

## Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision

NOTE: The Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision [referred to from here on as “the Code”] applies to all research students regardless of year of entry.

Research students who first enrolled on their studies before 1 August 2016 will follow the progression monitoring timings and procedures that applied to their year of entry and as determined by their Faculty (including those for upgrade/transfer from MPhil to PhD). A summary of the applicable timings, depending on year of entry, is set out in paragraph 63 (*Progression Reviews – Timings*) of the Code and students should refer to their Faculty for further information. However, note that all upgrade/transfer and confirmation panels must consist of at least two Independent Assessors regardless of the research student’s year of entry.

Students who first enrolled on their research degree on or after 1 August 2020 will not be confirmed in Doctoral Candidature by the Faculty following the Second Progression Review (Confirmation) should any mandatory training requirements remain unsatisfactorily completed.

Research students who first enrolled on their studies prior to 1 August 2020 will follow the nominal registration procedures as set out in the [Regulations for Research Degrees 2019/20](#) (paragraphs 37 to 41 (*Nominal Registration*)) and as set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision 2019/20](#) (paragraphs 79 to 80 (*Transfer to Nominal Registration*)).

Note: the term ‘Student visa’ refers to both the Tier 4 (General) visa and the new Student visa which replaced the Tier 4 (General) visa on 5 October 2020.

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## Introduction

1. The University of Southampton<sup>1</sup> undertakes to make satisfactory arrangements for the admission, candidature, supervision and examination of research students. The Code sets out University-level policy and guidelines for candidature for Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and other doctoral degrees (including Integrated PhD programmes and professional doctorates) in the University. The Code is intended to amplify and complement the Regulations for Research Degrees and Higher Doctorates ([Section V of the University Calendar](#)) and provide a framework for all supervisory relationships. It is supplemented by policies and guidance published in the [Quality Handbook](#) or by Faculties, which are consistent with this Code but which specify more detailed procedures operating at local level.

The Code is intended to promote good practice in research candidature and supervision and ensure a degree of comparability in the experience of research students. It is essential that a good working relationship is established between the supervisors and the research student, and that responsibilities on both sides are clearly defined and understood. It is intended to cover the many different types of research student candidature and to recognise the diversity of experiences, needs, interests and styles. In considering how best to support research students with disabilities, Faculties may find it helpful to review the practical advice and information accessible via the [Vitae website](#) and from [Student Disability & Wellbeing](#).

To ensure compliance with the Code, the University will monitor research degree provision against internal and external indicators and targets. In particular, in order to evaluate the success of our postgraduate research degrees, the University may collect and review:

- submission and completion times and rates, with account taken of any variations (for example relating to individual research students' circumstances, part-time programmes and the requirements of research councils, funders or other relevant bodies);
- pass, resubmission, referral (for taught doctorates), and fail rates;
- withdrawal rates;
- the number of appeals and complaints, the reasons for them, and how many are upheld;
- analysis of comments from examiners;
- recruitment profiles;
- data on equality and diversity.

The University will also monitor and review information on subsequent employment destinations and career paths of research students who have achieved the qualification.

## Introduction to the Research Environment

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<sup>1</sup> "University of Southampton" and "Faculty" includes any institution accredited by the University of Southampton to supervise the degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy as awarded by the University of Southampton. In any instance where a research student is in candidature at an accredited institution, the University of Southampton External Research Degrees Committee (ERDC) will undertake the role of the "Faculty Education Committee", "Faculty Graduate School Committee" and "Faculty" as defined within this Code.

The principal role of ERDC, which reports to Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC), is to make decisions on the admission, candidature, progress and examination of all students for research degrees in the Accredited Institution within the academic areas approved for this purpose by the University of Southampton. ERDC may recommend the award of degrees to Senate.

2. The research environment should be regarded as both a place of learning and of research productivity. The environment allows for research students' changing needs and requirements as their programmes develop, including providing an adequate amount of academic and, if relevant, work or practice-based supervision of an appropriate quality. To satisfy these aims, there should be a clear commitment to research in the Faculty in which research students are to be supervised, as well as commitment to encouraging the integration of research students into the research activity of the Faculty or School/Institute. Factors that can be used to indicate excellence in research would normally include:

- demonstrable research achievement as recognised either through peer assessment as internationally excellent or above, or consistently recognised by the award of grants in open competition;
- at least five research-active staff and six research students;
- knowledge exchange and applications (including knowledge transfer partnerships), with an emphasis on the practical impact of research outcomes and demonstrable ability to attract external funding.

An appropriate environment in which to undertake and develop research skills would normally include:

- exposure to researchers working at the highest level in the research student's chosen field and in cognate and related disciplines;
- the expectation that research students' proposed topics of research will typically relate substantially to the Faculty's research programme to enable research students to relate current research and issues arising from it to their own research (e.g. through debate with professional researchers);
- opportunities and encouragement for research students to work and exchange ideas with people and organisations using research outcomes for their own purposes and with colleagues in the wider research environment;
- access to academic and other colleagues able to give advice and support;
- adequate learning and research tools, including access to IT equipment, library and electronic publications;
- opportunities for research students to develop peer support networks where issues or problems can be discussed informally;
- supervision (see also the section on Supervision) that encourages the development and successful pursuit of a programme of research;
- guidance on the ethical pursuit of research and the avoidance of research misconduct, including plagiarism and breaches of intellectual property rights;
- support in developing research-related skills, and access to a range of development opportunities (which includes the mandatory training as detailed by the Doctoral College) that contribute to the research student's ability to complete the programme successfully (including, where appropriate, understanding issues of funding and of commercial exploitation);
- access to and support for a range of development opportunities (which includes the mandatory training as detailed by the Doctoral College) that contribute to the research student's ability to develop personal, professional and, where pertinent, employment-related skills;
- availability of relevant advice on career development.

An environment supportive of research achievement may include:

- a collegial community of academic staff and postgraduates conducting excellent research in cognate areas;
- supervisors with the necessary skills and knowledge to support research students in working towards the successful completion of their research programmes;
- access to welfare and support facilities that recognise the distinctive nature of research degree study;
- the opportunity for research students to raise complaints or appeal mechanisms for addressing research students' feedback both as individuals and collectively;
- sufficient implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that where a project is undertaken in collaboration with another organisation, the standards of both organisations are maintained.

## The Higher Degrees of MPhil and PhD

3. The MPhil and PhD are higher degrees involving a programme of research training and supervision and leading to the production of a thesis or, in the case of research students in the disciplines listed in paragraph 85 of this Code (*Alternative Formats of Thesis Submission*), the production of a body of work as appropriate to the discipline completed in conjunction with a critical written component (as specified in paragraphs 85 to 86 of this Code (*Alternative Formats of Thesis Submission*)). The MPhil and PhD are two separate, distinct awards with the MPhil differing from the PhD in terms of the scope of study required and the extent of the original personal contribution to knowledge. (Paragraphs 5 to 7 of this Code (*The Difference between PhD and MPhil*)) give more details on the levels of attainment required for the MPhil and for the PhD).

### *The Thesis*

4. The thesis (or equivalent submission as specified in paragraph 85 of this Code (*Alternative Formats of Thesis Submission*)) which is the outcome of the research project and the training programme, must be composed clearly and presented in the required format. The subject should be dealt with in an orderly manner using appropriate research methods and techniques and displaying critical discrimination in evaluating the evidence.

## The Difference between PhD and MPhil

### *The PhD*

5. For the award of PhD, research students must have demonstrated<sup>2</sup>:
  - the creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;
  - a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge, which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or an area of professional practice;
  - the general ability to conceptualize, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
  - a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

<sup>2</sup> The outcomes cited here for both PhD and MPhil are taken from the QAA's document: [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies, October 2014.](#)

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

In addition, holders of the qualification will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

### *The MPhil*

6. The MPhil is an award of considerable distinction in its own right and is awarded for the successful completion of a substantial element of research or equivalent enquiry. The MPhil differs from the PhD only in terms of the scope of study required and the extent of the original personal contribution to knowledge.
7. More specifically, for the award of MPhil, research students must have demonstrated<sup>2</sup>:
  - a systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice;
  - originality in the application of knowledge together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
  - conceptual understanding that enables the research student to:
    - evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
    - evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses;
  - a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.

## **Doctoral Degrees with a Substantial Taught Element**

8. The University offers a number of doctoral degrees with a substantial taught element; for example the Engineering Doctorate and the Doctor of Clinical Psychology). The University also offers the Integrated PhD programme in certain disciplines. These are all covered by this Code.
9. In terms of comparability with the standard-route PhD, it is appropriate to regard the professional doctorates as having no more than one third of the degree as being at master's level (FHEQ Level 7) and the subsequent research and thesis preparation at doctoral level (Level 8). For the Integrated PhD programme, typically one quarter of the degree will be at master's level with the subsequent research and thesis preparation conducted at doctoral level Further guidance regarding the structure of doctoral degrees with a substantial taught element can be found in the QAA's underpinning document: [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies, October 2014.](#)

## **Selection and Admission of Research Students**

### *Entry Requirements*

10. Only suitably qualified and prepared applicants will be admitted to degree programmes leading to the award of a University of Southampton research degree. Applicants must demonstrate that they have the motivation and potential to undertake and complete a sustained piece of research and to produce a thesis for examination. Applicants will normally be expected to possess one or more of the following:
- an undergraduate degree, normally with at least upper second (2i) honours classification (or equivalent) in a relevant subject;
  - a master's-level qualification (or equivalent) in a relevant subject;
  - evidence of prior professional practice or learning that meets the University's criteria and good practice guidelines for accreditation of prior experiential and/or certificated learning. Guidance is available in the University's [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).

Advice and guidance on qualifications and equivalencies can be obtained from the Global Recruitment and Admissions Team (email [admissionspolicy@soton.ac.uk](mailto:admissionspolicy@soton.ac.uk) and the [Admissions Policy](#) sets out some general principles for selectors.

Applicants may, depending on their intended area of research, be required to meet other conditions (e.g. a Disclosure and Barring Service (enhanced) check; an occupational health assessment).

