Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes

Contents

Section 1: Introduction

This Queen's Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes applies to all the Research Degree Programmes (including the research elements of Professional Doctorates) and has been updated with full cognisance of the [UK Quality Code](#) (June 2024). The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes has been written for students, staff, examiners, and other stakeholders. It provides links to the [Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes](#), and outlines University procedures, processes and areas of good practice.

The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes forms an integral part of the University's quality assurance mechanisms and is designed to assure the quality and maintain the academic standards of Research Degree Programmes, bringing consistency to research degree provision.

The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes complements but is not a substitute for the existing Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes. Staff and students should refer to the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes in the first instance, in addition to the wider General Regulations. In the event of any conflict of interpretation between the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and the regulations, the regulations prevail.

The UK Quality Code

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) publishes the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code) which acts as the definitive reference point for all UK

Higher Education (HE) providers. It outlines what HE providers are required to do, what they can expect of each other, and what the general public can expect of them.

This Queen's Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes has been updated with full cognisance of the [UK Quality Code](#) (June 2024), and demonstrates how the University meets the Quality Code's expectations for Standards and Quality, the practices regarding Research Degrees and the guiding principles outlined within the supporting Advice and Guidance related to Research Degrees.

Queen's takes account of [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies](#), [the QAA Doctoral Degree Characteristics Statement](#), and other UK and European reference points in order to secure the academic standards of its Research Degree Programmes.

The [Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes](#) and this accompanying Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, (and in the case of the Professional Doctorate and Integrated/Structured PhD programmes – [Principles for Professional Doctorates and Integrated/Structured PhDs](#), [Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes](#), and the relevant [Programme Specification](#)), form the academic framework for Queen's Research Degree Programmes, which outlines how the University awards academic credit (where relevant) and Research Degree Programme qualifications. These documents also represent the definitive record for the respective Research Degree Programmes.

Queen's Research Degree Programmes

The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes applies to all the Research Degree Programmes (including the research elements of Professional Doctorates) offered by the University:

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Doctor of Philosophy (by Published Works) (PhD)
Integrated/Structured Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

Doctor of Medicine (MD)

Master of Surgery (MCh)*

Professional Doctorates

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych)

Doctor of Education (EdD)*

Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP)

Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP)*

Juris Doctor (JD)*

*no longer open for new applications

University Regulations, Policies and Procedures: Overview

The University has specific Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, which are updated on an annual basis, and include the following areas:

   i.   Registration.
  ii.   Regulations relating to external students and students working away from the University for a period.
 iii.   Minimum and maximum periods of study.
  iv.   Progress including supervision, monitoring and the Annual Progress Review process.
   v.   Assessment and Award of Degree including requirements for Master's/Doctoral degrees, appointment of examiners, and the examinations process.

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes are contained within the University Calendar: General Regulations, which is revised annually and includes the following areas:

   i.   Principles for Professional Doctorates and Integrated/Structured PhDs.
  ii.   Regulations for Students including definitions, admissions procedures, fees, and graduation.

iii.   Temporary withdrawal.

iv.   Academic Appeal Regulations (Research Degree Programmes).

v.   Conduct Regulations and other regulations for the use of laboratories and the library.

vi.   A range of procedures including those for dealing with academic offences, Fitness to Practise (particularly relevant to Professional Doctorates), and the Student Complaints Procedure.

vii.   A range of policies including the Equality and Diversity Policy, the Student Disability Policy, and the Student Maternity, Maternity Support and Adoption Policy.

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes are complemented at School level by a range of information including guides to specific Research Degree Programmes, application and admissions procedures, and the expectations of students undertaking a Research Degree Programme within a particular School. Student handbooks contain both generic and subject-specific material in relation to admissions, support during study, supervision, Annual Progress Review, and final examination. Some procedures may vary at a local level and may be influenced by the structure of the programme, particularly if it has any taught elements. The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes will, however, have precedence over all other existing procedures at a local level. Procedures at a local level must therefore be in line with the current Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes.

Key Contacts

For further advice on the Regulations, Code of Practice or other quality assurance issues relating to Research Degree Programmes, contact the Quality Assurance and Regulations Team (qar@qub.ac.uk).

Section 2: Research Environment

Introduction

The University seeks to undertake research of the highest international standing that addresses societal and planetary challenges and changes the world for the better. To achieve this, Queen's will nurture a vibrant research culture, seeded by research-led education and built upon curiosity, discovery, innovation and enterprise.

Researchers at Queen's help tackle the global challenges of our age, changing people's lives for the better.

We are a world-class international university built on teaching excellence, leading-edge research, innovation, collaboration and engagement.

Queen's has a proud history of conducting innovative, impactful and world-leading research that has positively changed people's lives. Our [ambition for 2030](#) is to further enhance our impact by strengthening our research position and working with industry to broaden our translational impact and innovation, ensuring we deliver high-quality, world-leading research, which addresses local and global challenges.

Full details on the research and innovation system at Queen's can be found here: [Research | Queen's University Belfast (qub.ac.uk)](#)

Queen's has three pillars which form the framework for the University's Research Strategy: 'People', 'Research Quality' and 'Partnership and Place'.

The Research and Enterprise Directorate helps secure the University's vision for excellence and impact in its research and enterprise activities via:

  i. Identifying opportunities and research grant application development.
  ii. Fostering engagement with industry and industry-facing funding initiatives.
  iii. Translating inventions and innovations into wider commercial and societal impact.

iv.   Developing a culture of research impact and support engagement with research users.

v.   Protecting the interests of researchers and participants through the integrity of research conducted.

vi.   Dedicated and expert legal, contracting and intellectual property support.

vii.   Post-award project management support for major research grants.

viii.   Managing research information systems and research data analysis.

ix.   Promoting a positive and supportive Research Culture and environment.

Beyond the Research and Enterprise Directorate, expert support for researchers is embedded across the University's professional services, including support for costing and pricing, systems development, open science, and learning and development. The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School connects postgraduate students from all disciplines with one another, and with mentors, academic leaders, and professional partners both within the University and beyond. It offers an intellectually stimulating environment that extends beyond disciplinary boundaries, fostering personal effectiveness, advanced skills development, and a vibrant culture of opportunity, innovation, and enterprise. The School is committed to building a rich, diverse, and inclusive postgraduate community. This includes empowering students to contribute meaningfully to the University's research culture, creating cross-disciplinary networking opportunities, and celebrating student achievements. Through an extensive programme of training and events aligned to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School equips students with the skills and confidence needed to progress in their research and future careers.

Schools provide prospective research students with specific information on the School's research activities and what students can expect upon enrolment for a research degree. Each School website highlights the key research achievements of the School in terms of awards, status and publications. Schools also highlight evidence of their ability to attract external funding and what opportunities exist both internally and externally for the development of academic collaborations and knowledge transfer partnerships.

In order to illustrate that a School has a suitable research environment for the recruitment of postgraduate research students, it is required to:

i. Demonstrate research excellence, as evidenced through the Research Excellence Framework.
ii. Have an appropriate pool of research active staff capable of fulfilling the role of supervisor.
iii. Provide appropriate facilities and support (as detailed in the Resources and Training subsection below).

Schools also facilitate effective research by providing access and opportunities to interact with academic staff, postdoctoral researchers, and other research students, for example, through research cluster activities, seminars, and peer support networks.

Resources and Training

Queen's aims to provide an enriching research environment and enable students to access appropriate resources to develop their potential within one of the UK's leading research intensive universities.

Upon enrolment on a Research Degree Programme, students have access to an induction programme covering key elements of being a research student offered by the [Thomas J. Moran Graduate School](#), as well as a discipline-specific induction from their School. To accommodate the on-going enrolment of postgraduate research students across the academic year, induction sessions are offered on a regular basis by the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School. The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School also provides access to online resources to guide students through the critical periods and milestones of their research.

Regularly updated student handbooks provide students with an overview of University regulations, policies and procedures, and links to support services such as counselling and Accessible Learning Support.

Schools provide research students with appropriate facilities, normally including a desk in a shared room (for full-time students), access to computing facilities suitable for their research, use of a telephone for research purposes, library access, and laboratory space (as applicable).

The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School empowers postgraduate students to become confident thinkers, communicators, innovators, and leaders who are ready for the future. Research students can access a wide range of programmes, training courses, and discussion opportunities to support both personal and professional development. The [Postgraduate Development Programme](). The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School offers tailored support for academic and research skills alongside one-to-one sessions focused on personal growth. The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School also provides [career development opportunities and specialist advice]() for research students, including guidance on working with research stakeholders, building professional networks, and connecting with potential employers. For those interested in enterprise, dedicated consultation is available, and students are actively supported to lead initiatives that strengthen research culture and enrich the postgraduate experience.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

The University [Intellectual Property (IP) Policy]() sets out the rights of students and staff relating to IP created as a result of their work in, or for, the University. Research students who are funded; use significant University resources; use University background IP; or collaborate with University staff, to create new IP, should ensure that they liaise with the Commercial Development team in the Research and Enterprise Directorate before they exploit or otherwise deal in any way with IP arising from their work.

