

# Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes

## Research Degree Programmes

This Queen's Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) applies to all the RDPs (including the research elements of Professional Doctorates) and has been developed with full cognisance of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11, Research Degrees. The Code of Practice for RDPs 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.

### Key Contact:

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# Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes

## Section 1: Introduction

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

The Code of Practice for RDPs 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 RDPs, issued in good faith, complements, but is not a substitute for the existing Study Regulations for RDPs. Staff and students should refer to the Study Regulations for RDPs in the first instance, in addition to the wider General Regulations for Postgraduate Students. In the event of any conflict of interpretation between the Code of Practice for RDPs 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.

The UK Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees outlines the following expectation about research degrees which HE providers are required to meet:

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

This Queen's Code of Practice for RDPs has been developed with full cognisance of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11, Research Degrees, and demonstrates how the University meets the Quality Code expectation and the indicators of sound practice related to RDPs.

Queen's takes account of The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies and other UK and European reference points in order to secure the academic standards of its RDPs.

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 programmes – Principles for Professional Doctorates, Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes, and the relevant Programme Specification), form the academic framework for Queen's RDPs, which outlines how the University awards academic credit (where relevant) and RDP qualifications. These documents also represent the definitive record for the respective RDPs.

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## Queen's RDPs

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

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)  
Doctor of Philosophy (by Published Works) (PhD)  
Integrated Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)  
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)  
Doctor of Medicine (MD)  
Master of Surgery (MCh)

## Professional Doctorates

Doctor of Childhood Studies (DChild)  
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych)  
Doctor of Education (EdD)  
Doctor of Education (EdD) TESOL  
Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP)  
Doctorate in Governance (DGov)  
Doctorate in Midwifery Practice (DMP)  
Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP)  
Juris Doctor (JD)

## 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/Intellectual Property Rights.
- ii. Regulations relating to external students and students working away from the University for a period.
- iii. Minimum and maximum periods of study, and interruptions to 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.
- vi. Academic Appeals Regulations (Research Degree Programmes).

The Study Regulations are contained within the General Regulations: University Calendar for Postgraduate Students which is revised annually and includes the following areas:

- i. Principles for Professional Doctorates.
- ii. Regulations for Students including admissions procedures, fees, and postgraduate awards.
- iii. Conduct Regulations and other regulations for the use of laboratories and the library.
- iv. A range of procedures including those for dealing with academic offences, Fitness to Practise (particularly relevant to Professional Doctorates), and the Student Complaints Procedure.
- v. 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 are complemented at School level by a range of information including guides to specific RDPs, application and admissions procedures, and the expectations of students undertaking a RDP within a particular School. Student handbooks contain both

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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 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.

### Section 2: Research Environment

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) relates to Indicator 4 of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

#### Introduction

The University seeks to be distinguished by its academic strengths and recognised globally for the social, economic and cultural benefit it delivers through its research. To achieve this, staff work to create an inspiring research environment that nurtures talent and rewards outstanding leadership and excellence.

Research at Queen's takes place in three related settings: Core Disciplinary Groups, Pioneer Research Programmes and Global Research Institutes. Many academics are engaged with multiple research programmes across several of these settings. Each of these structures includes members from all stages of the research career path, from postgraduate to professoriate. All involve collaboration amongst Queen's researchers and links with partners at other institutions and outside the academic world, both regionally and globally.

Queen's has three research priorities: culture of research ambition; connecting to tackle global challenges; and vibrant postgraduate and postdoctoral communities; and three cross-cutting themes within the Research Strategy: internationalisation; impact; and environment.

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.

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## 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 RDP, students have access to a comprehensive induction programme offered by the Graduate 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 Graduate School. The Graduate School has also provided 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 disability.

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 Graduate School provides a range of services for students including relevant training and advice to assist student development in the research environment. Training and development opportunities include the Postgraduate Development Programme which offers comprehensive training, one to one support and skills development opportunities for research students at the University. The Graduate School along with the Careers, Employability and Skills service provide on-going group and individual career guidance for research students.

## Plagiarism and Research Misconduct

The University seeks to ensure that students are provided with clear and concise advice (and training where relevant) in relation to plagiarism and 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 Graduate School, Learning Development Service and library provide a wide range of face to face and online citation training. In addition to this, the Centre for Educational Development supports Schools providing students with guidance in the use of similarity checking software packages such as Turnitin.