#### *English Language Proficiency*

11. All programmes leading to a University of Southampton research degree are delivered in the medium of English and applicants must demonstrate that they possess at least a minimum standard of English Language proficiency in accordance with the requirements specified in the University's course webpages. Successful applicants are expected to demonstrate that their ability to understand and express themselves in English (including in reading, writing, speaking and listening) is sufficient to enable them to achieve the full benefit from studying at the University. Precise programme requirements for English language proficiency are set out in the University's course webpages.

#### *References*

12. Two references setting out the applicant's suitability and academic potential to undertake research at doctoral level must be received from individuals independent of the selectors for all applicants. Referees should not normally be the applicant's potential supervisor.

#### *Selection Procedures*

13. Selection procedures should be clear and consistently applied and always demonstrate equality of opportunity. Procedures should take into account any additional requirements imposed by funders, subject to these not conflicting with the University's expectations. Reference should be made to the [Equality and Diversity Statement](#), to paragraphs 1 and 2 of the University's [Regulations for Admission to Degree Programmes](#), and to the [Admissions Policy](#) in considering the impact of equality and diversity. The Faculty Graduate School Committee is responsible for ensuring the effective monitoring of the admissions process to demonstrate compliance with legal requirements and, in particular, with regard to equality of opportunity.

Faculties should provide clear, accessible, jargon-free information for applicants and for staff involved in the admissions process, recognising diversity and different needs.

14. Staff responsible for the selection and admission of applicants must be familiar with:
- the [Regulations for Admission to Degree Programmes](#);
  - the [Admissions Policies](#);
  - the [Academic Regulations](#) applicable to the degree (published in Section VI of the University Calendar);



- the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision (paragraphs 10 to 21: *Selection and Admission of Research Students*)

The Faculty Director of the Graduate School is responsible for ensuring that such staff have received sufficient instruction, guidance and advice in selection and interviewing processes and techniques to enable them to effectively conduct their duties and to maintain the quality and standards of the admissions process. Selectors can also obtain specialist advice and guidance from the Global Recruitment and Admissions Team (email [admissionspolicy@soton.ac.uk](mailto:admissionspolicy@soton.ac.uk)).

The selection of applicants should involve at least two members of suitably trained academic staff and each application must be assessed against the required criteria for admission.

Interviews by at least two suitably trained members of academic staff must be used as part of the selection process to assess applicants' suitability, and reasonable adjustments should be made, where feasible, to ensure similarity of opportunity for applicants who are unable to attend for interview in person (e.g. by the use of videoconference). Staff responsible for interviewing applicants must have received sufficient training in inclusion, diversity and equality and in interviewing techniques, and should be familiar with the support available for applicants with a disability and/or additional support need. Faculties should also ensure that due attention is given to ensuring that there is diversity in the membership of interview panels.

Before making a recommendation that a formal offer of a place to study is made, Faculties must make applicants aware of the costs of the planned research and of any available financial support. Applicants should also be made aware of opportunities to apply for special funding, and how to apply for such funding. Information should also be provided to applicants regarding the support that may be available for research students with disabilities, how to access it within the University, and how to fund it.

Should applicants feel they have cause for complaint, they should, where possible, first raise their concerns informally with the relevant Faculty staff. If matters cannot be resolved, applicants should refer to the University's [Regulations Governing Complaints from Applicants](#).

### *Accepting an Applicant*

15. Prior to approving a recommendation to admit an applicant, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School must be satisfied that:
  - in assessing the application, the selection procedures have been complied with in full;
  - the applicant's chosen subject for research, their qualifications, experience and English Language proficiency have been adequately assessed;
  - the research degree is within the applicant's capabilities and the applicant is judged to have the motivation and potential to undertake a sustained piece of research and to produce a thesis for examination;
  - the applicant has been judged to be capable of sustaining research at doctoral level and to complete their chosen research degree within the maximum length of candidature;
  - the applicant will be supported by a suitable supervisory team and that there is access to adequate resources facilities within an appropriate research environment (as specified in paragraph 2 (*Introduction to the Research Environment*) of this Code, including any access to additional support strategies, specialist equipment or assistive technology required by the applicant.
16. All applicants with non-standard entry qualifications must be recommended for approval by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School to the Associate Dean (Education) on a case-by-case basis.

### *Transferring from another Institution*

17. Applications from research students wishing to transfer to the University of Southampton with their supervisor from another institution must be accompanied by the following from the previous institution:
- an official release together with details of the duration of the research student's previous research study;
  - a brief progress report approved by an appropriate officer or committee at the previous institution;
  - information as to whether the research student has upgraded from MPhil to PhD or PhD registration has been confirmed in a formal progression stage; and
  - details of that process if it has taken place in line with the University's requirements as stated in paragraphs 65 to 73 of this Code (*The Second Progression Review (Confirmation of Doctoral Candidature)*).

If appropriate, the Faculty may wish to re-assess the research student's English language proficiency in order to ensure the University's English language requirements are being met.

18. Applications from research students wishing to transfer to the University of Southampton independently of their previous supervisor and institution must be accompanied by the information described above, but also:
- two references relating to recent previous study and which are in accordance with the requirements set out in paragraph 12 of this Code (*References*);
  - copies of regular progress reports (preferably annual reports) from the previous institution where these exist;
  - a clear recommendation from the selectors, following an interview with the research student, explaining why the research student wants to transfer institution, and why it is felt that prospects for successful completion will be better at the University of Southampton.
19. All such applications are subject to confirmation by the Faculty concerned; that satisfactory arrangements for supervision have been approved; and that the Faculty is satisfied as to the arrangements for financial support for the research student and facilities for the project (including the provision of any additional support strategies, specialist equipment or assistive technology required by applicants with a disability or additional need).

International applicants holding a Student visa sponsored by another institution should refer to the [Visa and Immigration Student Advice Service](#) for guidance.

Any applicant accepted for transfer will be required to be in candidature at the University of Southampton for a minimum of 12 months between the date of transfer and the submission of their thesis for examination, irrespective of whether the applicant has previously upgraded from MPhil to PhD or had their doctoral candidature confirmed in a formal progression review at their previous institution.

20. The Faculty Director of the Graduate School is responsible for approving recommendations to accept an applicant for transfer from another higher education institution to the University of Southampton. Paragraphs 13 (*Selection Procedures*) and 14 (*Accepting an Applicant*) of this Code also apply to applicants transferring from another institution, unless agreed otherwise by the Dean of the relevant Faculty.

#### *Formal Offer Letter*

21. The formal offer letter forms the basis of the contract between the applicant and the University of Southampton and must define and clearly communicate the terms and conditions relating to the offer and its acceptance. Any offer of funding is distinct and independent of the offer of

candidature. The duration of any funding offered may be different to the maximum duration of candidature that is specified in the formal offer letter.

#### *Enrolment of Research Students*

22. Research students are expected to enrol promptly each academic year according to the procedures set out by the University and their Faculty. This will normally be through the University's online enrolment process.

#### *Research Student Information and Induction*

23. The Faculty will provide research students with sufficient, timely information to enable them to commence their studies with an understanding of the academic and social environment within which they will be working. Guidelines on information that may usefully be provided are given in Appendix 1: Induction Information to this Code. The timing and frequency of inductions should also take account of part-time and international research students. Additional information regarding any special arrangements or facilities should be made available to research students with a disability. This should have been discussed and agreed individually with the research student prior to the commencement of their studies.

## Research Training and Transferable Skills Training

24. Research students must have access to a suitable programme of research skills and transferable skills training which recognises differing needs arising from student diversity. A range of mechanisms, sufficiently flexible to address individual needs, should be available to support research students' learning. Training programmes should support students' research, comply with any funder requirements, and help research students to prepare themselves for their subsequent career. Training may be provided in-house or by arranging access to external training programmes. Training will be offered where appropriate at programme, Faculty or University level. Faculties will work together through the Doctoral College to co-ordinate their training programmes.

#### *Academic Needs Analysis*

25. The research student's personal and professional developmental needs, including transferable skills, should be assessed within three months of entry to a research degree programme, or within three months of the beginning of the research stage of a taught doctorate, by means of an initial Academic Needs Analysis. Any specific programme requirements will be communicated by the Faculty/discipline (or in the case of degrees with a substantial taught element, detailed in the programme specification). Consideration should be given to:
- the facilities required to enable the research student to undertake their research (for example, any specialist software packages or a high specification computer; appropriate space to work – see paragraph 50 of this Code (*Facilities and Equipment*));
  - whether the research student has subject-specific gaps in their knowledge base and how these might be filled (for example, by attending classes at Master's level);
  - whether the research student needs to learn a language and/or require English language support during their candidature and how these could be implemented;
  - a self-assessment of the research student's personal, professional and research skills (as set out in the *Researcher Development Framework* on the [Vitae website](#)). The research student should be directed to the training on offer through the University, their programme and their Faculty to meet the training needs identified.

Research students are required to maintain a record of personal achievement in their acquisition of knowledge and of subject specific, personal, professional and research skills. Research students should submit an updated Academic Needs Analysis at each Progression Review. The

Review Panel should evaluate the training needs at each *viva voce* and provide feedback on the updated Academic Needs Analysis.

#### *Research Data Management*

26. All research students are required to maintain a Data Management Plan as set out in the [Research Data Management](#) guide on the Library website. A preliminary Data Management Plan should be assessed within three months of entry to a research degree programme, or within three months of the beginning of the research stage of a taught doctorate. Any specific programme requirements will be communicated by the Faculty/discipline (or in the case of degrees with a substantial taught element, detailed in the programme specification).

The Data Management Plan may inform the Academic Needs Analysis, for example, training connected to research data management. Therefore, research students should submit an updated Data Management Plan at each Progression Review (as well as the updated Academic Needs Analysis). The Review Panel should evaluate the research data management at the *viva voce* and provide feedback on the updated Data Management Plan.

27. Faculties should ensure that procedures are in place to collate, on an annual basis, the needs that have been identified in the Academic Needs Analysis. This should be reflected in their annual monitoring reports. Faculties are responsible for ensuring that suitable training is made available to meet the needs of individual research students, either in-house or externally.