Research Integrity

The University provides students with training to ensure they conduct their research honestly, as open as possible – closed as necessary, with rigour, care and respect and are accountable for their activities. Good Research Practice training is

mandatory for all postgraduate students, provided via an online training platform, where relevant additional training is provided on research ethics, informed consent, the use of animals in research and/or human tissue compliance. Students are also informed around the principles of Trusted Research, especially when working in STEM disciplines. For those undertaking research in sensitive areas there is also training from the Higher Education Export Control Association to ensure UK national security requirements are complied with.   As plagiarism can be a clear breach of research integrity, training is provided to ensure students understand how to avoid possible allegations. They are also informed of the consequences of this or any other form of research misconduct. To help students make an informed choice as to how they cite their evidence, the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School and the Library provide a wide range of face-to-face and online citation training. In addition to this, the Centre for Educational Development supports Schools by providing PGR students with guidance in the use of similarity checking software packages such as Turnitin. Schools whose students submit to Turnitin through Canvas are supported through the Canvas support team.

Any allegation of plagiarism or duplication in unpublished work, which is submitted by a postgraduate research student for assessment (via Annual Progress Review or oral examination), or any alleged academic offence occurring as part of a Taught module, will be dealt with under the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences.

Any other allegation of misconduct in research by a postgraduate research student will be dealt with under the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

Students can seek advice and guidance in relation to these Procedures and Regulations from SU Advice, and the Students' Union.

Collaborative Agreements

To ensure the academic standards of the University are adhered to in the delivery and completion of awards which may be offered in partnership with another institution, the University has a protocol for the establishment and governance

of collaborative arrangements. Key outcomes of this protocol involve the signature of an appropriate Collaborative Agreement or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) by Queen's with a partner institution(s) and formal recognition of individual partner staff involved in programme delivery. In relation to PhD study, MOAs are required to support formal arrangements of joint supervision and/or the delivery of joint/dual PhD awards or Integrated/Structured PhDs. Coming under the broad heading of collaborative research degree programmes, such arrangements can be made for individual students or cohorts of students and/or form part of a doctoral training programme. Partner staff acting as co- or joint supervisors are also required to apply for Recognised Supervisor status on a per-student basis.

To establish a MOA for a collaborative research degree programme, Schools should, in the first instance, inform Academic Affairs and, for agreements with universities outside the UK, Global Student Recruitment. The relevant Faculty Office (including the appropriate Dean(s)) should also be consulted and appropriate support secured for the development of a particular arrangement and any associated financial or funding implications. Relevant approval procedures are outlined within the University's Educational Partnerships Framework including application for Recognised Supervisor status.

Regulations relating to the fee and required enrolment status of collaborative research students are contained in the Student Finance Framework, 3.2.5 Collaborative Research Students. The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 3 outlines further regulations applicable to collaborative research students.

It should be noted that sufficient time (up to one year) should be allowed for the development and approval of any new collaborative arrangement and the negotiation of the supporting MOA. Agreements must normally be signed prior to the admission of students.

Section 3: Selection and Admission

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes relates to the Advice and Guidance on Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access within the UK Quality Code (June 2024), and the Postgraduate Admissions Policy.

The Provision of Information for New Research Students subsection in this Code of Practice also introduces the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes and associated processes and practices in relation to student registration; external students and students working away from Queen's; periods of study for Research Degree Programmes; interruptions to study, including temporary withdrawals; progress; and assessment.

Admissions Procedures

The University is committed to providing a professional admissions service. The Postgraduate Admissions Policy and accompanying procedures are transparent, fair, and consistently applied, which ensures that prospective students understand how the admissions process works and applications are processed in a timely manner.

The Postgraduate Admissions Policy complies with relevant legislation affecting the admission of students. It presents details of criteria for admission and procedures including for the PhD by Published Works (section 3.1.2), roles and responsibilities of Faculties, Schools and Directorate staff in administering and quality assuring the admissions process (Postgraduate Admissions Policy Appendix 1), and information on policy areas such as selection procedures to Research Degree Programmes (section 4.1.2), which supplements the information contained in this Code of Practice.

The University provides pre-entry information (in a variety of formats on request) to ensure that a student can make an informed decision regarding their preferred subject area as the basis of their application for a place on a Research Degree Programme. Information on Research Degree Programmes is available through the online Course Finder and Postgraduate Prospectus, School leaflets and brochures,

and School websites. Helpful information and guidance is also available at [Find a PhD Supervisor](#).

Please note that any pre-application contact with academic staff members providing support to develop an application for a Research Degree Programme does not constitute an application in its own right. All those wishing to apply for a place on one of the University's Research Degree Programmes must apply through the Queen's portal and have their application assessed against the admissions criteria to ensure adherence with the Postgraduate Admissions Policy and to check that all the relevant entry requirements are met. Amongst the information which should be accessible to all students are up to date overviews of the Schools, their achievements and key research interests; programme information including expected timescales for completion and supervisor support; opportunities for personal development and potential career options; entry requirements; and information about support services including training, accessible learning support, counselling, and careers support. Where programmes are only offered on a full-time or part-time basis, this will be highlighted by the School.

Funded postgraduate research opportunities are listed on the University's Postgraduate Course Finder under [Opportunities](#).

The [Admissions and Access Service](#) is responsible for managing the Postgraduate [Queen's Portal](#) or will process paper applications for the [PhD by Published Works](#), as required. The Admissions and Access Service will also issue official documentation to international applicants for immigration and visa entry purposes. The University's [Immigration Support Service](#) can offer advice on visa and immigration issues.

Entry Requirements and the Decision Making Process

The University applies standard criteria and procedures as part of a transparent admission process for all students. The [Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#) outlines the normal entry requirements and criteria to be met for admission to Research Degree Programmes. Where specific programmes require additional criteria such as

additional or specific qualifications, an assessment, or attendance at an interview, this will be detailed under the relevant programme entry in the online Course Finder. Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant School for further information, where appropriate.

Information regarding the minimum level of English language proficiency required of applicants for whom English is not their first language; and English language qualifications acceptable for entry to Research Degree Programmes, is available in the [Postgraduate Prospectus](#) and [English Language Requirements web page](#).

Decisions on the admission of research students are made by suitably qualified academic members of staff, which may include the Head of School. Schools apply strict admissions criteria for research students, in line with the regulations and the Postgraduate Admissions Policy, and liaise with the Admissions and Access Service, as appropriate, when assessing a student's eligibility to enrol on a Research Degree Programme.

Where applicants are required to complete an assessment or attend an interview, Schools ensure that any reasonable adjustments which the applicant may require because of a disability or long-term condition, including neurodiversity, are arranged in advance. Schools consult with Accessible Learning Support for advice where necessary. Further information on the support available to postgraduate candidates and students with a disability or long-term condition is available from [Steps to Apply](#) and [Accessible Learning Support](#).

Offer Letter

The [Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#), section 4.5 outlines the details of the information which an applicant can expect to receive with the formal offer of admission letter, sent by email, which is specific to the individual applicant. Students are also advised in the correspondence that by accepting an offer of admission, they are agreeing to meet the responsibilities for their academic studies and candidacy for a research degree as outlined in this Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

The offer letter, and supporting Admissions and Access Service guidance provide a range of information, including information relating to funding, accommodation, support services, immigration procedures, and the International Welcome and Orientation Programme as required. The Admissions and Access Service issues the official offer letters and guidance notes upon receipt of decisions from Schools.

The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School is responsible for the administration and allocation of Postgraduate Student Awards. The notification of an offer of an award (studentship funding) is made by the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School in a separate letter to the offer letter from the Admissions and Access Service. Queries about funding offers, and funding body terms and conditions, can be sent to the Postgraduate Awards team, email: pgawards@qub.ac.uk.

Transfer Protocol for Postgraduate Research Students from Other Institutions

From time to time, postgraduate research students from other universities may wish to transfer to Queen's to complete their degree. This is most common where a student is transferring with their supervisor who has been recruited to Queen's.

The Transfer Protocol for Postgraduate Research Students from Other Institutions sets out guidelines and key principles on postgraduate research students transferring from other universities. The Protocol also outlines the procedures for the consideration and approval of postgraduate research student transfer applications, including the additional information required to support a transfer application.

Section 4: Induction

Provision of Information for New Research Students

The University is committed to ensuring that students are provided with the appropriate information and support during the initial registration period. Through the Welcome and Registration website, students can view the registration process for general enrolment, finance, and find information on accommodation. Students can also access specific information and checklists, which signpost students to the relevant Schools to complete the registration and induction process.

The [Thomas J. Moran Graduate School](#) offers a comprehensive induction programme for NI, GB, EU, and international postgraduate research students, including activities during University Welcome Week and dedicated sessions in October and February. These sessions provide orientation, practical advice, and opportunities for students to connect with peers and build a sense of community. Support is also available year-round through on-demand videos and online resources to accommodate students who register outside the main induction periods.