## Collaborative Agreements

To ensure the academic standards of the University are adhered to in the delivery and completion of awards which may be offered jointly with another institution, the University has developed a protocol for the establishment and governance of collaborative arrangements. To establish a collaborative agreement Schools should, in the first instance, inform Academic Affairs and the International Office (for agreements with Universities outside the UK). 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.

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.

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## **Section 3: Selection, Admission and Induction of Students**

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) relates to Indicators 5 to 8 of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees, and the Postgraduate Admissions Policy.

The Provision of Information for New Research Students subsection 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 RDPs, interruptions to study, including temporary withdrawals; progress; assessment; and academic appeals.

### **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, and includes details of criteria for admission and procedures (section 3.1.2), roles and responsibilities of Schools and staff in administering and quality assuring the admissions process (Postgraduate Admissions Policy Appendix 1), and information on policy areas such as selection procedures (section 4.1.2) to RDPs, which supplements the information contained in this Code of Practice for RDPs.

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 RDP. Information on RDPs is available through the online Course Finder, Postgraduate Prospectus in hardcopy and online, School leaflets and brochures, School websites, and through the Prospective Student Portal.

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, disability 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.

The Graduate School and International Office provide up to date information for NI, GB, EU and international students regarding sources of funding and closing dates for applications. The Graduate School and International Office also provide details of how students can apply for funding, eligibility criteria and links to external sources of funding.

The Admissions and Access Service is responsible for managing the Postgraduate Applications 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. International Student Support can offer advice on visa and immigration issues.

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## 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 RDPs. 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 Coursefinder. 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 RDPs, is available in the Postgraduate Prospectus and online.

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 RDP.

Where applicants are required to complete an assessment or attend an interview, Schools ensure that any reasonable adjustments which the applicant may require as a result of disability are arranged in advance. Schools consult with Disability Services for advice where necessary. Further information on the support available to postgraduate students with a disability is available online.

## Responsibilities and Entitlements of Students undertaking Research Degree Programmes

### Offer Letter

The Postgraduate Admissions Policy, section 4.5 outlines the details of the information which the student can expect to receive with the formal offer letter, 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 RDPs.

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. The Admissions and Access Service issues the official offer letters and guidance notes upon receipt of decisions from Schools.

The Graduate School is responsible for the administration and allocation of Postgraduate Student Awards. The notification of an offer of an award is made by the Graduate School in a separate letter to the offer letter from the Admissions and Access Service.

### Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulations 2.7 and 2.8 highlight the requirement that subject to conditions of funding or other collaboration agreements, all postgraduate students involved in University RDPs shall be required to assign their intellectual property to the University on registration.

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## 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. The responsibilities of students whilst engaging with their supervisor over the course of their RDP are highlighted at various stages throughout the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes. 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 RDP.
- 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. 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 the RDP. (In endorsing the Notice of Intention to Submit Service Request, the Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee, or nominee, does not confirm that the thesis is fit for submission or that the submission will be successful.)

## **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 Portal students can complete the registration process for general enrolment, finance and accommodation. Students can also access group specific information and checklists which signpost students to the relevant Schools to complete the registration and induction process.

The Graduate School provides a range of activities during the University Welcome Week, and induction sessions in early October and February, to provide NI/GB/EU and international students with a comprehensive induction programme and access to a wide range of information and advice. In addition to helping students with the orientation of the wider University, the programme provides a range of activities which encourage postgraduate research students to engage and build up relationships with their peers. The Graduate School also delivers regular induction programmes to accommodate new students registering throughout the course of the academic year.

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

- i. Student registration (regulation 2).
- ii. External students and students working away from Queen's (regulation 3).

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- iii. Periods of study for RDPs, including the minimum, normal and maximum periods of study (regulation 4), and how to request, in light of extenuating circumstances, an extended period of study and thesis submission date using the RDP Exception Request: Registration and Thesis Submission form.
- iv. Interruptions to study (regulation 5), including how to request, in light of extenuating circumstances, an extended period of temporary withdrawal using the RDP Exception Request: Temporary Withdrawal form.
- v. Progress, including supervision, regular progress monitoring, and Annual Progress Review (regulation 6).
- vi. Assessment, including the requirements for the RDP awards, and the assessment/examination process (regulation 7).
- vii. The Academic Appeals Regulations (Research Degree Programmes) procedure (regulation 8).