#### *Research Skills Training - Discipline-Specific and Generic*

28. All research students must undertake the mandatory training as detailed by the Doctoral College, or an equivalent agreed with the Doctoral College Board. Research students who first enrolled on their research degree on or after 1 August 2020 will not be confirmed in Doctoral Candidature by the Faculty following the Second Progression Review (Confirmation) should any mandatory training requirements remain unfulfilled. Research skills training, which should be provided either by single subject groups or on a multidisciplinary basis, forms a substantial and compulsory part of a research student's programme and should be assessable where appropriate. Any compulsory modules will be communicated by the Faculty/discipline (or in the case of degrees with a substantial taught element, detailed in the programme specification). Such training should and be required of research students except in cases where they have already developed sufficient and appropriate skills through a Master's degree or other postgraduate work or appropriate work experience. Funded students should also receive any training required by their funder. Any exemption from such training should be agreed by the supervisory team as part of the Academic Needs Analysis.

Training programmes should:

- ensure that research students develop so as to become increasingly aware of their own training needs, both discipline-specific and generic;
- enable research students to choose between a range of different approaches to their research study;
- achieve a balance between subject-specific and more general material which might relate to future employment needs;
- encompass the basic principles of research design and strategy including techniques (e.g. computing and bibliographic) for use in the research study;
- include opportunities for the presentation of research, both oral and written;
- provide access to relevant seminar programmes and conferences within and beyond the institution (where resources and opportunities permit);
- where appropriate, utilise the diverse cultural, social and educational backgrounds of research students in order to enrich the learning experience of all research students.

Faculties should ensure that all research students can access skills training sessions and events, and that staff are aware of any particular additional learning needs.

### *Transferable Skills Training*

29. Faculties should ensure that research students have access to suitable in-house or external training in transferable skills.

Training programmes should enable research students to:

- develop good oral and written communications skills equipping them with the skills to articulate ideas clearly to a range of audiences;
- use information technology appropriately for data management, recording and presenting material, etc.;
- apply effective project management skills including realistic goal setting and prioritization of activities;
- appreciate the factors which contribute to the success of formal and informal teams;
- provide effective support to others when involved in teaching, mentoring or demonstrating activities (refer to paragraph 55 of this Code (*Teaching and Demonstrating Duties*) for further guidance);
- take ownership of their own career progression.

## Ethical Considerations

30. It is the research student's responsibility, with appropriate guidance from the supervisory team, to observe due ethical standards in the design, conduct and reporting of the research (see also paragraph 46 of this Code (*Responsibilities of the Research Student*)). Ethical considerations must be addressed in all research and, where required, approval must be sought under the University's [Ethics Policy](#). That Policy, and other related documents, can be accessed on the Governance section of the University website. Research students should receive formal training in research ethics to help them to understand both the formal mechanisms for gaining ethical approval for their research and the intellectual debates surrounding research ethics. It should be recognised that research students may arrive with a particular cultural perspective regarding research ethics and sensitivity may be needed to ensure that a shared view is arrived at through training. Research students should be aware that research carried out without the necessary ethical approval will not be accepted for assessment. Research students should refer to the [Academic Integrity Regulations](#) for further information.

## Candidature

### *Initial Candidature*

31. Research students will be registered on the degree they intend to submit for. A research student on a PhD programme will be required to demonstrate that they have made satisfactory progress and must successfully complete the confirmation process described in paragraphs 65 to 73 of this Code (*The Second Progression Review (Confirmation of Doctoral Candidature)*).

### *Mode of Candidature*

32. Candidature may be full- or part-time. Research students should satisfy the Faculty that they can commit sufficient time to the project to sustain satisfactory progress.

### *Duration of Candidature, Suspension of Candidature and Extension of Candidature*

33. See the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) paragraphs 19 to 22 (*Duration of Research Degrees*) and paragraphs 41 to 42 (*Suspension of Candidature*) and paragraphs 43 to 44 (*Extension of*

*Candidature*). In practice, the period of candidature will usually be longer than the minimum period. In exceptional circumstances, when the research student has successfully completed their Second Progression Review (Confirmation) and where the research student is able to submit a thesis of sufficient quality, they may be permitted to submit a thesis earlier than the specified minimum period of candidature. Where a research student is in receipt of external funding and/or where an external body places an expectation that studies are completed within a defined period of time, the Faculty will assist the research student in meeting the requirement.

#### *Research Assistants*

34. An individual employed as a Research Assistant may also be registered as a research student. Performance as an employee and progress as a research student should be assessed and treated separately.

## Supervision

35. Subject to approval by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School, research students are allocated to a supervisory team on the recommendation of the Faculty Graduate School directorate. A supervisory team of at least two members is required, one of whom will be the main supervisor (see also paragraphs 39 to 43 of this Code (*Members of the Supervisory Team*)). The supervisory team should include the roles of main supervisor and co-ordinating supervisor and these roles will normally be undertaken by the same individual. See also paragraphs 39 to 43 of this Code (*Members of the Supervisory Team*), and paragraph 23 to 32 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees \(Supervision\)](#). Where there are any conflicts of interest in the composition of the supervisory team, these must be communicated immediately to the research student and to the Faculty Graduate School directorate, and an additional supervisor or advisor appointed to the team. An example of a conflict of interest would be a marital relationship between members of a supervisory team.
36. The supervisory team should be chosen to provide adequate academic expertise. Where a research student's project requires further expertise, an additional supervisor should be appointed to provide the required specialist advice. This additional supervisor may be external to the University.
37. The Faculty will ensure that the overall workload of supervisory staff is at a level that will allow supervisors to fulfil the responsibilities of the supervisory team as detailed in paragraph 38 of this Code (*Responsibilities of the Supervisory Team*). With effect for research students receiving formal offer letters on or after 1 August 2018, the Faculty will ensure that a member of staff supervises no more than the equivalent of six full-time research students at any one time; with the maximum number of students, whether full-or part-time, supervised by an individual supervisor being ten. All research students under supervision from the point of enrolment up to, and including those on nominal registration, will be included within this count. Cases for exemptions will be made by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School to the Dean, or their nominee (normally the Associate Dean (Education)), for approval on the [PGR Supervisory Loading: Request for Exemption form](#). Such exemptions may be granted, for example, where a supervisor is acting as a stand-in supervisor. Further information can be found in the [PGR Supervisory Loading: Guidance for Faculties](#).

## Responsibilities of the Supervisory Team

*The following paragraph should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 61 to 76 of this Code (Progression Monitoring and Reviews), and also paragraphs 51 to 52 (Arrangements for Research Students based at a Distance).*

38. The Faculty is responsible for ensuring the appointment of an appropriate supervisory team and for ensuring that individual members of the supervisory team are fully aware of their role and responsibilities, the scope of which includes the following:



## Responsibilities at the outset of supervision:

- to meet the research student to identify the initial objectives of the research;
- to confirm any requirements of the research student's funder, if applicable;
- to assist the research student in an Academic Needs Analysis with respect to research skills (discipline-specific and generic) and transferable skills, identifying sources of training provision at discipline/Faculty/University level or externally, and a timescale for undertaking training;
- to ensure that the research student has access to information about events organised for, or open to, research students in the discipline/Faculty/University and externally (including workshops, seminars and conferences);
- for research students whose first language is not English, to advise on additional English language support if appropriate (for example, some research students may experience difficulties with technical language);
- if the research student has disclosed a disability, to identify ways in which they may be supported in their studies with help and advice as required by [Student Disability & Wellbeing](#). Enabling Services encompasses a wide variety of support for research students who have disabilities, mental health issues or specific learning differences. Research students should also be asked about the impact, if any, of research activity on their disability;
- to explain the roles of the members of the supervisory team and to discuss and agree the pattern and frequency of contact between members of the supervisory team; (for example, international research students may benefit from a higher frequency of meetings during the first year, or, for research students with a disability, account may need to be taken of the effects of medication);
- to clarify arrangements for Progression Reviews ensuring that the research student is fully conversant with the Faculty and University procedures from the outset (see paragraphs 61 to 76 of this Code (*Progression Monitoring and Reviews*));
- to ensure that the research student is cognisant of Intellectual Property (IP) issues that may be/become associated with the project and is aware of their responsibilities in relation to research ethics (see [Ethics Policy](#) and paragraph 30 of this Code (*Ethical Considerations*), governance, and the University's [Intellectual Property Regulations](#));
- to ensure that the research student is aware of the obligations under the University's [Research Data Management Policy](#) and any other related requirements for data storage required by sponsors;
- to make clear to the research student their responsibilities as detailed in paragraph 46 of this Code (*Responsibilities of the Research Student*).

## Ongoing responsibilities

- to maintain regular contact with the research student in accordance with arrangements established at the outset and in-line with Faculty policy. The frequency of meetings will depend upon the stage and nature of the research and the particular needs of the research student, but it is expected good practice that, for full-time research students, these meetings should take place at least once a month, and more frequently at the start of the candidature (for part-time research student, these timings should be adjusted accordingly). This could include both face-to-face meetings and other means of communication (see also paragraphs 61 to 76 of this Code (*Progression Monitoring and Reviews*)). It is good practice that notes of these meetings are recorded and for research students with Student visa sponsorship, this is a requirement;

- to be aware of and to comply with internal and external reporting requirements pertaining to the research student;
- to be accessible at other reasonable times when advice is needed, keeping in mind the needs of the individual research student;
- to provide advice and guidance as necessary on the planning and development of the research programme and standard of work expected, recognising that some research students may require additional support. Such advice and guidance will include reference to literature and sources, research methods and techniques, academic integrity including avoidance of plagiarism, research ethics and governance, issues of copyright, intellectual property and health and safety;
- to ensure that the University's [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) is taken into account in all aspects of the research student's experience, and to be sensitive to the differing needs of research students arising from diversity.
- to ensure that the research student conforms to the University's research ethics, research governance, and Intellectual Property Regulations and policies which can be accessed via the University's governance website ([Research and Enterprise Policies](#));
- to ensure that the research student conforms to the University's [Research Data Management Policy](#) and any other related requirements for data storage required by sponsors;
- to monitor the research student's progress (requiring activity reports and written work as appropriate), providing reports to the Faculty as required, and giving constructive and timely feedback which is accessible and useful to the research student;
- to be aware of Progression Review deadlines, and ensure that the research student is aware of these and the requirements for each review;
- where progress is unsatisfactory, or the standard of work unacceptable, to ensure that the research student is made aware of this and that steps are taken in a timely fashion to develop a constructive plan for improvement;
- to set target dates for successive stages of the work in order to encourage timely submission of the thesis (taking into account any additional disability-related needs or language support arrangements required by the research student);
- to ensure that the research student is aware of other sources of advice at Faculty, Doctoral College and University level including:
  - [safety legislation](#);
  - [equal opportunities policy](#);
  - [intellectual property](#);
  - [careers guidance](#);
  - [submission and completion of research degree candidature](#).
- to provide pastoral support and/or refer the research student to other sources of support, independent mentors and other student support services;
- to check with the research student with regard to the effectiveness of any support they are receiving from the University services, and responding to any on-going or acute difficulties;
- to liaise with external bodies and make arrangements with any external supervisors;



- to keep the research student informed of events organised for, or open to, research students by the discipline/Faculty/University or externally, encouraging them to participate;
- to arrange for the research student to present work to staff or peers at seminars or conferences; to arrange mentoring for publishing and grant writing; to encourage publication of work; and to act as a link between the research student and the wider academic community;
- to participate in staff development activities to ensure competence in, and bring enhancement to, all aspects of the supervisory role.