As part of the University-wide induction sessions, students are introduced to this Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, the [Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes and the Regulations for Students](#). As such, students are briefed on the regulations, processes and practices regarding:

i. Student registration (Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 2).

ii. External students and students working away from Queen's (Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 3).

iii. Periods of study for research degree programmes, including the minimum, normal and maximum periods of study (Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 4), and how to request, in light of extenuating circumstances, an extended period of study and submission date using the [RDP Exception Request - Registration and Research Degree Submission Submission Form (Microsoft Word)](#)

iv. Temporary withdrawal (Regulations for Students, 1.20), including how to request, in light of extenuating circumstances, an extended period of temporary withdrawal using the [RDP Exception Request - Temporary Withdrawal Form (Microsoft Word)](#).

v. [Progress](#), including [supervision](#), regular progress monitoring, and [Annual Progress Review](#) (Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5).

vi. [Assessment](#), including the requirements for the research degree programme awards, and the assessment/examination process (Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 6).

vii.   The [Academic Appeal Regulations (Research Degree Programmes) procedure](#).

In addition to specific University induction programmes run by the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School, School induction programmes provide a range of information including information relating to School facilities, research support, and School health and safety procedures. Schools also facilitate an initial meeting with the supervisory team, where the student and supervisors agree on plans for the research degree programme.

Ongoing training opportunities are available through [the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School](#), and the [Student Gateway](#) provides students with a wide range of links to sources of information and advice on all aspects of student life, including access to support services, financial advice, and careers advice. (See also [Useful Contacts](#)).

The Students' Union [Student-Supervisor Relationship Toolkit](#) provides useful guidance on establishing the relationship between student and supervisor.

Section 5: Responsibilities and Behaviour

Responsibilities of Students towards the University and their Supervisors

The general expectations of students, and what students can expect from the University, are contained within the [Student Charter](#). This sets out the values and standards we all commit to at Queen's: respect, integrity, connectivity, excellence and ambition.

The responsibilities of students whilst engaging with their supervisor over the course of their research degree programme are highlighted at various stages throughout the [Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes](#). (See also [Responsibilities of the Supervisor](#)). Research students' responsibilities include:

i.   Personal and professional development, including, where possible, recognising when they need help and seeking it in a timely manner.

ii.   Maintaining regular contact with the supervisory team.

iii.   Preparing adequately for meetings with supervisors.

iv.   Setting and keeping to timetables and deadlines, including planning and submitting work as and when required, and maintaining satisfactory progress with the research degree programme.

v.   Maintaining research records in such a way that they can be accessed and understood by anyone with a legitimate need to see them.

vi.   Raising awareness of any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect their work.

vii.   Attending any development opportunities (research-related or other), that have been identified when agreeing development needs with supervisors.

viii.   Recording training and development activities on QSIS to evidence the required minimum of 30 days training over the course of the degree programme.

ix.   Being familiar with the regulations and policies that affect them, including those relating to their award, health and safety, intellectual property, electronic repositories, and ethical research.

The student is responsible for the submitted work, and the eventual success or failure of their research degree programme. (In endorsing the Notice of Intention to Submit form, which is completed and submitted by the student, the Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee, or nominee, does not confirm that the research degree submission is acceptable or will be successful.)

Addressing Concerns or Problematic Behaviour

Where concerns arise regarding the conduct or behaviour of a postgraduate research student that may impact the research environment, supervisory relationship, other students or broader academic community, the University will seek to address such matters promptly and constructively. In the first instance, concerns will normally be addressed through the Informal Resolution Procedure. This approach encourages early engagement, dialogue, and mutual understanding, with the aim of resolving issues without recourse to formal action under the Conduct Regulations. Supervisors, School staff, or relevant support services may facilitate informal discussions, and

where appropriate, a Future Conduct Requirement may be put in place to manage and address behaviours which have been identified as problematic.

Breach of the Future Conduct Requirement will normally result in investigation of the matter under the Conduct Regulations.

Should informal resolution prove unsuccessful or inappropriate due to the nature or severity of the behaviour, the matter may be escalated in accordance with the University's formal Conduct Regulations.

The Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Team can support colleagues engaging in the Informal Resolution Procedure (appeals@qub.ac.uk). Students are encouraged to engage with the advice and guidance available from SU Advice, as well as the support from the Student Wellbeing Service.

Students are also reminded of their obligations under the Student Charter.

Section 6: Supervision

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes relates to regulation 5.1 of the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes.

Appointment of Skilled Supervisors

The Head of School (or nominee) is responsible for staff within the School and will normally appoint the supervisory team to a particular student upon their acceptance of a place on the research degree programme. The School will consider and appoint the most appropriate supervisory team to supervise the research project.

Appointment Criteria

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.1 details the requirements for supervision at the University. Regulations 5.1.1 – 5.1.15 outline the criteria for the appointment of supervisors. These regulations ensure that Schools delegate supervisory responsibilities to suitably qualified academic staff. It is

essential that the principal supervisor is employed on a contract that covers the duration of the proposed research degree to be supervised. It is also strongly encouraged that the remaining supervisory team holds contracts that cover the same period. This maintains continuity in supervisory support and upholds the quality and integrity of the entire supervisory team.

The Principal Supervisor should be an academic member of staff from the School where the student is carrying out the research and who holds an academic position of lecturer or above. Regulations 5.1.8 – 5.1.10 outline the conditions for appointment of lecturers on probation, staff on an education contract and research fellows as Principal Supervisor.

Each member of the supervisory team is expected to be experienced in and actively engaged in research and/or scholarly activity. This means that the person is a subject specialist and currently active in research and/or educational scholarship, as demonstrated by a publication record which includes both recently published work and work in progress, or active involvement in on-going projects.

Please consult the Supervisor Eligibility Matrix for guidance on supervisory criteria across the team.

Exception Requests

In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff who do not meet the criteria for the appointment of supervisors, to be considered for appointment. In such instances, the Head of School may request a concession to the regulations to permit the appointment by completing the RDP Exception Request - Supervisor Appointment Form (Microsoft Word). This will be considered by the Chair of the Education Committee (Quality and Standards) or nominee, who will take advice from the appropriate Faculty Dean responsible for postgraduate research students and determine whether the proposed individual is permitted to be appointed as a supervisor.

Supervisors appointed by exception must also complete the mandatory supervisor training course, and, where appropriate, be supported by a second supervisor who

has experience of successfully supervising at least two doctoral students through to completion.

Training and Development

Supervisors are required to have the appropriate training and skills to perform the task of supervision satisfactorily. Supervisors new to the role of supervision must attend a one-day training course, which is delivered by the Thomas J. Moran [Graduate School](#). There are three sessions per year, usually held in November, February and May, which are bookable through iTrent. Refresher training is available for experienced supervisors. Please email pg.skills@qub.ac.uk for any queries. For queries about probationary requirements, please contact the HR Hub, People and Culture (hrhub@qub.ac.uk).

All supervisors (including those working in industry or professional practice) are expected to engage in developmental opportunities, to equip them to supervise research students, and to meet requirements for continuing professional development. People and Culture and the Centre for Educational Development offer a range of ongoing personal development opportunities to build skills relevant to supervision for staff.

The Supervisory Team

Supervisory teams are normally appointed and made known to new students by the end of the induction process. The supervisory team must include a principal supervisor and a secondary or co-supervisor. A third supervisor, who may be internal or external to the University, may be appointed where a student's research is interdisciplinary or would benefit from external input. [Download further guidance on the composition of supervisory teams (PDF).](#)

Supervisors who are Partners

Should the supervisors be partners, the following safeguards will be implemented:

i.   Appointment of a third supervisor – this will be a senior academic with significant Research Degree Programme experience whose role will specifically be to facilitate project progression and appropriate supervision.

They will be required to attend two documented meetings per year together with the student and other supervisors and will be otherwise available for the student to discuss any specific concerns in confidence.

ii. Full disclosure – students will be specifically informed of the relationship between the supervisors at the start of their Research Degree Programme.

iii. Opportunities to raise concerns – students will be advised that they are able to raise concerns relating to their supervision, in complete confidence, both through Annual Progress Review and by contacting their adviser of studies, Director of Postgraduate Research Students or Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee at Centre/Institute/School level.

iv. Research Degree Programme procedures – sections relating to supervision in School Research Degree Programme handbooks provided to all students will be reviewed and updated to include all of the above.

Managing Changes to the Supervisory Team

In line with the Postgraduate Admissions Policy, section 4.1.2, Schools consider whether appropriate supervision can be provided and maintained throughout the research period when admitting a student to a Research Degree Programme. The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulations 5.1.16 – 5.1.18 outline School responsibilities for ensuring the appointment of appropriate supervision in the event of a supervisor being unavailable for a significant period of the student's research, or should a change in supervisor be required under different circumstances such as at the student's request.

Supervisor Roles: Recording within QSIS

Supervisor roles should be recorded within the student's record on QSIS, using the appropriate option, which feeds into the Academic CV on PURE. Access the guidelines on recording supervisors in QSIS (staff log-in required).