In addition to specific University induction programmes run by the 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 RDP.

Information on on-going training opportunities through programmes such as the Postgraduate Development Programme is available through the Graduate School. 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.

### Section 4: Supervision

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) relates to Indicators 9 to 12 of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees, and regulation 6.1 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 RDP. Partners should not be appointed to the same supervisory team. The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulations 6.1.1 – 6.1.9 outline the criteria for the appointment of supervisors at the University. These regulations ensure that University Schools delegate supervisory responsibilities to suitably qualified academic staff. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff, for example holders of prestigious, personal postdoctoral fellowships, or lecturers on probation, who have considerable postdoctoral experience, to be appointed as principal supervisors following completion of the mandatory supervisor training course, and with the support of an experienced second supervisor. The Head of School/Institute should submit the Research Degree Programmes Exception Request: Supervisor Appointment form via [academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk](mailto:academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk) for the consideration of the Chair of the Research and Postgraduate Committee, who will take advice from the appropriate Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and determine whether the proposed individual is permitted to be appointed as a principal supervisor.

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Supervisors are required to ensure they 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 Graduate School. Please contact [pg.skills@qub.ac.uk](mailto:pg.skills@qub.ac.uk) for further details of the courses available.

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. The Graduate School provides updates and examples of best practice for existing supervisors.

### The Supervisory Team

Supervisory teams are normally appointed and made known to new students by the end of the induction process. The supervisory team normally comprises a principal supervisor and a secondary or co-supervisor. A third supervisor may, exceptionally, be appointed where a student's research is interdisciplinary, to provide a link between the disciplines. In addition, 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.

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 RDP. The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulations 6.1.8 – 6.1.10 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.

Normally the principal supervisor will be the initial point of contact for the student.

### Responsibilities of the Supervisor

The student is responsible for the eventual success or failure of the RDP. The supervisory team provides the student with advice, help and guidance over the course of the RDP, enabling access to relevant training and development opportunities, to support the completion of the RDP.

In line with the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 6.1.11, 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, six (but normally ten for full-time 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.

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

- i. 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

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- specific policies, including gaining ethical approval, and health and safety practices at School level.
- ii. 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.
  - iii. 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.
  - iv. As highlighted in the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 6.2, the supervisory team should agree an initial research plan with the student, which may be subject to change during the course of the RDP.
  - v. 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 RDP, raising any concerns about progress at an early stage with the student.
  - vi. The supervisory team should ensure that appropriate records are maintained in relation to supervisory meetings, progress monitoring, and Annual Progress Review (including differentiation).
  - vii. 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.
  - viii. 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.
  - ix. 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.

### 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.

In line with the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 6.1.9, a supervisor may not normally be the principal supervisor for more than six full-time (or equivalent) research students (pro rata for those with co-supervisors) at any one time.

## Section 5: 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 5.3.

In exceptional circumstances, students/Schools may request a concession to the regulations to seek an extended period of temporary withdrawal, or an extended registration period and thesis submission date by completing the appropriate Research Degree Programmes Exception Request form (which replace PGR10 and PGR7 forms, respectively):

- i. RDP Exception Request: Temporary withdrawal.
- ii. RDP Exception Request: Registration and Thesis Submission.

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The University's Policy on Holidays and Other Absences for Postgraduate Research Students provides guidelines for staff and students registered on RDPs. Funded students should also refer to their funder's terms and conditions (or contact the Postgraduate Awards Team, [graduateschool@gub.ac.uk](mailto:graduateschool@gub.ac.uk)) for any implications to their funding arrangements. International students should contact International Student Support to determine any implications for their visa.

### 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

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulations 5.1 and 5.2 outline the procedure for notifying and certifying periods of absence or failure to meet deadlines due to illness. Students should apply to their School for a period of temporary withdrawal when the absence will exceed four weeks.