#### Responsibilities in the latter stage of supervision

- to ensure that, where a research student is unable to submit a thesis within the required time (or funding period), a timely and reasoned request for extension of candidature is made in line with the [Regulations Governing Special Considerations and Suspension of Candidature for Postgraduate Research Students](#);
- to ensure arrangements are made for examination of the research student including the nomination of examiners in accordance with Faculty and University policy;
- to ensure any additional examination arrangements are made for research students with a disability (see paragraph 99 of this Code (*The Viva Voce*));
- to ensure that the research student is adequately prepared for the *viva voce*, arranging a practice examination if required.

## Members of the Supervisory Team

See also paragraph 23 to 32 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees \(Supervision\)](#) and also paragraphs 35 to 37 of this Code (*Supervision*).

39. At least one member of the supervisory team must have prior experience of supervision which has resulted in a successful doctorate. For members of staff new to supervision, experience should be gained through working closely with an experienced supervisor and attending the specified training and may include a recognised mentorship arrangement. Supervisors must be active researchers in the appropriate discipline and should normally themselves have a PhD or equivalent substantial research experience, experience of publication, and expertise in the area of the student's research. Members of staff in formal candidature for a higher degree should not be appointed as a main supervisor.
40. The **main supervisor** has responsibility for the supervision of the design and progress of the student's research project and for providing academic advice to the research student. The main supervisor should be available to provide guidance and direction on a regular basis. Paragraph 26 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees \(Supervision\)](#) sets out the criteria for the appointment of the main supervisor.
41. The **co-ordinating supervisor** has responsibility for ensuring that the administrative processes for the research student (e.g. Progression Reviews, arrangements for examination) are completed in a timely manner throughout a research student's candidature. The role of the co-ordinating supervisor is typically undertaken by the main supervisor. Paragraph 27 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees \(Supervision\)](#) sets out the criteria for the appointment of the co-ordinating supervisor.
42. New supervisors must take, or have taken, training (including training to ensure awareness of diversity issues which may impact on the supervision process, e.g. research students wishing to participate in their religious festivals) as determined by the Doctoral College Board and the Faculty Director of the Graduate School. New supervisors must be members of a supervisory team that includes an experienced supervisor.

43. The contact details and responsibilities of all members of the supervisory team should be readily available to research students throughout their programme (see paragraph 38 of this Code (*Responsibilities of the Supervisory Team*)).

#### *Unavailability of a Supervisor*

44. The supervisory team is collectively responsible for ensuring that the Faculty Graduate School Office is immediately notified if one of the supervisors is likely to be unavailable to supervise for a substantial period (normally one month or more). The supervisory team, in consultation with the research student, should then collectively assist the Faculty Director of the Graduate School to designate a temporary or permanent replacement, and in making handover arrangements.

#### *Change of Supervisors*

45. A request for change of supervisor can come from a member of the supervisory team or from the research student. Consultation between all parties should occur at an early stage. Changes to the main supervisor and/or any member of the supervisory team must be approved by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School. Records should be kept of the reason for any change. Suitable handover arrangements should be implemented and the new supervisory relationship monitored by the Faculty Graduate School directorate.

## **Responsibilities of the Research Student**

46. The ultimate responsibility for the thesis lies with the research student and it is therefore essential that they participate fully in planning the research project, considering advice and discussing the work with the main supervisor or supervisory team. Particular responsibilities of the research student will include:
- Showing commitment to the research project and programme of studies and agreeing with one or more members of the supervisory team the amount of time to be devoted to the research and the timing and duration of any holiday periods (also see paragraph 59 of this Code (*Holidays*)). Full-time research students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 37 hours per week on their studies throughout their candidature. Expectations for part-time research students are on a pro-rata basis. See paragraph 59 of this Code (*Holidays*) for information on holiday entitlements.
  - Discussing with one or more members of the supervisory team the type of guidance and commitment found to be most helpful, and agreeing a schedule of meetings, and the importance of adhering to the schedule and preparing for these meetings.
  - Analysing, with assistance from one or more members of the supervisory team, any initial or on-going training needs with respect to research and generic/transferable skills as part of the Academic Needs Analysis and participating in training activities as advised by one or more members of the supervisory team in order to meet these needs.
  - Maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the research plan as agreed with the supervisory team. This includes the provision of information and the submission of written material in sufficient time to allow for comment and discussion before proceeding to the next stage, complying with the deadlines associated with progression monitoring and reviews (see paragraphs 61 to 76 of this Code (*Progression Monitoring and Reviews*)).
  - Providing regular updates on progress (through Activity Reports on PGR Manager, or equivalent system), at least every three months.
  - Depositing data from the research project as required in the University repository.
  - Taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties however trivial they may seem (this is a recognised aspect of the relationship between a research student and the supervisory team). Where difficulties are perceived (by the research student) to stem from inadequate supervision, this should be raised with the relevant Faculty through appropriate means.

- Where applicable, discussing with one or more members of the supervisory team any changes in learning support needs which may arise during the period of study.
- Attending conferences and participating in staff and research student seminars, presenting work where appropriate and as guided by the supervisory team.
- Being aware of the diverse cultural, social and educational backgrounds of fellow research students, recognising the actual and potential benefits this brings to the learning experience.
- Preparing papers for publication or presentation at conferences, as guided by the supervisory team.
- Abiding by the institutional health and safety policy, observing safe working practices at all times, and following procedures prescribed by the supervisory team.
- Deciding when the thesis is to be submitted after taking due account of advice from one or more members of the supervisory team.
- Submitting the thesis as set out in the *Research Degree Candidature: Submission and Completion* section of the [Quality Handbook](#). Theses may be subject to restriction only in exceptional circumstances – see paragraph 103 of this Code (*Access to the Thesis*).

In addition, it is the responsibility of the research student to conform to both the University's [Intellectual Property Regulations](#), and the University's [Ethics Policy](#) (see paragraph 30 of this Code (*Ethical Considerations*)), consulting if necessary with a relevant member of the supervisory team.

Research students who fail to engage with these responsibilities will be subject to the [Procedures for circumstances that may lead to termination of postgraduate research degree candidature](#), with the exception that failure to abide by health and safety requirements will be referred for investigation under the [Regulations Governing Student Discipline](#).

## Responsibilities of the Faculty

47. Although much of the responsibility for ensuring that the student's research reaches successful completion is shared between the research student and the supervisory team, the Faculty has overall responsibility for the process. The Faculty should satisfy itself that the requirements of the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and this Code are met.
48. In addition, and as set out in this Code (paragraph 49 (*Research Environment*) and paragraph 50 (*Facilities and Equipment*) of this Code), the Dean of the Faculty should ensure that research students are accepted into an environment which provides support and facilities for their overall learning and for their development as researchers.

### *Research Environment*

- 49 The research environment plays a key role in ensuring that research students have the best possible opportunities to develop and bring their research projects to fruition. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Code set out in full the factors involved in creating a robust environment, and the Faculty should pay careful attention to these; these factors set the context for all areas covered by this Code. The Faculty should strive to create an infrastructure that is capable of supporting the range of research students recruited. This may be located for some periods of the degree in or among other educational institutions, or in a work setting (for example, in industry).

### *Facilities and Equipment*

50. Facilities and equipment to support students' research should be made available and explained in a clear statement to research students. These facilities should meet in full the expectations of the relevant Research Council(s), and will include as a minimum:

- access to appropriate space to work, as indicated by the research student's Academic Needs Analysis and by Faculty policy;
- the provision of laboratory and technical support where appropriate;
- access to computing facilities in accordance with iSolutions' policy. Faculties should have a mechanism by which research students may submit a request for a computer with a more powerful specification;
- access to appropriate electronic resources of the University. Faculties should have a mechanism by which research students may submit a request for access to specialist electronic resources;
- appropriate access to email, telephone, and photocopying facilities;
- opportunities to meet and network with other research students and researchers;
- appropriate library and other academic support services;
- the opportunity to apply for funds to support training and for attendance at conferences and other relevant events.

Advice should be sought from [Student Disability & Wellbeing](#) with regard to accessing any specialist equipment or assistive technology for research students who may need such support.

Part-time research students are normally allocated space on a shared basis only.

#### *Arrangements for Research Students based at a Distance*

51. Where a Faculty admits research students based at a distance from the University, satisfactory arrangements must be put in place to ensure an equivalent experience to locally based research students. Such arrangements will include:
- a specified number of face-to-face meetings with members of the supervisory team which may be supplemented by email, videoconference and other means of communication;
  - access to training and personal development activities by means of existing training opportunities or, alternatively, equivalent training which may include web-based training or other distance means;
  - opportunities to network and interact with staff and fellow research students, either face-to-face or through a virtual environment.
52. The above arrangements should be agreed and recorded on an individual basis for each research student, should be approved by the Faculty, and kept under review as part of the annual review process. In some cases, it may be appropriate to consider agreeing joint supervision arrangements with another institution (see paragraph 11 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees \(Candidature\)](#)).

Faculties should refer to the [Mode and types of study](#) section of the Quality Handbook for further guidance on the modes of PhD that include periods of study away from the University. See also paragraph 38 of this Code (*Responsibilities of the Supervisory Team*).