Responsibilities of the Supervisor

i. The student is responsible for the eventual success or failure of the Research Degree Programme. (See Responsibilities of Students towards the University and their Supervisors). The supervisory team provides the student with advice,

help and guidance over the course of the Research Degree Programme, enabling access to relevant training and development opportunities, to support the completion of the Research Degree Programme (see Useful Contacts).

ii. In line with the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.1.18, at an initial supervisory meeting, the supervisors and student agree the roles and responsibilities of the student and each member of the supervisory team; and the frequency, duration and format of formal meetings. In addition to the mandatory, recorded, ten (six for part-time and writing-up students) formal meetings per year between the supervisor(s) and student, there are normally additional, informal meetings as required, depending on the needs of the student and the supervisory team. Students and supervisors are jointly responsible for ensuring that regular and frequent contact is maintained.

iii. Responsibilities are normally shared out amongst members of the supervisory team, however it is expected that the principal supervisor has overall responsibility, with the second or co-supervisor providing a supporting role.

iv. The principal supervisor must ensure the student is made aware of relevant policies and procedures including the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, Conduct Regulations, procedures for the use of similarity checking software, and specific policies, including gaining ethical approval, and health and safety practices at School level.

v. The principal supervisor should ensure that the student understands the nature and requirements of postgraduate research, including progress requirements and deadlines, and is aware of the expected standards as a research student.

vi. The supervisory team should agree with the student what training and development requirements need to be fulfilled as part of the requirements for the completion of the RDP.

vii. As highlighted in the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.2, the supervisory team should agree an initial research plan with the student, which may be subject to change during the course of the Research Degree Programme.

viii. The supervisory team (and in most cases the principal supervisor) should provide timely and constructive feedback on the student's work and overall

progress within the Research Degree Programme, raising any concerns about progress at an early stage with the student.

ix. The supervisory team should ensure that appropriate records are maintained in relation to supervisory meetings, progress monitoring, and [Annual Progress Review](#) (including differentiation).

x. The supervisory team should provide appropriate pastoral support as required, by providing advice and/or referring the student to other sources of support, including relevant support services.

xi. The supervisory team should help the student interact with others working in the field of research, for example, encouraging the student to attend relevant seminars and conferences; supporting the student in seeking funding for such events as required; and where appropriate, supporting the submission of conference papers and articles to refereed journals.

xii. The principal supervisor is responsible for informing the School if, for any reason, any member of the supervisory team is unable to undertake their supervisory responsibilities for a significant period so that appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure continuity for the student.

xiii. The second or co-supervisor may be required to act as the principal supervisor, should the principal supervisor be away from the University for a prolonged period of time. See also regulations 5.1.16 – 5.1.17.

The Students' Union's [Student-Supervisor Relationship Toolkit](#) provides useful guidance on establishing the relationship between student and supervisor.

Supervisor Workload

Schools should ensure that the existing teaching, research and administration commitments of potential supervisors are fully taken into consideration before they are appointed, allowing supervisors to have sufficient time to monitor and support the progress of the student's research, and to respond to the student in a timely manner.

A principal supervisor (pro-rata for co-supervisors) will normally be responsible for a maximum of six postgraduate research students (FTE). However, there are instances where the area of research, level of supervisory experience and/or staff availability allow for a larger cohort. In approving supervisory teams, the Head of

School (or nominee) shall ensure that supervisory allocation is consistent with experience and availability.

Assistant Supervisor

In addition to the supervisory team which comprises the principal and second or co-supervisor, students have access to support from a number of areas including other research staff in the research cluster/School, a School postgraduate research adviser and/or tutor, and other individuals/support areas across the University.

The Assistant Supervisor role officially recognises and regulates the contribution of postdoctoral researchers who are involved in the supervision of PhD students but who are not eligible to be listed as a supervisor. The role recognises supervision already carried out by postdoctoral researchers, encourages and provides an opportunity for them to gain supervision experience, and defines a framework for supervision activities. Further information on the Assistant Supervisor role, including roles and responsibilities, eligibility criteria and the appointment process, as well as the Assistant Supervisor Guidelines and Application Form can be found on the Postdoctoral Development Centre's Supervision page.

Section 7: Periods of Study, Holidays and Other Absences

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 4 outlines the minimum, normal and maximum periods of study for a student completing a RDP. These periods exclude approved temporary withdrawal periods, in line with regulation 1.20 Regulations for Students.

In exceptional circumstances, Schools may request a concession to the regulations to seek an extended period of temporary withdrawal, or an extended registration period and submission date by completing the appropriate Research Degree Programmes Exception Request form as linked below:

  i.   RDP Exception Request - Temporary Withdrawal Form (Microsoft Word)
  ii. RDP Exception Request - Registration and Research Degree Submission Form (Microsoft Word)

Download the current [protocol for handling RDP exception requests](#) (PDF). Completed forms should be submitted by the School, by email, to qar@qub.ac.uk.

The endorsement of a concession to the regulations by a School is not guaranteed. Schools reserve the right to decline a request to exceed the cumulative temporary withdrawal limit, on the following grounds:

- There would be insufficient School resources to support the student for their extended period of study or when they return from the temporary withdrawal.
- The student's research would no longer be valid.
- The School is not satisfied that the student would complete their research.

Any refusal of a concession request should be documented by the SPRC. Details of the student's request and reason for refusal should be included, and the student advised of the outcome in writing.

The following information provides guidelines for staff, and students registered on Research Degree Programmes, regarding holidays and other absences for postgraduate research students. Funded students should also refer to their funder's terms and conditions (or contact the Postgraduate Awards Team, pgawards@qub.ac.uk) for any implications to their funding arrangements. International students should contact the [Immigration Support Service](#) to determine any implications for their visa.

COVID-19 Fee Free Periods

The University has support in place for postgraduate research students first registered prior to 31 August 2021, to allow additional time without fees (a fee free period (FFP)) in recognition of the continued impact that the COVID-19 pandemic may have had on progress of a student's research during the early stages of their programme. Eligibility for the COVID-19 Fee Free Periods (FFP) is as follows:

- PGR students who were first registered on or before 23 March 2020 and registered as active in 2019-20 are eligible for both FFP1 and FFP2.
- PGR students who were first registered after 23 March 2020 up to and including 31 August 2021.

Holidays

All holidays should be agreed with the principal supervisor/School in advance. Full-time, registered students are entitled to take up to 40 days of annual leave, including public holidays and University closure days, each year (or pro rata for part-time, registered students). Holidays for incomplete years may be allowed pro rata.

Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave and Adoption Leave

The Student Maternity, Maternity Support and Adoption Policy provides advice and guidance on issues related to study, health and safety, and finance to:

i. Students who become pregnant during their studies; prospective students who are already pregnant when they commence study; students who have given birth within the previous 26 weeks (or are continuing to breastfeed); their partners and those who have recently become parents (e.g. through adoption).
ii. University staff who may have a role in advising students coming to them with these issues.

Absence Due to Accident or Illness

Regulations for Students, regulations 5.11 and 5.12 outline the procedure for notifying and certifying periods of absence due to illness. Students should apply to their School for a period of temporary withdrawal (see Regulations for Students, regulation 1.20).

Suspension of Studies – Temporary Withdrawals

In general, students are expected to complete their Research Degree Programme in a single continuous period. However, students may request a period of temporary withdrawal – an approved absence from the University for a set period of time – in the following circumstances:

i. Medical reasons.

ii.   Maternity.

iii.   Compelling personal reasons that require the student to be absent from the University.

iv.   For the purposes of taking up an internship at a centre of excellence or an industrial placement. Normally only one such visit may be considered during the period of the Research Degree Programme and must not exceed 12 months' duration.

Suspensions will not normally be granted for the following reasons:

i.   Employment, temporary lectureships, exchanges, voluntary service overseas or expeditions/sport.

ii.   On the grounds of financial hardship due to not completing the Research Degree Programme within the maximum period of study (i.e. 4 years FTE for the PhD programme).

The [Regulations for Students, regulation 1.20](#) outlines the procedure for considering periods of temporary withdrawal. Students should discuss a request for a period of temporary withdrawal with their principal supervisor/School in advance of the period of withdrawal requested. Where a temporary withdrawal request may be considered feasible by the School, students/Schools should avail of this procedure to suspend studies earlier in the student's Research Degree Programme, rather than seek to extend a registration period and submission date towards the end of the Research Degree Programme.

Section 8: Progress Monitoring and Annual Progress Review

Regulations to support progress within the Research Degree Programme are outlined in regulation 5 of the [Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes](#). These include regulations for:

i.   Effective supervision.

ii. The development and updating of the research plan.

iii. An initial review of the feasibility of the project and the research plan, taking account of the required timeframe for the Research Degree Programme.

iv. Regular progress monitoring by the supervisory team, including the requirement for a minimum of ten (six for part-time and writing-up students) formal, recorded meetings per year between the supervisor(s) and student to monitor progress against the research plan; and mechanisms to identify and deal with progress issues at an early stage.

v. Annual Progress Review (including differentiation, see below).

