Ph.D. STUDENTS


A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy


by


John Augustus Smith


Department of English, Brunel University London

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- Following the title page, an abstract of not more than 300 words should be included.

It should be in a form suitable for separate publication and may be edited by the student's Principal Supervisor.  The University may publish the abstract without further reference to the author.

## Process for Submission

When the student is nearly ready to submit, they should send a final draft to the Principal Supervisor for review.  It is required that the thesis is put through CheckIt, a thesis checking service provided by the Library, which uses Turnitin plagiarism detection software.  This step must be undertaken **at least two weeks** prior to formal submission.  The Turnitin service compares student work with other sources and produces an originality report, highlighting where matches have been found and the source of the match.  The student must follow the instructions for uploading the thesis and the Principal Supervisor will evaluate the report, and any issues of plagiarism or copyright will be required to be addressed by the student before submission of the thesis.

Candidates should submit three soft-bound copies and one electronic copy of the final version of their thesis for examination to a central collection point in their College.

College PGR offices will ensure that the candidate's submission is recorded.  The College arranges for the thesis to be sent to the examiners following

their formal appointment by Senate.

# 11 Examination

Role of Internal and External Examiners

The role of the examiners is to ensure that the thesis meets the requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, as set out in Senate Regulation 5.

Examiners are appointed for the entire examination process, which includes any re-examination.

Following examination, Examiners should not have any contact with the candidate regarding any corrections/revisions they may have recommended and must not be involved in providing support to the candidate whilst undertaking such corrections/revisions.

Process and Requirements for Appointment

Senate Regulation 5.25-5.29 details the criteria for Examiner and Independent Chair appointments.

Immediately following the final annual review, the supervisor (on behalf of the Supervisory Team) should approach potential external and internal examiners and Independent Chairs informally with a view to them being nominated to conduct the examination of the thesis.

The appropriate form should be completed, signed by the Vice-Dean (Education) and submitted for approval on behalf of Senate, together with a curriculum vitae of the proposed external examiner, **a minimum of 8 weeks before the proposed date of the viva voce.** This period is necessary to allow for checks on suitability of examiners and for appointment packs to be sent out. It also gives time to appoint an alternative examiner if necessary.

It must be ensured that there is an appropriate balance of experience across the examining team. The CV of the potential external examiner must demonstrate previous experience of research degree supervision and/or examination. Should the proposed external examiner lack significant experience, a strong case needs to be made for their appointment and evidence provided of how the Panel as a whole will be able to discharge its duties. Registry will seek the approval of the examiners and Independent Chair on behalf of Senate.

Colleges should not propose internal examiners who have been part of the candidate's supervisory team at any stage.

Independent Chairs must be permanent members of academic staff of the

University with experience of supervision and examining of research degrees and knowledge of the University Senate Regulations and the Code of Practice for Research Degrees. The Independent Chair must not have been involved in the supervision of the candidate. It is not necessary for the Independent Chair to be a subject expert.

Once approved, Registry will send out appointment letters and examination packs to the Examiners and the Chair. Candidates and principal supervisors are also contacted confirming the appointments. Examination packs contain all relevant information for examiners, including Senate Regulations.

Examiners do not need to be re-approved to conduct a re-examination.

## Examination Process

Senate Regulations 5.30 – 5.32 set out the regulatory requirements of the examination of research degrees.

The examination of the thesis is deemed to have commenced once the thesis is submitted to the University, and to have been completed when the recommendation of the Examiners have been accepted by the University.

## Preliminary Reports

Each External and Internal Examiner shall complete a preliminary written report, which should be sent to the College in advance of the viva, or, in cases where a viva is not to be held, prior to the determination by the Examiners of the award to be recommended.
Senate Regulation 5.32 stipulates the requirements relating to the length and content of the preliminary reports.

**Examiners' preliminary reports must not mention the possible outcome of the examination, but address the issues identified in Senate Regulation 5.32.**

Should examiners wish to recommend that the thesis is of an unacceptable standard to be examined for a research degree; the preliminary report must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the planned viva voce examination. The Independent Chair must, in such instances, ensure that a joint report is produced by the examiners recommending that there be no award and no viva voce examination. Should preliminary reports be received after the two week deadline, the viva voce examination must go ahead in order that the student is not informed at very short notice that the viva voce is to be cancelled.

Preliminary reports must be signed and dated before the viva voce (or meeting of examiners to examine a thesis where no viva voce is to be held) and be circulated in advance, by the College, to the other examiner(s) and

Independent Chair.

Preliminary reports are required for all research degree examinations, including thesis re-submission within 12 months.  They are not required for minor corrections or minor revisions.

Preliminary reports are issued to the candidate when the examination is complete, as part of the formal notification by the University of the outcome. However, it should be noted that prior to the examination, preliminary reports are confidential to the examination panel and should therefore not be shared with the candidate prior to them being formally issued to the candidate by the University.   Preliminary reports are provided to students for information and should not be relied upon to form part of the feedback to the student regarding any revisions required to their thesis following examination.