#### *Feedback Mechanisms*

53. Faculties must have in place mechanisms to collect, review and, where appropriate, respond to feedback from research students, supervisors, examiners, external parties and others concerned with postgraduate research programmes. Separate arrangements should exist for obtaining individual and collective feedback and, when appropriate, for publishing the results of collective feedback and actions taken. Timescales for the feedback and review cycle should be clearly specified and should occur at least annually, using mechanisms that allow for comparison and consistency across feedback and review cycles. Faculties should also strongly encourage research students to participate in national surveys (such as the Postgraduate Research

Experience Survey (PRES)) endorsed by the University, requesting research student feedback. The Faculty Graduate School Committee should work with the Professional Development Subcommittee to collect and review student feedback on their training activities to inform the portfolio of training provision and, where appropriate, respond to research student feedback on their training activities. Wherever possible feedback should be gathered and processed anonymously, unless the research student's permission is otherwise given.

#### *Submission and Completion Rates*

54. Faculties should monitor submission and completion rates for both full-time and part-time research students and reflect on these in the annual quality monitoring cycle. They should take management action where necessary to ensure that submission rates for research students are at least at the minimum thresholds laid down by the University and/or external funders and regulatory bodies.

## Teaching and Demonstrating Duties

55. Having completed Faculty-approved training, research students should, wherever possible, be offered the opportunity to undertake teaching or demonstrating duties, provided this does not encroach on their studies. Faculties should refer to the [Research Students Who Teach: Policy](#) for guidance.

## Publications

56. Research students will be encouraged by their supervisory team to produce articles and papers for publication during candidature. Students should not be unduly restricted from publishing their work unless there are matters related to funding, confidentiality or intellectual property that prevent publication. Preparation of publications should not take precedence over the writing of the thesis and the supervisory team should give advice about an appropriate balance.

## Health and Safety

57. It is the supervisory team's responsibility to advise the research student on safety procedures, especially if the research project entails working with dangerous equipment and materials or is being carried out in a laboratory environment. It is the research student's responsibility to abide by the University's [Health and Safety Policy](#), and that of any other institution or organisation where they may from time to time be located in pursuit of their research, to comply with safe working practices at all times and to follow those procedures prescribed by the supervisory team.

## Equal Opportunities

58. It is the supervisory team's responsibility to ensure that the University's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) is taken into account in all aspects of the research student's experience related to their degree.

## Holidays and Absence due to Ill Health

#### *Holidays*

59. In addition to University closure periods and bank holidays, full-time research students are permitted to take a further 26 days annual leave (or in accordance with funder requirements). For part-time research students this is applicable on a pro-rata basis. Research students should seek the prior agreement of their supervisory team (in practice this will normally be the co-ordinating supervisor) regarding the timing of holidays. The annual leave year runs from 1 August to 31 July; research students commencing their research part-way through the academic

year will have their annual leave allowance calculated on a pro-rata basis. International research students on a Student visa should refer to the [Visa and Immigration Student Advice Service](#) for guidance.

#### *Absence due to Ill Health*

60. Research students experiencing illness that affects their studies are subject to the [Regulations Governing Special Considerations and Suspension of Candidature for Postgraduate Research Students](#). These Regulations apply to all research degrees but do not cover taught assessed components of research degrees which are governed in accordance with the [Regulations Governing Special Considerations \(including Deadline Extension Requests\) for all Taught Programmes and Taught Assessed Components of Research Degrees](#). For research students in receipt of a medical certificate confirming that they are unable to pursue their studies for medical reasons, and for periods of illness longer than five days, discussion of the effect of the illness on their studies must be held with their main/co-ordinating supervisor (see the [Attendance and Completion of Programme Regulations](#)). This also applies to part-time research students on a pro-rata basis. Externally funded research students should check the terms of their studentship with regard to advising their funder of any absence due to illness and the provision of a medical certificate. It is good practice for research students to keep their main supervisor or co-ordinating supervisor advised of any short periods of illness, particularly if these are frequent, so that any potential effect on progress can be identified and any additional support provided if thought necessary.

## Progression Monitoring and Reviews

### *Monitoring and Supporting Research Student Progress*

- 61 Faculties will have in place, and bring to the attention of research students and relevant staff, clearly defined mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students' progress.

Faculties should have clear mechanisms for feeding back information on progress to research students, and on actions that are taken in response to any issues encountered.

It is good practice to keep records of meetings between research students and supervisors. Faculties will provide guidance on keeping appropriate records of meetings and related activities to research students, the supervisory team and others involved in progression monitoring and review processes. Normally, the appropriate mechanism to record the outcome of meetings will be Quarterly Activity reports in PGR Manager (or equivalent system). Quarterly Activity reports should be submitted by research students and reviewed by supervisors.

Supervisory teams and research students should establish a mutually agreed series of meetings, both formal and informal, to discuss progress and any problems arising.

When reviewing progress, the supervisory team should routinely assess whether the support needs of their research students are being effectively met.

It is the responsibility of the main/co-ordinating supervisor to inform the research student of unsatisfactory progress as soon as this becomes apparent. Significant academic concerns about a student's progress may result in the scheduling of an Exceptional Progression Review.

### *Progression Reviews – Overview*

62. Faculties will bring to the attention of research students, and relevant staff, clearly defined formats for submissions which inform the Progression Reviews, and the criteria to be used for defining outcomes from Progression Reviews (as specified in the [Postgraduate Research Progression Reviews: Criteria and Submission Guidelines](#)). As a minimum, students must submit a written report in advance of each Review which should summarise their progress.

Students should also highlight any particular problems they have encountered (e.g. access to resources, facilities or other additional disability-related or language support requirements)



together with details of the action taken. The student's report should also indicate whether any additional support requirements or facilities already being provided are continuing to meet their needs, or if any different or additional adjustments are required. Each Progression Review will also include a review of the student's Academic Needs Analysis and the Data Management Plan. The [Regulations Governing Academic Integrity](#) apply to all Progression Reviews and the Assessment Panel is responsible for referring any suspected breach to the relevant School's Academic Integrity Officer for their investigation.

Each Progression Review must also include a *viva voce*, which should take place in a supportive way. In conducting the assessment, arrangements will be made, where necessary, to accommodate any additional needs of the research student. Following each Progression Review, the research student will be given constructive written feedback by the Assessment Panel and, if necessary, guidance on actions to be taken to support progress in their candidature.

The Assessment Panel for each Progression Review will be constituted according to the requirements specified in the paragraphs below. Requests for an independent notetaker to attend the Progression Review and to record a summary of the discussion may be made to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School.

The Faculty Director of the Graduate School is responsible for approving the Panel's recommendation and, in circumstances where they deem this appropriate, may choose to delegate the approval process to a nominee. The nominee must be a member of the Faculty Graduate School directorate. Where this is done, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training and support is in place for the nominee and that there is a clear and transparent process within the Faculty to ensure that decisions are applied consistently across all programmes within the Faculty.

Decisions will be made in accordance with the timings as set out in the tables in paragraph 63.

Two attempts at each Progression Review are permitted:

- A research student who fails to meet the criteria required for a successful Progression Review at their second attempt and where the Assessment Panel does not (or, as in the case of MPhil candidates, may not) recommend transfer to MPhil candidature will be withdrawn from the degree and their candidature will be terminated in accordance with the [Procedures for circumstances that may lead to termination of postgraduate research degree candidature](#).
- A research student who does not submit material by the specified deadline for their first attempt at a Progression Review, and where no request has been submitted and approved under the [Regulations Governing Special Considerations and Suspension of Candidature for Postgraduate Research Students](#), will be deemed to have failed that attempt.
- A research student who does not submit material by the specified deadline for their second attempt at a Progression Review, and where no request has been submitted and approved under the [Regulations Governing Special Considerations and Suspension of Candidature for Postgraduate Research Students](#), will be deemed to have failed their second attempt and candidature will be terminated in accordance with the [Procedures for circumstances that may lead to termination of postgraduate research degree candidature](#).

Termination of candidature has additional significance in the case of research students with Student visas and they should contact the [Visa and Immigration Student Advice Service](#) for guidance.

### *Progression Reviews - Timings*

63. Research students who enrolled on their studies after 1 August 2016 are required to undertake Progression Reviews as outlined in the *Summary of timings of progression reviews for research students who enrolled on their studies on or after 1 August 2016* tables below. The Second Progression Review is known as confirmation of doctoral candidature (paragraphs 65 to 73 of this Code (*The Second Progression Review (Confirmation of Doctoral Candidature)*)) and must be successfully completed before a research student may submit a thesis for examination.

Research students will be required to submit the material for a Progression Review normally not later than four working weeks in advance of the decision deadline. These timings are defined to enable the Assessment Panel to consider the submitted material, hold the Review, and make a recommendation within the specified timeframe. Timings refer to the full month, i.e. the decision from the first attempt at the First Progression Review should be made before the end of month 10.

Summary of timings of progression reviews for research students who enrolled on their studies on or after 1 August 2016 ( <u>full-time</u> programmes) <sup>3</sup>				
	First attempt		Second Attempt	
	Submission window	Decision deadline	Submission window	Decision deadline
First Progression Review	7 – 9 months	Before the end of month 10	10 – 11 months	Before the end of month 12
Second Progression Review (Confirmation)	18 – 20 months	Before the end of month 21	21 – 23 months	Before the end of month 24
Third Progression Review	30 – 32 months	Before the end of month 33	33 -35 months	Before the end of month 36

Summary of timings of progression reviews for research students who enrolled on their studies on or after 1 August 2016 ( <u>part-time</u> programmes) <sup>3</sup>				
	First Attempt		Second Attempt	
	Submission window	Decision deadline	Submission window	Decision deadline
First Progression Review	15 – 20 months	Before the end of month 21	21 – 23 months	Before the end of month 24
Second Progression Review (Confirmation)	30 – 41 months	Before the end of month 42	42 – 47 months	Before the end of month 48
Third Progression Review	61 – 65 months	Before the end of month 66	66 – 71 months	Before the end of month 72

In exceptional circumstances, and only where a student can be shown to be making exceptional progress, a research student may be permitted to undertake their Progression Review earlier than the timeframe specified. In such a case, the request must be made by the main supervisor to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School for recommendation to the Faculty Education Committee for approval.