Annual Progress Review

Student progress is reviewed annually, by an independent progress review panel, until the student has completed the Research Degree Programme. Schools should ensure that students know what is expected of them for Annual Progress Review (APR). School should provide details of the type of student submission that is required for students completing each year of study, including any other information/requirements that the School deems appropriate for the discipline.

Panel members should be provided with previous APR reports, or the differentiation report if applicable, prior to holding the APR meeting, to enable members to consider the student's progress. No member of the APR Panel should receive documentation directly from the student.

Students registered for the PhD by Published Works normally complete the programme within one year of registration, and therefore are not expected to engage in Annual Progress Review.

The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School provides training and support for preparing for Differentiation, APR and oral examination (viva voce or 'viva').

Regulatory Requirements

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.5 outlines the requirements for APR. While the exact format of the Annual Progress Review is

determined, at School level, by discipline, year of study and full-time/part-time status, it must contain the following three elements:

i.   A written submission from the student.

ii. A meeting with the student, whereby the student can be questioned about their work by the progress review panel.

iii. A documented outcome of the review and the progression decision.

All returning students registered for Research Degree Programmes (including those engaged in the research elements of a Professional Doctorate) must have their progress reviewed annually by independent progress review panel members, in a meeting at which they are present to discuss their work, prior to registration for the next academic year.

The following subsections should provide guidance on good practice to support APR.

Panel Membership

The School shall appoint a progress review panel for each student. This should comprise two independent members of staff. One of the independent members should be an experienced member of staff within the School. The other member may be a lecturer on probation who has significant knowledge of the research area. Both are full members of the review panel, expected to read the student's submission, engage in the progress review meeting and reach a progress recommendation. Where possible, individual Panel members should remain the same for every APR across the student's research lifecycle, to provide consistency.

As it is expected that panel members will not have had substantial co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the student's work as a result of APR, panel members would be eligible to act as internal examiners at the final oral examination. Individuals eligible for appointment as an internal examiner under regulation 6.7.5 may also act as a member of a differentiation or APR panel.

One member of the supervisory team, preferably the principal supervisor, may be present to provide input, but may not take part in making the final recommendation concerning the student's progress. If a supervisor is in attendance at a panel

meeting, the supervisor should be asked to leave the meeting for a few minutes so the student can openly discuss the supervisory process. Schools may wish to consider how they will receive feedback from supervisors, regarding the supervisory process, particularly if the supervisor does not attend the meeting.

Student Engagement

If a student is absent from the APR, without reasonable cause or prior mitigation, the panel may proceed in their absence, provided that there is sufficient evidence within the submitted documentation to assess their progress.

Failure by the student to engage with the APR process will result in a referral to the School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC).

Timing of Progress Review Panel Meetings

As stated in the [Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes](), regulation 5.5.1, registration at the beginning of an academic year shall be dependent on the completion of a satisfactory progress report by the end of the previous academic year, for returning students. Schools can determine when in the second semester that APR shall take place for their students. Timing may vary depending on the student's year of study/progress, but appropriate information should be disseminated to all students in advance, to allow for the required preparations.

Differentiation is an important milestone for new PhD students. This is where the University determines if, and how a student will continue on their programme of research. For students who are required to differentiate to Doctoral status (e.g. PhD students), it is recommended that reviews are held within nine months to allow for any remedial actions arising from the review to be completed within the year.

Schools may wish to hold APR meetings for students on each year of study at different times within the second semester. This may enable the School to effectively schedule and administer APR, and to ensure that students receive feedback at a time that would benefit their future research. It is recommended that APR meetings are held early enough to allow students to complete any remedial actions required for progression before they need to register for the next academic year.

APR Examples Based on Student Status

For year one full-time students on the PhD programme, the APR meeting should comprise the differentiation interview and take place approximately nine months after the student first enrols on the programme. (For late enrollers, who would not be expected to differentiate until the next academic year, a light touch APR meeting should be held, such as that arranged for year one part-time students, see below. Once differentiation has been completed at the appropriate time, these students should fit in with the normal cycle of APR meetings in subsequent years.) Students being considered for differentiation should normally submit a differentiation report, a research plan, and a training record for consideration by the progress review panel.

For full-time students in year two and beyond, APR meetings may comprise a student presentation on their research, followed by a question and answer session. Students should normally submit a training record, an updated research plan/completion timetable, and one or more of the following: a progress report, PowerPoint presentation, chapter outline, research degree submission overview, and chapter(s). Schools may also consider a report from the supervisors. These types of meetings could also be used with the majority of students on Professional Doctorate programmes.

For part-time students, Schools may wish to implement the approach outlined above at the end of the second, fourth and sixth years. A lighter touch approach (e.g. reduced student submissions regarding progress, and brief progress review meetings) could be implemented at the end of the first, third, and fifth years.

For external students, and those who are studying away from the University, in accordance with [Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes](), regulation 3.5, students are normally required to visit the University to take part in APR (including differentiation). However, in exceptional cases where this is not possible, it would be acceptable to host the meeting between the progress review panel and student via Skype or alternative videoconferencing or teleconferencing approaches.

For students who are on an approved leave of absence, a light touch approach could be implemented when the student has returned to studies, where this is out of sync with the usual APR cycle. The student should be afforded sufficient time to prepare the written submission, with advice from the supervisory team. It would be good practice for the student to submit a brief research progress report to date, and a research plan for the next period, which is discussed during a brief meeting with the progress review panel.

All students who may need to register in the next academic year in order to have a final version of their submission approved prior to graduation must complete the APR process. For students who are very near submission (as acknowledged by the principal supervisor), or who have submitted but are awaiting a viva, a light touch approach would be appropriate. This is to act as a formal way of 'keeping in touch' in case there may be progress issues, whilst recognising that a full APR at this stage would not be appropriate. These students may benefit from submitting the outline of their submission and one or more chapters for consideration by the panel.

For students who are completing corrections within a deadline, which occurs in the next academic year, a very light touch approach would be appropriate. Students who have been asked to revise and resubmit their research degree submission for re-examination may benefit from submitting draft revised work to the progress review panel, and experiencing a mock oral examination ('mock viva') regarding the corrections. For students who are completing corrections, the student submission may simply be a brief report on progress with the corrections, and the expected date of completion and submission of the corrections, and the APR panel meeting could be a very brief meeting to ensure that the student is on track and that there are no issues that would delay the completion.

Any students who are completing corrections within a deadline, which occurs in the current academic year, will not have to complete the APR process. These students would be expected to register in the next academic year in order to graduate only.

These examples are not prescriptive but should be seen as guiding Schools in determining the most appropriate way of reviewing, documenting and verifying the progress of their research students.

Feedback after the APR Meeting

Students should receive written feedback from the progress review panel once the progress recommendation has been approved by the School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC). It would be good practice for the supervisory team to receive a copy of this feedback to support the future progression of the student.

Referral to School Postgraduate Research Committee

Where a student has received a recommendation under [Study Regulation for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.5.4 iv or v](#), or where a supervisor has serious concerns regarding a student's progress outside of the APR cycle and submitted a report to the SPRC ([Study Regulation for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.4.2](#)), the student should be invited to appear before the SPRC before the decision is confirmed.

Where a student has been referred to the SPRC following the outcome of their APR, the purpose of the meeting is to provide the student with an opportunity to highlight any personal, medical, or other circumstances that may have affected their academic progress, which were not previously known to the School. This meeting is not intended to reconsider the academic judgement of the APR panel, nor to reassess the student's academic progress independently of the APR process.

Where a student has been referred to the SPRC by their supervisor, the meeting will take the format of an exceptional APR. In such cases, the SPRC will consider the student's academic progress in detail and determine whether the student is in a position to continue on the programme and complete it to the required standard.

In conducting meetings, the School must take appropriate steps to safeguard the student's wellbeing. Students should be informed in advance of the purpose, format, and potential outcomes of the meeting to reduce unnecessary stress or uncertainty.

Where a student is registered with Accessible Learning, the School must ensure that any agreed reasonable adjustments are put in place for the meeting. The SPRC should be mindful of the sensitive nature of these meetings, ensuring that they are conducted in a professional, respectful, and supportive manner.

It is advised that the following steps are taken:

i.   The SPRC should inform the student in writing of the referral, the purpose of the meeting, and the possible outcomes. A copy of the report should be provided to the student. The student should be given sufficient time to submit a report in response.

ii.   The student should also be invited to attend the SPRC meeting to discuss their case. The student should be advised that they may be accompanied (Study Regulation for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.6.2). Students should also be reminded that they may access support services and where applicable, reasonable adjustments must be made for students registered with Accessible Learning.

iii. If the student attends the meeting, the Chair of the APR Panel or the supervisor should also attend. If the student does not attend the meeting without good cause, the SPRC can meet and reach a decision in their absence.

iv.   The SPRC should meet to review the case (quorum outlined in Study Regulation for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.6.1) and agree an outcome (powers of SPRC listed under Study Regulation for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.6.3).

v.   The SPRC should inform the student in writing of the outcome within 5 working days. They should also be informed of their right to appeal.