### Suspension of Studies – Temporary Withdrawals

In general, students are expected to complete their RDP in a single continuous period. The suspension of studies (temporary withdrawal) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, such as:

- i. Illness (which is likely to last for more than four weeks).
- ii. Compelling personal reasons that require the student to be absent from the University.
- iii. 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 RDP 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 RDP within the maximum period of study (i.e. 4 years FTE for the PhD programme).

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 5.3 outlines the procedure for considering periods of temporary withdrawal. Students should discuss a

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request for a period of temporary withdrawal with their Principal Supervisor/School in advance of the period of withdrawal requested.

### Section 6: Progress Monitoring and Annual Progress Review

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) relates to Indicator 13 of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

Regulations to support progress within the RDP are outlined in regulation 6 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 RDP.
- iv. Regular progress monitoring by the supervisory team, including the requirement for a minimum of six (but normally ten for full-time 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).

#### Annual Progress Review

Student progress is reviewed annually, by an independent progress review panel, until the student has completed the Research Degree Programme (RDP). Schools 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.

#### Regulatory Requirements

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 6.5 outlines the requirements for Annual Progress Review (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 RDPs (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.

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### Panel Membership

The School shall appoint a progress review panel for each student. This should normally comprise two independent members of staff. One of the independent members should be a senior member of staff within the School. The other member may be a lecturer on probation who has significant knowledge of the research area.

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. If Schools are concerned that there may have been substantial involvement with a student, Academic Affairs should be contacted for further guidance.

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.

### Types of Meetings and Student Submissions

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 enrolls 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. 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, thesis overview, and thesis 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, 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 when the School is completing APR, a light touch approach could be implemented when the student has returned to studies and has had 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

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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 the thesis 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 their thesis 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 thesis 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 thesis for re-examination may benefit from submitting draft revised work to the progress review panel, and experiencing a 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. It would be good practice for the supervisory team to receive a copy of this feedback to support the future progression of the student.

### Timing of Progress Review Panel Meetings

As stated in the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 6.5.1, 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.

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

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their future research. It is recommended that initial 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.

### 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.

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.

It is considered good practice for draft differentiation reports, papers or thesis chapters/sections, as appropriate, to be submitted 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 in the Good Practice Guide on the Use of Turnitin Software for Postgraduate Research Students.

## Section 7: Skills Development

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) relates to Indicator 14 of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

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 RDPs. Research students must comply with the University's training requirements for their specific RDP, 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 RDP.

### **Central Training and Resources**

The 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 (guidelines available online) includes training courses, online learning, personal effectiveness programmes, developmental activity, and one to one consultancy and advice.

The Graduate School supports students and academic staff in relation to Postgraduate Researcher Development Planning. Students in the first year of their RDP (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 RDP. Students then take responsibility for undertaking the relevant development activity and recording the completion of aims and objectives on their

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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 Queen's Researcher Plus award provides official recognition of transferable skills and assists researchers in demonstrating them to employers.

A range of on-line learning tools is currently available within the Postgraduate Development Programme.

### Subject-Specific Training

Whilst opportunities for skills development are integrated in the RDPs, 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, PGR 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 8: Annual Review of Research Degree Programmes

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) relates to Indicators 3 and 15 of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

The University undertakes regular reviews of the provision of its RDPs to assure the quality and maintain the academic standards of research degrees, and to provide an indication of the University's progress against national targets. The University's Annual Review of Research Degree Programmes process provides a retrospective overview across all Schools. Schools complete the Annual Review of Research Degree Programmes School Report Template. The key areas of review include:

- i. Overview of programmes.
- ii. Student body profile for current students, student applications and new entrants.
- iii. Achievement of standards.
- iv. Stakeholder evaluations (students, staff, external examiners, employers, funders and sponsors).
- v. School action plans.
- vi. A review of collaborative arrangements is managed separately via the Collaborative Provision Group.

Data from the Schools and other relevant internal and external agencies is assessed by the Postgraduate Research Academic Review Group for quality assurance purposes before reports and recommendations are fed back to each School. The Research and Postgraduate Committee receives a report from the Postgraduate Research Academic Review Group which comprises cross-University feedback; collaborative arrangements feedback; and reports from each Faculty, including general themes, School-specific feedback, and a Faculty Action Plan.