Research students who first enrolled on their studies before 1 August 2016 will follow the progression monitoring timings and procedures that applied at the time of their year of entry and as determined by their Faculty (including those for upgrade/transfer from MPhil to PhD). A summary of the applicable timings, depending on year of entry, is set out in the table below and students should refer to their Faculty for further information. However, the policy and



procedure outlined in paragraphs 65 to 73 of this Code (*The Second Progression Review (Confirmation of Doctoral Candidature)*) will apply to research students who first enrolled on their doctoral studies before 1 August 2016 when completing their upgrade/transfer from MPhil to PhD.

Summary of timings of confirmation of doctoral candidature/upgrade from MPhil to PhD <sup>3</sup>		
Time of Entry	Full-time	Part-time
After 1 August 2016	18 - 21 months	30 - 42 months
1 August 2015 to 1 August 2016	18 - 21 months	30 - 42 months
Before 1 August 2015	At least 6 months before final thesis submission	At least 6 months before final thesis submission

### *The First Progression Review*

64. The format of assessment informing the First Progression Review will be determined by the Faculty and will be conducted by an Assessment Panel consisting of an internal Independent Assessor and a member of the supervisory team<sup>4</sup>. Following the Review, the Independent Assessor will recommend either: to progress to the next stage of candidature; or to re-assess. If re-assessment is recommended, the research student will be given written guidance on preparation for their second (and final) attempt.

The second attempt at the First Progression Review will have the same format as the first attempt, and will usually be conducted by the same Panel as for the first attempt but with the addition of an Independent Chair (see paragraph 96 of this Code (*The Viva Voce*)). In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School may wish to appoint a fourth panel member independent of the supervisory team. The second attempt at the First Progression Review will involve a repeat *viva voce*. However, if the Assessment Panel deems that the research student's written submission is of sufficient quality to permit progression, the repeat *viva voce* will be cancelled. The second attempt at the First Progression Review will lead to one of three recommendations: to progress to the next stage of candidature; to transfer the research student to MPhil candidature; or to terminate the research student's candidature.

### *The Second Progression Review (Confirmation of Doctoral Candidature)*

65. The Second Progression Review consists of the confirmation process and all research students will follow the policy and procedure outlined in paragraphs 65 to 73 of this Code (*The Second Progression Review (Confirmation of Doctoral Candidature)*). However, the process for students who enrolled on their doctoral studies before 1 August 2016 is known as Upgrade/Transfer from MPhil to PhD and will follow the timings as specified in the *Summary of timings of confirmation of doctoral candidature/upgrade from MPhil to PhD* table above. However, it should be noted that **all** upgrade/transfer and confirmation panels must consist of at least two Independent Assessors regardless of year of admission (see paragraph 67 of this Code (*The Confirmation Panel*)). The exception to this is for those research students who are in candidature for an MPhil degree. Such candidates will be required to undertake the Second Progression Review in accordance with the timings set down for doctoral candidates but the criteria for confirmation (as specified in paragraph 69 of this Code) will not apply.
66. All research students who are registered at doctoral level must successfully meet the requirements of a confirmation panel. The precise format of the assessment will vary according

<sup>3</sup> These timings may be adjusted on a pro-rata basis for research students registered on non-standard research programmes where other duties are a formal part of the programme; for example, the Clinical Doctorate Research Fellowship scheme or the Mayflower Scholarship scheme.

<sup>4</sup> In exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the Faculty Director of the Graduate School, an external Independent Assessor may also be appointed to the panel.

to the discipline and should involve the practice and criteria set out in paragraph 69 of this Code (*Criteria for Confirmation*).

A member of the supervisory team will normally be invited to attend the *viva voce* as an observer, however, the research student can ask to meet the confirmation panel without a supervisor being present. Such requests should be submitted by the student to the Faculty Graduate School Office for approval by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School.

**67. The Confirmation Panel**

The recommendation whether or not to confirm doctoral candidature will be made by a confirmation panel constituted for this purpose. The confirmation panel will consist of at least two members of staff who have had no direct involvement in the research and can take the role of Independent Assessors. One of these members of staff should act as chair of the panel and is responsible for leading the *viva voce*. In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School may approve an Independent Assessor to the confirmation panel who has been appointed as a 'Visitor' to the University.

The confirmation panel for the second attempt at the Second Progression Review (Confirmation) will be conducted by the same panel as for the first attempt but with the addition of an Independent Chair (see paragraph 96 of this Code (*The Viva Voce*)).

**68. Supporting Evidence**

The confirmation panel making the recommendation must have reviewed a sufficient body of written work in order to make a judgement on the criteria noted in paragraph 69 of this Code (*Criteria for Confirmation*). This body of work should include:

- an overview of the research problem and rationale for the project;
- a substantial literature review;
- well-developed plans for fieldwork and data analysis.

**69. Criteria for Confirmation**

In order for doctoral candidature to be confirmed, the confirmation panel must satisfy itself that the research student has demonstrated the ability to:

- manage the research project;
- become proficient in the special field of research involved;
- achieve success at doctoral level given adequate motivation and perseverance.

The confirmation panel must also satisfy itself that the project being undertaken is of sufficient scope, originality and theoretical interest to constitute a genuine contribution to the subject in the form of the understanding of a problem, the advancement of knowledge or the generation of new ideas. Students who first enrolled on their research degree on or after 1 August 2020 will not be confirmed in Doctoral Candidature by the Faculty following the Second Progression Review (Confirmation) should any training mandated by the Doctoral College remain unsatisfactorily completed.

**70. The recommendation**

Faculties should have a clear policy on the scrutiny of confirmation reports and confirmation of doctoral candidature should be recommended only after the confirmation panel has formally reviewed the research topic, its suitability for development into a doctoral thesis, and the research student's ability and progress. The recommendation should be supported by all members of the confirmation panel (paragraph 73 of this Code (*The recommendation*) sets out the process to be followed in circumstances where a unanimous decision cannot be reached).

Research students who have been successful in their confirmation should receive written feedback on the confirmation process highlighting, where appropriate, any potential areas of

concern. If the recommendation is not to confirm doctoral candidature, the research student must be given a written report giving a statement of the reasons, and guidance regarding any ways in which they might reach the required standard.

The confirmation panel for the second attempt at confirmation of doctoral candidature may make one of three recommendations: to recommend that a research student's doctoral candidature is confirmed; to recommend that the research student is transferred to MPhil candidature, or to recommend that the research student's candidature is terminated.

If a unanimous decision cannot be reached in either the first or second confirmation panel, an Additional Assessor shall be appointed by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School. This Additional Assessor will be provided with a copy of the confirmation report and the separate reports of the two original Assessors by the Faculty Graduate School Office. The Additional Assessor shall be permitted to interview the research student before submitting a final report and recommendation to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School who shall consider the independent reports of the original Assessors and the report of the Additional Assessor before making a final decision.

### *The Third Progression Review*

71. The format of assessment informing the Third Progression Review will be determined by the Faculty and, as a minimum will include detailed discussion of the thesis structure and a plan for submission. The assessment will be conducted by the student's supervisory team. The Review will lead to one of two recommendations: to progress; or to re-assess. If re-assessment is recommended, the research student will be given written guidance on preparation for their second (and final) attempt.
72. The documentation required for the second attempt at the Third Progression Review will be the same as for the first attempt, and the assessment will be conducted by a Panel consisting of a member of the supervisory team and an internal Independent Assessor appointed by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School.<sup>5</sup> The Panel will also include an Independent Chair (see paragraph 96 of this Code (*The Viva Voce*)). The second attempt at the Third Progression Review will involve a repeat *viva voce*. However, if the Assessors deem that the research student's written submission is of sufficient quality to permit progression, the *viva voce* will be cancelled. The second attempt at the Third Progression Review will lead to one of three recommendations: to progress to the final stage of candidature; to transfer the research student to MPhil candidature; or to terminate the research student's candidature.

### *The Interim Progression Review*

73. All part-time research students who have not undergone a Progression Review in the previous twelve months of candidature should undergo an Interim Progression Review. If a research student is due to submit a Progression Review Report within one month of the next Interim Progression Review, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School may waive the requirements for an Interim Progression Review.
74. An Interim Progression Review cannot lead directly to termination of candidature. However, Interim Reviews are formal points in a research student's candidature and should be treated as such. Interim Progression Reviews are also the method by which the Faculty Director of the Graduate School (in their capacity as Chair of the Faculty Graduate School Committee) may at any time review the progress of an individual research student ([Regulations for Research Degrees](#); paragraph 33 (*Progression*)).
75. The format of the assessment informing the Interim Progression Review will be determined by the Faculty, and will involve all members of the supervisory team. It will usually involve a review of progress since the last Progression Review, a review of the Academic Needs Analysis and the

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<sup>5</sup> In exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the Faculty Director of the Graduate School, a third panel member independent to the supervisory team and/or an external Independent Assessor may be appointed.

Data Management Plan, and, where relevant, details of the research student's plan to submit the thesis. Following the Review, the research student will be given written feedback and any necessary guidance on actions to be taken to support progress in their candidature. An Interim Progression Review will lead to one of two recommendations: to continue to the next Progression Review; or, if progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, referral to an Exceptional Progression Review

#### *The Exceptional Progression Review*

76. An Exceptional Progression Review may be scheduled on the direction of the Faculty Director of the Graduate School if significant academic concerns about a research student's progress have been raised, either independently or as a result of an Interim Progression Review. An Exceptional Progression Review usually follows the procedures for the Second Progression Review (Confirmation of Doctoral Candidature) and should be carried out by two Independent Assessors. Following the Review, the Assessment Panel will recommend either: to continue in candidature; or to re-assess. If re-assessment is recommended, the research student will be given written guidance on preparation for their second (and final) attempt. The second attempt at the Exceptional Progression Review will have the same format as the first attempt, and will be conducted by the same Panel as for the first attempt but with the addition of an Independent Chair (see paragraph 96 of this Code (*The Viva Voce*)). The second attempt at the Exceptional Progression Review will involve a repeat *viva voce* and will lead to one of two recommendations: to continue in candidature; or to terminate the research student's candidature.