Additional Information

Registration at the beginning of an academic year is dependent on the completion of a satisfactory progress report by the end of the previous academic year. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the progress review may submit an academic appeal (Research Degree Programmes) if an appropriate ground for appeal can be evidenced.

It is considered good practice for draft differentiation reports, papers or submission chapters/sections, as appropriate, to be submitted by the School to the University's

similarity checking service (Turnitin) for feedback purposes, prior to Annual Progress Review. The supervisory team should provide support to the student to help interpret the Turnitin report and, where required, offer advice on correct writing and citing of sources in line with the conventions of the discipline in which they are studying. Further information is available at TurnitinUK | Academic & Student Affairs | Queen's University Belfast (qub.ac.uk).

Section 9: Skills Development

The University is responsible for ensuring access to a range of personal, professional, and skills development opportunities for research students. In collaboration with Schools, academic support units and external consultants, a range of training and development interventions are made available to postgraduate research students throughout the period of their Research Degree Programmes. Research students must comply with the University's training requirements for their specific Research Degree Programme, the training requirements of their funding body, and any compulsory or recommended training requirements in their School to facilitate teaching or lab demonstration requirements, as appropriate. Full-time research students are expected to undertake 30 days of training and development activity throughout the course of their Research Degree Programme. The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School has produced a planner that will help postgraduate research students decide on the training they wish to undertake each year.

Central Training and Resources

The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School enables students to access transferable and employability skills training and development opportunities through the Postgraduate Development Programme (PGDP), which maps onto the skills areas outlined in the national Researcher Development Framework. The PGDP programme includes training courses, online learning, personal effectiveness programmes, developmental activity, peer-led seminars and one to one consultancy and advice. Students can meet with the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School team to discuss opportunities to participate in programmes.

The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School supports students and academic staff in relation to Postgraduate Researcher Development Planning. Students in the first year of their Research Degree Programme (ideally within the first two months of registration) should plan their initial development aims and objectives. Personal Development Planning should be carried out in conjunction with the student's supervisory team, to agree the training and development requirements that need to be fulfilled in relation to their Research Degree Programme. Students then take responsibility for undertaking the relevant development activity and recording the completion of aims and objectives on their Postgraduate Researcher Development Plan and QSIS record. Personal Development Plans should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis with the supervisory team, and discussed during [Annual Progress Reviews](#).

The [Academic English Service](#) offers tailored support to international postgraduate research students for whom English is an additional or second language, helping them to strengthen their academic writing and communication skills. Delivered by specialist tutors, the service includes workshops, one-to-one consultations, and self-access resources covering areas such as thesis writing, clarity of expression, and oral communication for academic contexts. Support is available throughout the academic year and is designed to meet the needs of students at different stages of their research journey.

In addition, the service provides guidance on adapting to UK academic culture, including expectations around criticality, argument structure, referencing, and academic integrity. This support helps students build the confidence and skills needed to communicate effectively and meet the standards of UK higher education.

Subject-Specific Training

Whilst opportunities for skills development are integrated in the Research Degree Programmes, Schools may provide additional subject-specific training. This may include formal training courses or research methods modules, which students may be, required to complete as part of the formal training requirements. For example,

research students may enrol on up to two postgraduate taught modules for training purposes, subject to School approval. Students should also be made aware of training opportunities, which may be delivered, by Research Councils or other Professional Bodies. Subject to available funding and through agreement with the student's supervisor, Schools should ensure that students have a reasonable opportunity to attend or participate in conferences and seminars which further their research, as well as enhance their professional skills.

Section 10: Targeted Enhancement Approach

The University has introduced a Targeted Enhancement Approach to improve student success and enhance academic quality. The approach utilises evidence-based strategies to enable Schools that would most benefit from targeted support to focus their efforts where they will have the most significant impact. By adopting this structured, collaborative, and evidence-driven enhancement model, the University seeks to ensure sustained academic excellence and improved student success across all programmes. [Access further information on the Targeted Enhancement Approach](#).

Section 11: Assessment

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) relates to regulation 6 of the [Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes](#).

Criteria for the Award of a Research Degree

Regulation 6.4 outlines the criteria for a Master's degree by Research, including the expected abilities and qualities of the holders of the qualification.

Regulation 6.5 outlines the criteria for a Doctoral degree, including the expected abilities and qualities of the holders of the qualification.

Research Degree Submission Models

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes regulation 6.2 and 6.3 (and guidelines provided by Student Administration and Systems) outlines the research degree submission models available at Queen's and the relevant presentation and formatting requirements for each Research Degree Programme.

A description of each research degree submission is provided below:

A **Monograph Thesis** submission is a unified document of several chapters, typically comprising introduction, methodology, research findings, and discussion. The student is the sole author of the full thesis.

A **Thesis with Publications** submission is a cohesive document which integrates one or more research papers into the thesis structure. Students may include material which has been published or is in a format suitable for publication which was produced during registration on a research degree programme at the University. The publications can have multiple authors although it is expected that the student will normally be first author or have played a significant role in developing and writing the research. For more information, visit the Thesis with Publications Submission web page.

A **Creative Practice Portfolio** submission will include original creative work, for example music, writing or design, presented in an appropriate form and accompanied by a critical analysis. The analysis will define research objectives, address theoretical contexts, and reflect on methodologies and creative processes.

A **PhD by Published Works** submission is a portfolio of original work containing several peer-reviewed publications related to a unified research theme or field, produced prior to registration at the University.

Final Assessment Procedures

The final assessment of a Research Degree Programme comprises both the submission and an oral examination (viva voce or 'viva'). For Professional Doctorates and Integrated/Structured PhDs, the assessment will also have included the assessment of taught elements at earlier stages of the Research Degree Programme.

Regulation 6.6 outlines the procedure for the submission or a re-submission.

Appointment of Examiners

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Regulation 6.7 outlines the criteria used in appointing examiners. Examiners have an obligation of confidentiality regarding the submission and the examination. Schools have a responsibility to ensure no conflict of interest exists between the student and the examiners which could be perceived to influence their judgement. Examiners who, following appointment, become aware of a potential conflict of interest should inform the School immediately. Two external examiners should be used in any instance where a student has held an employment contract with Queen's during the course of their research degree, or in any other case where personal interest might be involved. Where doctoral students are employed or funded through structured training programmes (e.g. CDTs), the standard examination arrangement of one internal and one external examiner is appropriate. This applies regardless of the specific funder, provided the student has not held a substantive staff role beyond the scope of their training. This approach supports consistency and practicality, particularly in programmes with international or structured training components.

Individuals eligible for appointment as an internal examiner under regulation 6.7.5 may also act as a member of a differentiation or APR panel.

Appointment Process

Schools appoint the internal examiner (Microsoft Word) and the independent convenor (Microsoft Word); and nominate the external examiner(s), for approval by the Chair of the Education Committee (Quality and Standards) (or nominee). The external examiner nomination process is managed via QSIS.

Eligibility and Nomination of Examiners

The nominated external examiner should meet the criteria for appointment as outlined in regulation 6.7.4. If the nominee does not meet the criteria, an alternative examiner should be sought. However, in exceptional circumstances, a concession to the regulations can be requested for an external examiner appointment. A brief statement of the research experience which qualifies the nominee to be the external examiner should be provided in the QSIS Nomination of Examiners form. This should include details of their previous experience of examining research degree Teams students. Additional text or an academic CV to support the request can also be emailed to qar@qub.ac.uk .

External Examiner Experience

External examiners are expected to be experienced in and actively engaged in research and/or scholarly activity. This means that the person is a subject specialist and currently active in research and/or educational scholarship, as demonstrated by a publication record which includes both recently published work and work in progress, or active involvement in on-going projects.

Quality Assurance and Approval Process

Nominations for External Examiners for Research Degree Programme students are processed by the Quality Assurance and Regulations Team on a fortnightly basis. Please submit nominations well in advance of the student's submission date, to allow for the necessary quality assurance checks, approval of nominations and issue of appointment letters and Panel documentation. QSIS nomination of examiner forms are required for students being examined on any Research Degree Programme e.g. PhD, MD, Professional Doctorate, Integrated/Structured PhD or MPhil.

Communication and Documentation

A formal appointment letter is sent to the external examiner, by email, along with links to appropriate regulations and guidance. The letter will also indicate a neutral point of contact within the School to whom the external examiner can raise any concerns prior to the completion of the Independent Report. This ensures that the internal and external examiners have not been in contact before they have completed an independent assessment of the submission and so assures the quality of the examination process.

Replacement of External Examiners

If, following approval by the Chair of the Education Committee (Quality and Standards) (or nominee), an external examiner needs to be replaced, a new nomination must be processed on QSIS. The student should be informed that the external examiner has changed, as the original examiner is unavailable. Where this is the case for a resubmission, the new external examiner should be provided with the Joint Examiner Report from the original examination. The internal examiner should meet with the new external examiner in advance of them receiving the resubmission, to provide the context of the previous examination and the changes required for the resubmission. As a new examination will take place, both examiners must be satisfied that the resubmission is of doctoral standard to make the award.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of School designates a member of staff to make the arrangements for the oral examination, in consultation with the student and the examiners. This should not be the internal examiner, in order to assure the quality of the examination process.