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### Collecting and Responding to Stakeholder Evaluations of RDPs

The University ensures there are mechanisms in place for a variety of stakeholders (e.g. students, staff and external parties) to be able to provide feedback on the delivery, assessment and outcome of RDPs.

Student feedback is collated in a number of ways from informal feedback sessions with supervisors, research administrators and School postgraduate advisers, to interactions with University-wide support services and forums such as the Postgraduate Forum, to more formal feedback mechanisms such as through the completion of external national surveys including the Higher Education Academy's Postgraduate Research Experience Survey. This feedback is reviewed, acted upon, and reported back to stakeholders both informally at School/academic support area level, and more formally through University governance structures.

Feedback from supervisors, review panels, research administrators, and internal examiners are collated and acted upon, and reported back at School level, for example by the School Postgraduate Research Committee, and at a University level, for example by the Postgraduate Advisory Body and the Research and Postgraduate Committee. Academic Affairs also facilitates a number of mechanisms, including the PGR Support Staff Forum, consultation meetings, briefing sessions and feedback meetings to receive feedback, identify good practice, and discuss improvement opportunities, as part of the quality assurance of RDPs.

Feedback is gathered from external parties in a number of ways, including through the examination process, from external examiners; from collaborative provision review meetings, for collaborating organisations; and from School-based or academic support-based (such as Careers, Employability and Skills) consultation activities for employers and sponsors.

All of this feedback, and the resultant actions, are reviewed as part of the University's Annual Review of Research Degree Programmes process, a key quality assurance mechanism to review academic standards and quality across the University. This process culminates in the identification of areas of good practice for dissemination across the University, and areas for improvement, which are followed up with the specific Schools/areas.

### Annual Review of RDPs Procedure

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that all of the RDPs (including Professional Doctorates) in the School are reviewed each year. The School RDP Review Group(s) (which may comprise the School Postgraduate Research Committee) should be chaired by the Head of School (or nominee). Membership must include a student representative(s), and should include other stakeholders, where appropriate.

The Faculty Dean overseeing PGR matters will arrange a structured conversation with the Chair of each School RDP Review Group within the Faculty to review the draft School Report before its submission to the Postgraduate Research Academic Review Group.

One Annual Review of Research Degree Programmes School Report Template should be completed incorporating data for all RDPs (including Professional Doctorates) delivered by the School, and approved by the Head of School. An exemplar has been developed to support Schools in completing the template. Schools are encouraged to submit concise reports focusing on the main issues; risks and ongoing/planned actions; good practice and plans for dissemination when completing the School Report. The School Report should be sent to Academic Affairs by 15 December 2017.

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School Reports are considered by the PGR Academic Review Group (a sub-group of the University's Research and Postgraduate Committee). Schools receive a feedback report, including an identification of any areas that need attention, to inform reviews of policies, procedures and practices to improve the provision of RDPs.

A detailed procedures memo was circulated to Schools in September 2017.

### Feedback from the Previous Annual Review of RDPs

Each School received a feedback memo in June 2017 which outlined both cross-university comments, and School-specific comments. Additional copies of the individual School feedback memos can be provided on request.

## Section 9: Assessment

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) relates to Indicators 16 and 17 of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees, and regulation 7 of the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes.

### Criteria for the Award of a Research Degree

Regulation 7.2 (and Student Services and Systems) specifies the presentation and formatting requirements for each RDP, including the requirements for a creative practice research submission, and the requirements for the PhD by Published Works submission.

Regulation 7.3 outlines the criteria for a Master's degree by Research, including the expected abilities and qualities of the holders of the qualification.

Regulation 7.4 outlines the criteria for a Doctoral degree, including the expected abilities and qualities of the holders of the qualification.

### Final Assessment Procedures

The final assessment of a RDP comprises both the written submission (thesis), and an oral examination. For Professional Doctorates, the assessment will also have included the assessment of taught elements at earlier stages of the RDP.

Regulation 7.5 outlines the procedure for submitting or re-submitting a thesis for examination.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Regulation 7.6 outlines the criteria used in appointing examiners. Examiners have an obligation of confidentiality regarding the thesis and the examination. Schools appoint the internal examiner and the independent convenor; and nominate the external examiner(s), for approval by the Research and Postgraduate Committee. A formal appointment letter is sent to the external examiner, 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 thesis, and so assures the quality of the examination process.