### Transfer from PhD to MPhil

77. A research student may be permitted to transfer from PhD to MPhil at any time prior to the submission of the thesis. This may follow the outcome of the Second Progression Review (Confirmation) or a later Progression Review, or may be at the request of the research student in consultation with their supervisory team at any stage during candidature. The MPhil is an award in its own right (see paragraphs 6 and 7 of this Code (*The Difference between PhD and MPhil*)), and a *viva voce* is required as part of the MPhil examination. The Faculty should ensure that research students are made aware of this requirement. The University will comply with its obligations under the relevant immigration legislation which may be updated from time to time. A research student who is concerned about their entitlement to remain in the UK following transfer to MPhil should seek urgent advice from the [Visa and Immigration Student Advice Service](#).

### Transfer to Nominal Registration

78. A research student may be permitted to transfer to nominal registration, subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 36 to 40 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees \(Nominal Registration\)](#). Applications to transfer to nominal registration must be submitted on-line through PGR Manager (or equivalent system) or through the Faculty Graduate School Office. The application should contain confirmation of all the items in paragraph 36 of those Regulations. This should also include the date of submission and electronic version of a draft of the thesis and the supervisory feedback.
79. Whilst in nominal registration, and until the award of the degree has been made, research students may retain access only to library and computing facilities. Access to office space may be extended at the discretion of the Faculty Graduate School Committee in accordance with Faculty policy.

### Production and Submission of the Thesis

80. As stated in paragraph 22 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees \(Duration of Research Degrees\)](#), a research student who fails to submit a thesis by the end of the maximum period of

study will be deemed to have withdrawn from the programme and candidature will be terminated. The requirements for the production of the thesis for submission (as set out in the Research Degree Candidature Submission and Completion section of the [Quality Handbook](#)) should be followed.

#### *Decision to Submit*

81. The decision to submit the thesis must be the research student's own. The research student should take note of supervision advice but this advice should not be taken as an indication that the final thesis will fulfil the requirements of the examiners. The main supervisor must inform the Faculty Graduate School Office in writing if the research student submits without their agreement; this information will not be made known to the examiners but may be referred to in any subsequent discussions about the outcome of the examination, particularly where failure leads to an appeal.

#### *Notification of Intention to Submit*

82. Research students must inform the Faculty Graduate School Office of their intention to submit (using the [Intention to Submit form](#)) no later than two months prior to the date of submission in order to allow adequate time for examination arrangements to be made. A student in suspension is not permitted to indicate intention to submit, and may only do so on their return giving the required minimum two months' notice as specified above.

#### *Maximum Length of Thesis*

83. The maximum length of a thesis is normally 75,000 words for a PhD or 50,000 words for an MPhil, excluding references and bibliography, or equivalent in the case of alternative formats of thesis (also see paragraphs 85 to 86 of this Code (*Alternative Formats of Thesis Submission*)). Where appropriate, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School, in their capacity as Chair of Faculty Graduate School Committee, may determine a higher word limit for a specific discipline. All such decisions must be reported to the Faculty Education Committee. A thesis submitted for an MPhil after a PhD examination is not subject to a maximum length of 50,000 words. The maximum length of the thesis does not include supporting material or evidence which may be bound in as appendices. Appendices should be clearly marked as such and listed on the contents page. If appendices are submitted in separate volumes, they must be prepared and bound in the same style as the thesis. All supporting material or evidence will be available to the examiners and will form part of the record.

In deciding whether to include an appendix, the research student should consider the requirements of the research funder as well as the University's policy on [research data management](#).

It is important to remember that the stated maximum word limit is not a target figure; an important aspect of scholarship that must be demonstrated in a thesis is the ability to convey information concisely. Research students who exceed the stipulated length for the thesis may be required by the examiners to re-submit their thesis in a format which does not exceed the maximum length.

Prior to notifying their intention to submit (see paragraph 82 of this Code (*Notification of Intention to Submit*)), a research student may present a statement to their supervisory team indicating that the thesis cannot be contained within the stipulated length for reasons relating to the subject material. Should the supervisory team consider a longer thesis is appropriate, its recommendation must be submitted to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School for a decision in advance of the student submitting their thesis for examination.

#### *Thesis Written in a Language other than English*

84. A thesis may be written in a language other than English with the approval of the Faculty Graduate School Committee. When considering such a request, the nature of the research and discipline will be taken into account by the Faculty Graduate School Committee. It will require

assurances that there will be no problems in examining the thesis and that the subsequent published work will be accessible to subject specialists.

#### *Alternative Formats of Thesis Submission*

85. In the following disciplines, an alternative format of thesis submission is permitted:

- Art and Design
- Dance
- Drama
- English
- Film
- Music
- Performing Arts

Details will be advised by the Faculty.

86. The submission must consist of two parts: a body of work as appropriate to the discipline (for example substantial original practical work) completed in conjunction with a critical written component with a maximum length of 40,000 words and an indicative minimum of 20,000 words (30,000 and 15,000 words respectively for MPhil). The nature and extent of each component must be proposed by the research student in consultation with the supervisor, for consideration and approval by the Faculty Graduate School Committee by the time of the first Progression Review. The relationship of the components must be such as to form a holistic original research project, demonstrating the criteria as described in the section *The Difference between PhD and MPhil* in this Code (paragraph 5 (for PhD) or paragraph 7 (for MPhil)).

#### *Declaration of Authorship*

87. At the time of submission, a thesis should include a signed declaration from the research student that the material presented for examination is their own work and has not been submitted for any other award (and, where relevant, how it relates to a group project).

#### *Academic Integrity*

88. The University's [Regulations Governing Academic Integrity](#) state that research students are required to complete their work, and where relevant their professional practice, in accordance with the principles and practices set out in those Regulations. In particular, all research students should avoid breaches of academic integrity such as plagiarism, cheating, falsification and recycling, breaching ethical standards and misconduct in research. Suspected breaches of academic integrity will be investigated via the procedures set down within the Regulations.

## **Examination**

89. Once a research student has given notice of their intention to submit a thesis, examiners must be appointed and arrangements made for the examination. The internal and external examiners are nominated by the co-ordinating supervisor following the process for nomination of examiners as set out in the [Quality Handbook](#). The examination process, including the *viva voce*, should normally be completed within three months of submission. The [Regulations Governing Academic Integrity](#) apply to the examination of the student's thesis and any suspected breach should be reported to the Internal Examiner who is responsible for referring the matter to the relevant School's Academic Integrity Officer for investigation.

90. In order to ensure externality and quality assurance of choices made and justifications provided, examiners' nomination forms should be approved by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School in their capacity as Chair of Faculty Graduate School Committee (or a (sole and named) deputy

who must be a member of the Faculty Graduate School directorate). Alternatively, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School may choose to refer the nomination to the Faculty Graduate School Committee for its consideration.

91. It is the responsibility of the member of the supervisory team acting as co-ordinating supervisor to ensure that the arrangements for the examination are made. The co-ordinating supervisor should ensure that the Faculty Graduate School Office is advised of the date of the *viva voce*.

#### *Examiners*

92. The research student will normally be examined by an external and an internal examiner, and in exceptional circumstances one additional external examiner may be appointed. Research students who are members of staff of the University of Southampton should have two external examiners and an internal examiner appointed. For this purpose, a member of staff is defined as stated in paragraph 3 of the [Regulations for Members of Staff in Candidature for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy](#).

One examiner, either the internal or the external, may be drawn from the confirmation panel (e.g. an internal member of staff who acted in the role of Independent Assessor or an external Assessor if used) provided that they have had no further material contact with the research project since the confirmation, and that the other examiner is entirely new to the project.

Examiners, both internal and external, should have sufficient experience and appropriate subject expertise to be able to examine effectively. They should also be sensitive to, and take into account in the examining process, reasonable adjustments, equality and diversity. Collectively, the examiners should have acted as examiner for at least three doctoral examinations, and be familiar with examination practice and standards in the UK. As an example, if the external examiner possesses subject expertise but limited UK examining experience, this may be compensated for by a suitably UK-experienced internal examiner.

#### *Internal Examiners*

93. Academic members of University of Southampton staff with appropriate expertise and the ability to offer impartial scrutiny of the thesis submitted for examination may be appointed as internal examiners. Individuals who are not members of University of Southampton staff but who hold "visitor" status may not be appointed as internal examiners, with the exception of the following:
- An individual holding a substantive post within University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust or associated NHS organisation, or a member of staff employed at the Natural Environmental Research Council or the National Oceanography Centre, or an individual who has a similar joint employment status between the University of Southampton and its partners may also be appointed as an Internal Examiner but in such cases, an Independent Chair must be appointed in accordance with paragraph 95 of this Code (*Examination: The Independent Chair*).

No member of either the current or any previous supervisory team may be appointed as an internal examiner; nor may they take part in the judgement of the thesis under consideration in any other way. In addition, other researchers who have had any co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the research student's work, or whose own work is the focus of the research project such that there would be a conflict of interest or potential lack of objectivity, may not be appointed as internal or external examiners. Members of staff who have had pastoral involvement with the research student such that objectivity would potentially be affected may also not be appointed to the examining team.

#### *External Examiners*

94. External examiners should be independent of the University of Southampton and have the ability to offer impartial scrutiny of the thesis submitted for examination. The criteria for appointing external examiners for research degrees should be followed.

External examiners should normally hold an academic post in another higher education institution. Nominations for external examiners who do not hold such positions should be accompanied by a statement outlining their suitability and ability to examine, and there should be sufficient evidence of their research experience and expertise in the subject.

Former employees and graduates of the University are not eligible to be external examiners until an interval of at least three years has elapsed.

External examiners should have had no formal academic contact with the research student during the period of research candidature and, although reciprocity may be more difficult to avoid than for taught programmes, examiners should not be appointed from within a Faculty where University of Southampton members of staff have recently examined for the same subject if at all possible. Similarly, external examiners would not normally be expected to be reappointed if they have examined a research student at the University of Southampton within the last two years. In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School, in consultation with the Director of the Doctoral College, may appoint an external examiner who has examined a doctoral degree at the University of Southampton within the last two years. Members of University of Southampton staff are ineligible to act as external examiners for University of Southampton awards.