Preliminary reports must be retained with the final report of the examiners to ensure that a complete record of the examination process is held.

## The Viva Voce

Candidates for research degrees will normally be required to present themselves for a viva voce examination within three months of the date of submission of the thesis. The date for the viva voce shall be arranged by the supervisor in consultation with all concerned, and Colleges are responsible for confirming the date and venue of the viva voce with all concerned.  Viva voce examinations should normally be held at the University or on a campus of an Associated Institution.

The viva voce may be held outside the University if all the Examiners and the candidate agree. Such arrangements are subject to the agreement of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and International).  A senior member of the College, experienced in the examination of research students, will act as the Independent Chair if the viva voce is held off-campus.  In the event that not all the participants in a viva voce examination may be brought together in a suitable location on an agreed date and that no alternative date is possible within a reasonable timescale, a request for a "viva voce by video conference" may be made.  This will only be considered under special circumstances and provided that suitable facilities (i.e. suitable location, equipment, and technical support) can be arranged within an acceptable period from the original date of submission of the thesis.   Such arrangements must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and International).  Please contact the Quality and Standards Office for guidance.

No members of the candidate's supervisory team shall be present at the viva voce examination unless formally invited to attend by the candidate using the appropriate form.

Following receipt of such a form, the Independent Chair is informed that one member of the supervisory team will be present at the viva voce. He/she may speak during the viva voce only if invited to do so by the Examiners.  The viva

voce shall otherwise be held in private in the presence of the Examiners and Independent Chair.

## Role of Independent Chair

The role of the Independent Chair is to ensure that all procedures and regulations are adhered to throughout the examination, including the timely production of the examiners' report.  Chairs must therefore ensure they are fully conversant with the University's Regulations and the Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

The Independent Chair must not influence the outcome of the examination. They are not expected to have read the thesis prior to the examination, and may not ask any questions of the candidate. They should be present throughout the viva voce.

At the viva voce examination, the Chair must:
- Introduce the members of the examination panel and the candidate;
- explain how the viva will be conducted;
- remain present for the entire viva voce examination, including when the student is provided with feedback by the examiners regarding the outcome;
- ensure the viva voce is conducted fairly by:
  - ensuring the candidate has the opportunity to demonstrate what they know – ie that open-ended questions are asked;
  - ensuring the candidate has time to answer questions;
  - maintaining a smooth, disciplined discussion;
  - remaining aware of the environment in which the viva voce is being conducted and ensuring adequate breaks are prompted where necessary;
- make contemporaneous notes of the viva process;
- draw the proceedings to a close and explain the next steps.

At the end of the oral part of the examination, the candidate shall retire from the examination room, together with the supervisor if in attendance.  The examiners shall discuss and agree the feedback to be given to the student and the outcome of the examination. The candidate is then invited back into the examination room to receive feedback and be informed of the outcome of the viva.

Examiners must provide their joint written report and submit it to the College office at the earliest opportunity and preferably immediately following the examination using the appropriate proforma.   The Independent Chair will ensure that all processes are followed correctly and that the report is completed and signed following the examination.   The Chair should check that all written feedback to the student is provided as part of the report of the examiners, including any detailed written information to the student on recommended revisions to their thesis. It is advisable for computer facilities to be made available by the College in the viva voce venue, to enable the report

to be produced on the day of the examination.   This ensures timely formal notification of the outcome to the student.  Examiners may, in addition, make separate written statements on any matter concerned with the examination if they so wish.

The Independent Chair must complete the report of the Chair and submit it to the College office.

### Outcomes of Examination

Senate Regulations set out the various recommendations which examiners may make following the examination.

Following examination, Colleges will be responsible for sending a letter to the candidate informing them of the outcome.  Such communication must include the report of examiners and their preliminary reports.  Reports of examiners must include any details of corrections/revisions required.

The exception is where students are to be awarded without any corrections/revisions (either after first examination or following corrections/revisions) where Registry will be responsible for sending the letter to the candidate.

## 12    Following Award

Students who have been awarded must provide an electronic copy of their thesis  to the Library prior to the award certificate being produced, to enable it to be deposited on the Brunel University Research Archive (BURA).  Prior to uploading onto BURA, the thesis may be put through Tunitin for copyright/ plagiarism checks if not previously done so (see section 10), or where significant revisions have taken place.

The Brunel University Research Archive (BURA) is the institutional repository containing the University's open access research outputs.  The service enables a worldwide audience to find, read and download material for non-commercial private study or research purposes.  It is a requirement that all theses are supplied for inclusion in BURA.  Information about BURA and advice about copyright, as well as frequently asked questions can be found on the BURA website.

Should students or supervisors wish the University to hold the thesis under confidential cover  (for example to protect intellectual property; pending publication; controversial or sensitive material) for a period of time (up to a maximum of three years), this can be requested and needs to be agreed by the candidate and the Principal Supervisor. The College will submit the request to the Library using the appropriate form (available from Departments).  The Library will keep a record of the agreement.  If a further period of confidentiality is requested, this will need to be considered and,

where appropriate, approved, by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and International), who may seek the view of the appropriate Vice-Dean (Research).