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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 thesis 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 thesis and to play a full part in the examination.

In any instance where an internal examiner is not appointed (see regulation 7.6.2), the Head of School appoints an independent member of the internal staff to co-ordinate the examination process.

A Director of Research (or nominee 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 and provide a report.

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

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.

### **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

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role of the external examiner, and questioning the student about the thesis and associated research areas, and then providing feedback to the student at the end of the session. The Graduate School provides additional information and student resources regarding preparing for the oral examination.

Student Services and Systems sends the thesis to the examiners, along with the template examination reports.

The research and the written submission must be the student's own work. An examiner who, in reading a thesis, discovers evidence of plagiarism, fabrication of results or other research misconduct should report the matter immediately to the Head of School. The allegation of research misconduct will be investigated in line with the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research. The examination will not continue until this 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 thesis before the oral examination, without consulting the other examiner. Each examiner indicates in this preliminary report whether the thesis 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 thesis before the examination.

A period of six to eight weeks is normally allowed for reading and examining a thesis, including the oral examination of the student.

### **The Oral Examination Process and Communicating the Result to the Student**

Regulation 7.7 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 RDPs (including for all resubmitted theses following major revisions), and is normally held in the University. It may serve a number of different functions including the following:

- i. It provides the student with the opportunity to defend the thesis 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 thesis.
- iii. It can be used to determine that the student is the author of the written materials submitted.

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

An agreed Joint Report, signed by both examiners, is completed after the oral examination, and submitted to the School normally 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 7.7.5. 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 the examination decision requires thesis corrections or revision and resubmission, the examiners list the required amendments within the Joint Report. If, in accordance with regulation 7.7.5 iv, the examiners have recommended that the thesis 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 Services and Systems within ten working days of the date of the examination outcome notification letter, which is sent by Student Services and Systems.)

The independent convenor submits a report covering the procedural conduct of the examination, to the School, normally 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 Independent Reports, Joint Report, and Report of the Independent Convenor are sent to Student Services and Systems, normally within eight working days of the oral examination.

When the result includes corrections, revision and resubmission, or the award of a lower qualification subject to corrections, the Head of Registry Services signs the Joint Report when notifying the student of the outcome of the oral examination.

When the result indicates that no amendments are required, including the award of a lower qualification without amendments, the Head of Registry Services signs the Joint Report after the submission of the final hard bound thesis.

Student Services and Systems 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), normally within two weeks of the oral examination. Amendments must only be made as directed by the examiners, and not to other areas of the thesis.

Following approval of the corrections received within the deadline set by the examiners, an examiner (normally the internal examiner) signs off the Library forms certifying that all corrections have been completed within deadline. The Library forms should be bound into the front of each of the hard bound copies of the thesis which the student submits to Student Services and Systems. Student Services and Systems then notifies the student that the award has been approved.

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Students who fail to submit a corrected or revised thesis by the date set by the examiners will normally 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 of the thesis, the deadline for submission of a corrected or revised thesis 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 Research Degree Programmes Exception Request: Temporary Withdrawal form to [academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk](mailto:academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk) for consideration by the Research and Postgraduate Committee. The School should update the examiners, and notify Student Services and Systems as appropriate, if a temporary withdrawal period has been granted.

### Library Regulations

Regulation 7.9 outlines the library regulations. The author of a thesis may, with the written approval of the Head of School and supervisory team, place an embargo on access to the thesis for up to 5 years. Requests for further 5-year extensions should be made 6 months before the embargo is due to elapse, to Academic Affairs for consideration by the Director of Information Services and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. Access to a thesis may also be withheld on the instructions of Senate to protect the interests of the University.

## Section 10: Research Student Complaints and Appeals

This section of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) relates to Indicator 18 of the UK Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

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 Procedure is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the University.

The Academic Appeals Regulations (Research Degree Programmes) procedure is intended for use by students on Research Degree Programmes (including students engaged in the research elements of a Professional Doctorate programme) who wish to appeal a decision on student progression, assessment and/or award.