#### *The Independent Chair*

95. An Independent Chair must be appointed by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School (in their capacity as Chair of Faculty Graduate School Committee) in the following circumstances:
- in response to any request from the Faculty Graduate School Committee, an examiner, a member of the supervisory team or the research student;
  - where the examination team is inexperienced at examining under the UK system (when one examiner has never conducted a *viva voce* before);
  - where the internal examiner holds a substantive post within University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust or associated NHS organisation, or is a member of staff employed at the Natural Environmental Research Council or the National Oceanography Centre, or has a similar joint employment status between the University of Southampton and its partners;
  - where there have been substantial difficulties with research student progress;
  - where the research student is undertaking a second *viva voce* either with or without a resubmission of the thesis.
96. The role of Independent Chair should be filled by an academic member of University of Southampton staff with substantial experience in supervising and examining research students in the United Kingdom. The Independent Chair is not provided with a copy of the thesis.

#### *Role of the Supervisory Team in the Examination Process*

97. A supervisor should be available to provide clarification at the *viva voce* if requested by the examiners. At the request of the research student, one member of the supervisory team may be invited to attend the *viva voce*. A supervisor who is in attendance at the *viva voce* will not play an active role in the examination and may not take part in the judgment of the thesis under consideration.

Such requests should be made in writing, by the research student, to the Faculty Graduate School Office for consideration by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School.

#### *The Viva Voce*



98. Responsibility for approving the arrangements for the examination rests with the Faculty Graduate School directorate. The document [Guidance for Examiners of Postgraduate Research Awards](#) provides additional information for staff and examiners in preparing for a *viva voce*.
99. The *viva voce* will be chaired by the internal examiner or by an Independent Chair. The chair is expected to monitor good practice within the examination and to ensure that:
- the examination is conducted according to the [Regulations](#) and the Code;
  - the research student is treated fairly and appropriately;
  - the process is appropriate and the outcome of the examination represents fairly the views of the examiners.

Following the *viva voce*, the chair will provide a report to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School.

100. Videoconference (or other suitable technologically-based communication) arrangements can be made for the conduct of the *viva voce*, provided all parties agree to these arrangements and all necessary safeguards are in place to facilitate the smooth running of the examination. The Faculty should seek specialist advice from iSolutions as to the best method of facilitating a *viva voce* via videoconference and should consult the guidance document *Conducting a viva voce as a videoconference*, available on the [Quality Handbook](#).
101. In preparing for and conducting the *viva voce*, reasonable adjustments will be made, where necessary, to accommodate any additional needs of the research student. In particular, examiners should be informed of any measures or adjustments needed in conducting the examination. For example, it is important that the room in which the *viva voce* is to be held is appropriately arranged to ensure physical accessibility and clear communication.

#### *The Examiners' Reports and Recommendation*

102. Each examiner will prepare an independent written report on the thesis which will be submitted to and made available to the other examiner(s) prior to the *viva voce* by the Faculty Graduate School Office.

Following the *viva voce*, the [Examiners' Joint Report and Recommendation Form](#) (or equivalent in PGR Manager) which sets out the criteria for assessing the research student as defined in paragraphs 5 to 7 of this Code (*The Difference between PhD and MPhil*) should be completed and signed by all members of the examining team. The examiners' recommendation must take one of the forms as specified in paragraph 58 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees \(Outcomes of the Examination\)](#). The Joint Report and Recommendation Form (and a copy of any additional instructions that have been provided direct to the student (e.g. annotated copies of the thesis; lists of required corrections)) should be submitted by the chair to the Faculty Graduate School Office within one working week of the date of the *viva voce*.

103. In cases where the examiners are unable to reach agreement, a further external examiner should be appointed to assess the thesis and the other examiners' reports (see also paragraph 102 of this Code (*Consideration of Examiners' Recommendations*)).

#### *Consideration of Examiners' Recommendations*

104. The examiners' independent reports and their joint recommendation should be scrutinised and approved by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School, in their capacity as Chair of the Faculty Graduate School Committee. The Faculty Director of the Graduate School may, if they consider it appropriate, authorise a single, named, deputy to undertake this task. In such instances, the deputy must be an academic member of University of Southampton staff and a member of the Faculty Graduate School directorate.
105. In the exceptional situation that the appointed examiners are unable to reach agreement (see paragraph 103 of this Code (*The Examiners' Reports and Recommendation*)), the examiners shall

submit independent reports, and the Faculty Director of the Graduate School shall recommend the appointment of an additional external examiner to the Faculty Education Committee. The Faculty Graduate School Office will provide the additional examiner with a copy of the thesis and the independent reports of the original examiners. The additional examiner shall be permitted to interview the research student in the presence of an Independent Chair before submitting a final report and recommendation to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School. In their capacity as Chair of the Faculty Graduate School Committee, The Faculty Director of the Graduate School shall consider the independent reports of the original examiners, and the report of the additional examiner, before making a recommendation to the Faculty Education Committee.

#### *Outcome and Award*

106. Following approval of the examiners' recommendations, the approved outcome should be communicated to the research student by the Faculty Graduate School Office within one month of the date of the *viva voce*. A copy of the completed examiners' Joint Report and Recommendation Form and, if amendments are required, written guidance on revisions to the thesis should be provided. The timing for amendments begins at the point the research student receives the written report from the Faculty Graduate School Office.
107. A research student required to make minor or modest amendments, or to submit a revised thesis for re-examination, should be given a clear and prompt statement by the examiners of what is required. When minor amendments have been submitted, the research student should normally be informed whether the amendments have been certified within three weeks of their submission. In the case of modest amendments, the research student should normally be informed whether the amendments have been certified within six weeks of their submission, or sooner if possible. It is the responsibility of the co-ordinating supervisor to ensure that the amendments are approved by the examiner(s) promptly so that the research student's degree can be awarded as soon as possible.
108. As specified in paragraph 60 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) (*Outcomes of the Examination*), a research student who fails to submit an amended or revised thesis by the date set by the examiners shall normally be regarded as having failed the examination, the recommendations of the examiners shall lapse and the candidate shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the degree. In exceptional circumstances a revised date for submitting corrections may be approved in accordance with the [Regulations Governing Special Considerations and Suspension of Candidature for Postgraduate Research Students](#).
109. The award will be made by Senate on the recommendation of Faculty Education Committee.

## Access to the Thesis

110. The results of research should be freely available. Theses are accessible in the University Library or electronically through the University of Southampton Research Repository. Research theses may be subject to restriction only in exceptional circumstances but where this is necessary, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School, in their capacity as Chair of Faculty Graduate School Committee may, on behalf of Senate, approve an initial embargo for a period not exceeding three years from the date of examination. Any subsequent request to extend an embargo will require the approval of the Director of the Doctoral College and such a period of extension may not exceed one year in duration. Each instance of approval of restriction of access should be reported by the Faculty to the University Library. The University Library will maintain a master list to be presented annually to the Doctoral College Board.

## Complaints and Appeals

### *Complaints Procedures*

111. If, during the period of study, the research student feels that the research project is not proceeding satisfactorily for reasons outside their control or that an effective working relationship with a supervisor is not being established or maintained, they should first consult another member of the supervisory team about the situation, or a member of the Faculty Graduate School directorate. If such discussions do not improve matters, the research student should refer to the University's [Regulations Governing Student Complaints](#). The Regulations explain in detail the procedure for submitting a complaint, as well as providing information about using mediation as an alternative informal method of dispute resolution. Research students can obtain free, independent and confidential advice about submitting a complaint from the [Students' Union Advice Centre](#).

#### *Appeals Procedures*

112. Provided they have grounds, a research student may appeal any academic decision made by the University, with the exception of the exclusions specified in Section A, paragraph 5 of the University's [Regulations Governing Academic Appeals by Students](#) in Section IV of the University Calendar. Research students are advised to consult with the [Students' Union Advice Centre](#) which can provide free, independent and confidential advice as well as representation in such matters.

#### **Revision History**

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*Revisions approved by UPC in July 2011*

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*Amendments approved by UPC in April and May 2013 and by Senate in June 2013*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in May 2014 and by Senate in June 2014*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in July 2015 and by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate in July 2015*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in May 2016, by AQSC in June 2016 [Chair's Action], and by Senate in July 2016*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in May 2017 and by Senate in June 2017*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in May 2018 and by Senate in June 2018*

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*Amendments approved by AQSC in July 2020 and by Senate in July 2020*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in May 2021 and by Senate in June 2021*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in May and July 2022 and by Senate in June and July 2022*

## Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision Appendix 1: Induction Information

The University of Southampton will provide, as part of a wider induction programme, information on:

- the institution in general with particular reference to the postgraduate offer;
- the institution's expectations of the independence and responsibilities of the research student;
- the institution's research ethics and codes, including consideration of issues concerning authorship and intellectual property;
- reference to the challenges that will typically face research students during the course of their candidature and where guidance may be sought in the event of difficulties;
- details about opportunities and requirements for skills development, which includes the mandatory training as detailed by the Doctoral College;
- centrally-organised social activity, including that provided specifically for postgraduate students;
- student support and welfare services such as counselling and advice centres;
- the facilities, in brief, that will be made available to the research student, including the learning support infrastructure;
- relevant health and safety and other legislative information.

Further relevant information should be provided as part of an induction programme run through the Faculty Graduate School Office. This can usefully include:

- the postgraduate portfolio in the relevant subject(s);
- the institution's registration, enrolment, appeals and complaints procedures, assessment requirements and research degree regulations;
- the names and contact details of the research student's supervisory team and information about how supervisory arrangements work;
- research ethics and codes of relevant professional bodies and discipline groups;
- a brief outline of the proposed research programme(s), together with the normal length of study and the facilities that will be made available to the research student;
- opportunity for the student representative body to introduce themselves, including specific postgraduate representation;
- locally-organised social activity, including that provided specifically for postgraduate students;
- opportunities for postgraduates to be represented by the student body;
- details about opportunities and requirements for skills development (which includes the mandatory training as detailed by the Doctoral College).

It can be helpful to provide research students with an introductory pack providing details about where they can find essential information.

### **Revision History**

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*No revisions 2009/10*

*No revisions 2011*

*No revisions 2012*

*Amendments approved by UPC in May 2013 and by Senate in June 2013*

*Reviewed in July 2014; no changes made*

*Reviewed in July 2015; no changes made*

*Reviewed in June 2016; no changes made*

*Reviewed in June 2017; no changes made*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in May 2018 and by Senate in June 2018*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in May 2019 and by Senate in June 2019*

*Reviewed in May 2020; no changes made*

*Reviewed in May 2021; no changes made*

*Amendments approved by AQSC in May and July 2022 and by Senate in June and July 2022*