The external examiner is a specialist in the subject area of the submission and will take the lead in the examination. The internal examiner is a full examiner and is expected to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the topic to provide a judgement on the quality of the submission and to play a full part in the examination.

In any instance where an internal examiner is not appointed (see regulation 6.7.2), the Head of School appoints an independent member of the internal staff to co-ordinate the examination process.

A University Director of Research (or nominee from the University of equivalent experience, i.e. senior lecturer or above) is appointed as an independent convenor of the oral examination panel. The independent convenor is in attendance to monitor the conduct of the examination, ensuring that the University's Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes are adhered to. They also provide a report and collate all the necessary paperwork after the viva has taken place.

The following guidelines outline the role of the independent convenor:

i.   The convenor is responsible for ensuring that the oral is conducted in a fair manner and must be present for the duration of the examination. However, the convenor is not one of the examiners and will not participate in the examination of the student, nor is there a requirement to read the submission.

ii. The convenor introduces those present at the oral examination and ensures that all parties understand the procedures to be followed, and the expectations of each member. The convenor offers assistance and facilitation where necessary.

iii. The convenor is responsible for ensuring that the oral is of a reasonable duration. Where the oral is longer than two hours, it is recommended that the student be offered a short intermission. Where difficulties arise, the convenor will decide whether an adjournment is required.

iv. The convenor intervenes if there is a danger of unfairness, bias or unprofessional behaviour.

v.   Towards the end of the oral examination, the convenor asks the supervisor to withdraw so that there is an opportunity to say anything that the student would prefer to say without the presence of the supervisor.

vi. At the end of the oral examination, the convenor asks the student to withdraw while the examiners deliberate.

vii. If the examiners wish to advise the student of their decision, the convenor ensures that the student knows that this decision is provisional only. The student must await a formal communication from Student Administration and Systems.

viii.   The convenor is required to submit a report on the standard template provided by Student Administration and Systems covering the procedural conduct of the examination.

 ix.   The convenor should collate the paperwork (examiners reports and their own report) after the viva, for the School Office to present to the Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC), or Head of School nominee, for signature. The convenor should ensure that no paperwork or annotated copy of the RDP submission is given to the student directly by the examination panel.

Only one supervisor may attend the oral, with the agreement of the student, and may speak only with the examiners' agreement. The supervisor's main role is to comment on any practical or administrative difficulties in the pursuit of the research raised by the student.

Scheduling the Oral Examination (viva)

The oral examination must take place without undue delay, normally within three months from the date the submission is sent to the examiners. It is not recommended that the viva is scheduled unless the approval of the examiners is completed. Viva dates should be scheduled with adequate timeframes for the completion of internal procedures such as the processing and issue of the submission to the examination panel, and sufficient reading and preparation time for the examiners. The letter of appointment to the external examiner indicates that a period of six weeks is normally given to read and examine the submission.

The Preparatory Period Prior to the Oral Examination

In order to provide an opportunity for students to become familiar with the typical examination conditions, requirements and expectations of the oral examination, all postgraduate research students should be invited to experience a mock viva approximately two weeks before the student's scheduled oral examination. It is recommended that the principal supervisor meets with the student for approximately one hour to role-play the viva experience, taking on the role of the external examiner, and questioning the student about the submission and associated research areas,

and then providing feedback to the student at the end of the session. The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School provides additional information and student resources regarding preparing for the oral examination.

Guidelines for students on the submission process are provided by Student Administration and Systems, which is responsible for sending the submission to the examiners, along with the template examination reports.

The research degree submission should not be issued to the examination panel by persons other than Student Registry Services (Student Administration and Systems). Where examination material is circulated to external parties (who may not yet be approved examiners) there is risk of a data breach. The material may also differ from the final approval version accepted by Student Registry Services and cause undue confusion or additional workload for an examiner. The individual issuing the thesis outside of the standard processes could be required to approach the third party and request its deletion, for example, if a nominated external examiner is subsequently not approved. They may also be required to inform the Information Compliance Unit to manage the extent of any data breach.

The research and the written submission must be the student's own work. An examiner who, in reading a submission, discovers evidence of plagiarism, fabrication of results or other research misconduct, should report the matter immediately to the Head of School. Any allegation of plagiarism or duplication will be dealt with under the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences. Any other allegation of research misconduct will be dealt with under the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research. The examination will not continue until the investigation process is complete and may not continue at all if a substantive misconduct in research case is established.

Each examiner is required to complete an Independent Report on the submission before the oral examination, without consulting the other examiner. Each examiner indicates in this preliminary report whether the submission provisionally satisfies the requirements for the research degree and makes an appropriate provisional decision subject to the outcome of the oral examination.

The internal examiner contacts the external examiner(s) a few days before the oral (once the Independent Reports have been completed) to discuss how the examination is to be handled. This enables them to identify the major issues which will be raised in the examination and to decide whether the student needs to submit any additional material (e.g. raw data). The internal examiner informs the supervisor at once if additional material is needed. In any instance where an internal examiner is not appointed, the Head of School appoints an independent member of the internal staff to co-ordinate the examination process.

Examiners meet briefly before the oral examination starts to exchange and discuss the Independent Reports.

The student may not communicate with the examiners about the submission before the examination.

The oral examination must take place without undue delay, normally within three months from the date the submission is sent to the examiners. If the appointed examiner(s) needs to be replaced due to circumstances beyond the School's control, a new QSIS nomination of examiners form will need to be submitted for the replacement examiner(s). Once notified by the School, the Quality Assurance and Regulations Team will review the nomination(s) and if necessary, liaise with the appropriate Faculty Dean and Student Registry colleagues. Sufficient time should be allowed for the new examiner(s) to read the research degree submission and prepare the independent report in advance of the rescheduled examination.

For more information on QSIS processes for Schools, see QSIS Services for Staff.

Format of the Oral Examination

The oral examination may be held in-person (on campus), fully remote or through a hybrid model where one or more participants attend remotely. The School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC) is responsible for determining the specific viva arrangements for each examination and should formally inform all parties involved once the decision is made. Factors contributing to this decision may include:

i. Preference of the examiners, the student and the supervisory team.
ii. Availability and cost of the examiners and the student to travel to the University.
iii. Support available for the student.
iv. Technology available to participants to conduct the viva online.

Where a viva is held remotely, or in hybrid, the examination should be conducted in compliance with the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes (6. Assessment/Award). Guidelines for conducting remote vivas are available which provide the panel and the student with additional support and considerations relevant to an online examination environment.

The Oral Examination Process and Communicating the Result to the Student

Regulation 6.8 outlines the oral examination process, award decisions, and the procedure to be followed if the examiners cannot reach agreement on a decision.

An oral examination is compulsory for all Research Degree Programmes (including for all resubmissions following an outcome of revise and resubmit). It may serve a number of different functions, including the following:

i. It provides the student with the opportunity to defend the submission through high-level debate with experts in the subject.
ii. It gives the examiners an opportunity to explore any doubts they may have about the material presented in the submission.

iii. It can be used to determine that the student is the author of the written materials submitted.

iv. It enables the examiners to check that the student has a thorough understanding of any theoretical framework, issues, methods and statistical analysis involved.

An agreed Joint Report, signed by both examiners, is completed after the oral examination, and should be submitted to the School within five working days of the oral examination. The Joint Report reflects the examiners' assessment of both the written submission and the student's performance at the oral examination, and includes a decision in accordance with regulation 6.8.6. It need not repeat comments already made in the Independent Reports. The Joint and Independent Reports taken together should be of sufficient length and provide sufficient evidence to justify the examiners' decision. If insufficient corrections or justification of the outcome is provided by the examiners, the reports may be refused until made sufficient.

If the examination decision requires submission corrections or revision and resubmission, the examiners list the required amendments within the Joint Report. If the report indicates that an annotated RDP submission copy will be provided with corrections, the report should be returned to the examiners to request that the substantive corrections are listed in full within the report. If, in accordance with regulation 6.8.6 iv, the examiners have recommended that the submission be revised and resubmitted for the Doctoral degree, and have also proposed a possible alternative option for the award of a Master's degree subject to corrections, the examiners should list the amendments required for each scenario so that the student can decide on the preferred option. (The student must confirm the preferred option with Student Administration and Systems within ten working days of the date of the examination outcome notification, which is sent by Student Administration and Systems.)

The independent convenor submits a report covering the procedural conduct of the examination, to the School, within five working days of the oral examination.

The Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC), or Head of School nominee, considers the Independent Reports, the Report of the Independent

Convenor, and the Joint Report, and may refer the case back to the examiners if the Joint Report does not justify the decision made. Otherwise, the Chair of the SPRC, or Head of School nominee, signs the Joint Report to confirm that the result has been justified. The Head of School nominee must not have played any other role in the viva e.g. as Independent Convenor or Internal Examiner. The Independent Reports, Joint Report, and Report of the Independent Convenor must be sent to Student Administration and Systems, within eight working days of the oral examination.

Upon receiving the examiner report forms, the Head of Registry Services or nominee signs the Joint Examiner report and viva outcome letter. Student Administration and Systems then notifies the student of the outcome of the examination and sends the student a copy of the examination reports (containing the list of required amendments, if appropriate), within two weeks of receipt of the examiner reports from the School. Amendments must only be made as directed by the examiners, and not to other areas of the submission. Schools and members of the examination panel must not, under any circumstances, send the student copies of the reports, corrections or annotated research degree submission copies directly. These must only be issued to the student by Student Administration and Systems after approval from the Head of Registry Services or nominee.

Where a student is required to revise and resubmit, Student Administration and Systems will change their academic load to Resubmission and the student may be liable for a resubmission charge. The student has not passed their examination at this stage. The outcome of revise and resubmit reflects that substantial revisions are required to make the submission acceptable and students should re-engage with their supervisory team to address the issues identified by the examiners within the 12 month period. Normal supervision should resume and at a minimum, six formal meetings should be held during this period. A new oral examination, with the same examiners, is required for the resubmission. The same examination processes as the original examination, including Notice of Intention to Submit; Nomination of Examiners; and Examiner Report Forms, will apply.

Following internal examiner approval of the corrections received within the deadline set by the examiners, an examiner (normally the internal examiner) signs off the Repository form certifying that all corrections have been completed within the

deadline. For examinations with two external examiners and no internal examiner, either external examiner can sign-off corrections.   The examiner may not introduce any new requests for additional corrections beyond those required in the joint report. Student Administration and Systems confirms that an electronic submission has been made via Pure (see information on Open Access and Research Degree Submission Embargo below). Student Administration and Systems then notifies the student that the award has been approved.

Students who fail to submit a corrected or revised submission by the date set by the examiners will be regarded as having failed the examination and the decisions of the examiners will lapse. If, in exceptional circumstances, the student is granted a period of temporary withdrawal following the original submission, the deadline for submitting a corrected or revised submission will be adjusted accordingly. This will be managed in the normal manner by the School, unless the student has/will exceed the cumulative maximum of two years' temporary withdrawal from the programme. In this instance, the student/School should submit a [RDP Exception Request - Temporary Withdrawal Form (Microsoft Word)](#) by email to qar@qub.ac.uk for consideration by the Education Committee (Quality and Standards). The School should update the examiners, and notify Student Administration and Systems as appropriate, if a temporary withdrawal period has been granted.

Open Access and Research Degree Submission Embargo

Increasingly, Open Access is becoming an essential component of how research is disseminated and communicated at universities. All students undertaking Research Degree Programmes at Queen's University must make their submission open access through uploading to Pure, which is the University's Current Research Information System. This is a compulsory requirement to successfully graduate. It is the responsibility of the Research Degree Programme student to upload to Pure before their account in Pure expires. If a student cannot access Pure to submit their thesis, they can contact the [E-thesis team](#) for support.

All Research Degree Programme students, moreover, are responsible for undertaking clearance of third-party copyright in their submissions. Where possible,

and in line with current copyright legislation and publisher licence restrictions, the final corrected version of the submission will be made available open access on the Research Portal. In all instances, it is the responsibility of the author to ensure that they meet the open access requirements outlined above.

Research Degree Programme students can embargo their submission while they seek to get their research published. Embargoed options are outlined in the repository form. Embargo options are available 1-5 years from the date of the award. There may be specific circumstances also where redaction of submission content is necessary; this may be temporary to accommodate an embargo or may be permanent. In all cases, redaction must be discussed with the [Open Research Librarian](#) for e-submissions.

There are Research Degree Programme students who are in receipt of funding in which there is an open access requirement. For example, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funded students are obliged to share their submission within 12 months of the award. Where a student has such an open access mandate from a funder and is seeking to get their submission published, it may not be appropriate to upload to Pure and make available within the funder's stipulated timeframe. Thus, it may be possible for UKRI funded students, or similar, to embargo their submission for a period between 2 and 5 years.

To be eligible, students must have concerns that making their submission open within 12 months would impact them or their career detrimentally. Students must select an embargo that is **no longer than necessary**. Students must, where possible, be willing to embrace the spirit of openness also. For example, Northern Bridge funded students may embargo their creative writing PhDs for the maximum 5-year embargo period. The full text of the submission should be made open access at the end of this period. Supplementary materials such as journal entries and work/writing samples etc. can be uploaded, especially if the full text of the submission is embargoed for the full 5 years. This is to honour the spirit of openness as insisted upon by the funder.

Only in the rarest circumstances would the University consider waiving the requirement to make the submission open access and offer an embargo in perpetuity. This could only occur in circumstances where sharing the submission would not be possible, for example where making the submission open access would compromise the safety or health of the student, or have significant negative ramifications to sharing e.g. legal disputes, confidentiality, sensitivity of content, employment etc. In such cases, a formal request must be sought by the student via the Open Access team. Approval can only be granted directly from the Dean of the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School.

Where a Research Degree Programme student has received approval for embargo in perpetuity, the student is nonetheless obliged to share the submission with the University's Open Research Librarian for e-submissions The electronic submission will be placed in a safe and secure online storage, whereupon it will be subject to a future review decision (80+ years).

Hard-bound submission is no longer a mandatory requirement for Research Degree Programme students, with the exception of PhD by Published Works.

Note that advice can be sought from the [Open Research Librarian](#) for e-submissions on the following areas: Embargoes, redactions and versioning of the submission, copyright issues, publication planning, visibility of research outputs and associated data connected with the submission.

Details of the payment scheme for external examiner fees and expenses are available from the [Examinations Office](#).

Section 12: Research Student Complaints and Appeals

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes relates to the Advice and Guidance on Concerns, Complaints and Appeals within the [UK Quality Code](#) (June 2024).

It is in the interests of research students and the University to resolve problems at an early stage.

The procedures for addressing complaints and academic appeals at various levels apply equally to all research students, including those who are part-time, off-site, registered in collaborative programmes, or on visiting programmes. The links below provide students, staff and other stakeholders with details of the relevant regulations, guidance, flowcharts, and forms.

A complaint under the Student Complaints Regulations is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, or facilities provided by the University and/or about the action or lack of action by the University.

The Academic Appeal Regulations (Research Degree Programmes) are intended for use by students on Research Degree Programmes (including students engaged in the research elements of a Professional Doctorate on Integrated/Structured PhD programme) who wish to appeal against a decision on student progression, assessment and/or award or an examiners' decision regarding the outcome of an oral examination.

Students can seek advice and guidance in relation to these Procedures and Regulations from SU Advice, and the Students' Union.

Section 13: Useful Contacts

Nature of Query	Sources of Advice
Academic	
Annual Progress Review including Differentiation	- Code of Practice section: Progress Monitoring and Annual Progress Review - Supervisory Team - School*
Submission	Student Registry
Examination Arrangements	- Code of Practice section: Assessment

	- Supervisory Team
	- Advice on fees and expenses: extexamexpenses@qub.ac.uk
Academic Issues	- Supervisory Team
	- Postgraduate Officer, Students' Union
	- Advice SU, Student's Union
	- Learning Development Service
Supervisory Issues	- Supervisory Team
	- School*
	- Postgraduate Officer, Students' Union
Appeals, Conduct and Complaints	- Academic Affairs (Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Team)
	- Advice SU, Student's Union
Training and Development	
Student Skills Development	- Code of Practice section: Skills Development
	- Thomas J. Moran Graduate School
	- Postgraduate Development Programme
	- Academic English Service
Supervisor Training	Thomas J. Moran Graduate School (Training and Development Team)
Wellbeing	
Financial Difficulties	Advice SU, Student's Union
Personal Difficulties	- Supervisory Team
	- School*
	- Student Wellbeing Service
	- University Chaplains
Disability and Wellbeing	Accessible Learning Support
Finance	
Grants/Studentships	The Thomas J. Moran Graduate School (Postgraduate Awards Team)
Tuition Fees	Fees and Funding

Scholarships and Awards	- [Opportunities for current students](#)
	- [International Scholarships](#)
Other	
Admissions	[Admissions and Access Service](#)
Enrolment and Registration	[Student Registry](#)
Graduation	[Student Registry](#)
Research Student Lifecycle / Research Student Management	[QSIS Services](#)
Open Access	[Open Research Librarian](#)
Equipment and Facilities	- Supervisory Team
	- School*
Intellectual Property Rights and Publications	[Research Governance](#)
Turnitin	[Centre for Educational Development](#)
Immigration Support	[Immigration Support Service](#)
External Examiner Fees and Expenses	[Examinations Office](#)

* School contacts may include School office, Head of School, Chair of SPRC, Adviser of Studies etc. This will vary across Schools.