It is traditional academic practice for students to present their Principal Supervisor with a bound copy of the thesis in acknowledgement of their input and help.


## 13     Student Representation and Feedback

Research students have the opportunity to be represented on relevant Committees at University, College and Department level. Research students are represented on Senate, Postgraduate Research Degrees Committee, College Education Committees and Department Academic Committees. Appropriate bodies are established in each College to enable research students to discuss matters with academic staff to ensure that there is an effective two-way channel for formal communication between students and staff. Such bodies have the responsibility for informing students of the actions taken to address matters raised. These bodies are an integral part of the University's procedures for assuring academic standards and enhancing the student learning experience.

Committees have a responsibility for informing students of the actions they have taken and the recommendations they have made, and any additional actions taken by the University.

Every other year, research students are invited to take part in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). This is a national survey involving most UK universities in all subjects, in which students report on their experience. The responses help the University to continue to provide better support for research students. Information about the survey is provided by the University when the survey is running. Further information about PRES can be found at: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/PRES


## 14     Assuring the Quality of Research Degree Programmes

**Senate Regulations** form the University's regulatory framework within which standards are defined and assured. Senate Regulation 5 applies to Research Degrees.

The following bodies in the University consider matters relating to the quality and standards of Research Degrees. Their place in the University's governance structure and their terms of reference are set out in Senate Regulation 1.

- Senate
- Postgraduate Research Degrees Committee
- College Education Committees

- Department Academic Committees

**Annual Monitoring:** Each Department critically reviews student progression, training, supervision, the research environment student completion rates and examination outcomes. Departments are provided with data to inform their considerations. Departments provide a report which details actions taken or plans for enhancements based on feedback from students, examiners and any other stakeholders and resulting from previous annual monitoring reports. It provides an opportunity for Colleges and Departments to reflect upon provision and support for students and to consider enhancements. Senate reviews data related to PGR degrees annually.

**Regulatory Audit:** Regulatory Audit is an annual 'health check' of the implementation of University policies and processes by academic units, with recommendations for enhancement made where possible. It also provides an opportunity to share good practice within the University.

**Reports of Examiners:** Examiners are asked to report that they are satisfied that the candidate should be awarded based upon a number of specified criteria which assure the standards of the award. Examiners also have the opportunity to comment on the examination process.

**Periodic Reviews:** Postgraduate research degree provision is reviewed periodically, involving panels made up of external and internal academic staff and students. The last review took place in 2013-14.

# 15 Changes to Registration Status, Abeyance and Extensions

The changes described below are initiated by the student and processed through the "MyResearch" facility in e-vision. A full justification for such requests needs to be provided, with evidence where appropriate. Supervisors should provide a justification for their recommendation to the authorised member of staff defined below, who must also provide a justification for the decision.

<u>Abeyance</u>
If a student has a serious problem which means that they need a period of time away from their studies, following discussion with their Supervisory Team, it is possible, in exceptional circumstances, for a case to be made for a period of abeyance. Such a request, together with evidence for the reasons, needs the approval of the Associate Dean (Welfare). Abeyance cannot be approved for students who are concerned that they will be submitting late. The University will comply with statutory requirements in relation to, for example, maternity and paternity leave. Abeyance does not count towards the maximum period of candidature.

Should students request periods of abeyance beyond the period normally allowed by Senate Regulation 5.12, the approval of the chair of the Postgraduate Research Degrees Committee must be sought. It is important

that the Principal Supervisor and the Associate Dean (Welfare) are involved in considering such cases to ensure that appropriate discussions are taking place with the student regarding their circumstances.   Such consideration may need to take into account the University's Senate Regulations in relation to, for example, Fitness to Study and any possible impact on the currency of the research following any lengthy periods of abeyance.

Students returning from periods of abeyance must have a meeting with their whole Supervisory Team, within a maximum of four weeks, so that appropriate plans are put in place to ensure the student is able to successfully return to study and to ensure they are re-engaging with their studies.

## Changes to Mode of Attendance

Notification of changes to mode of attendance should be processed via the 'MyResearch' facility in e-vision and approved by the Vice-Dean (Education). Approval to move from full-time to part- time mode of study should be based on a genuine and unexpected change in the student's circumstances. If there are any concerns at the time of registration as to a student's ability to undertake FT studies then they should be registered as a part time student.

Please also see Policy for Admission and Management of Research Students registered off-campus.

## Extensions to Maximum Period of Registration

It is not anticipated that extensions to the maximum period of registration will be granted, apart from in the most exceptional of circumstances.  Such extensions will require the explicit approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and International).

## Withdrawals

Withdrawals of research students **which are initiated by the student** and not the result of progression reviews are notified and processed via the 'MyResearch' facility in e-vision and are approved by the PGR Manager in the College.