York Graduate Research School

Policy on Research Degrees

1.   Introduction

1.1   The Policy on Research Degrees (formerly the Code of Practice on Research Degrees) sets out University policy on research degree programmes for research students, supervisors of research students and members of Thesis Advisory Panels, examiners of research degrees, and other University staff with responsibility for research students.

1.2   This Policy has been drawn up with reference to the *Chapter B11: Research degrees* of the QAA's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* (2012).York Graduate Research School (YGRS), reporting to Senate, is responsible for implementing the PoRD and reviewing it on an annual basis.

1.3   This Policy supplements, but does not supersede, the University's regulations for research degree awards (Regulation 2: www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/governance-documents/ordinances-and-regulations/regulation-2/).

1.4   This Policy applies to the degrees of PhD (including three-year, four-year and distance learning variants), EngD and MPhil, and MA/MSc by research (the MA (by research) and MSc (by research)). The PhD by Publication is detailed in University's regulations (Regulation 2.9). Therefore, this policy refers to all research students unless otherwise stated. Additional regulations applying only to the PhD by distance learning are in Appendix 3.

Responsibility for research students and research degree programmes

Institutional responsibility

1.5   York Graduate Research School (YGRS) and University Research Committee are responsible for maintaining an oversight of strategic policy relating to research degree students and programmes.

1.6   YGRS is responsible, at institutional level, for the quality assurance and enhancement of the research student experience and of research degree programmes, including the approval of new research degree programmes.

1.7   YGRS monitors research degree students and research degree programmes through:

(i)   the consideration of a range of statistical data on an annual basis (analysed by department and taking into relevant variation such as the mode of study, requirements of funding bodies etc.) including:
- Postgraduate Research Student Experience (PRES) survey data (when available)
- rates of confirmation of enrolment at the first and second attempt (from the Research Student Administration Team)
- submission and completion times and rates (from the Research Student Administration Team)
- pass, referral, fail and withdrawal rates (from the Research Student Administration Team)
- appeals and complaints (from Special Cases Committee)

(ii)   University Teaching Committee's (UTC) annual programme review and periodic review processes, which include explicit consideration of research students and research degree programmes.

1.8   Operational *institutional* responsibility for research students and research degree programmes is as follows:

Area	Office
Admissions	Student Admissions and Recruitment
Supporting the research student journey from enrolment to confirmation to final examination	The Research Student Administration Team
Research degree programme approval, monitoring and review	Academic Support Office (plus the Planning Office for consideration of new programme proposals and major modifications)
Research student training, including for Postgraduates Who Teach	Researcher Development Team (which is overseen by UTC and YGRS)
Research policy framework	Research Strategy and Policy Office
Research ethics	University Ethics Committee and its sub-committees
Training for supervisors	Learning and Development

Departmental responsibility

1.9   Within a department or centre, the departmental research committee has oversight of all research in the department, while responsibility for research students and research degree programmes rests with the Board of Studies, although in many departments responsibility is delegated from the Board of Studies to a Graduate School Board (or equivalent). In the rest of the document, 'department' is used to represent a student's home department or centre, and Graduate School Board is used to represent whichever departmental committee has formal responsibility (either directly or under delegated powers) for research students and research degree programmes.

Doctoral training centres

1.10   The University participates in a number of Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs). DTCs (which may also be called Centres for Doctoral Training or Doctoral Training Partnerships) are research-council funded consortia of universities and research institutions which provide enhanced research degree programmes (typically four-year PhDs) by pooling the expertise of the partners. Students undertaking a research degree within a DTC will receive their award from their home institution but are entitled and/or required to undertake taught elements and other training and networking opportunities across the partnership. To facilitate the operation of a DTC, decisions (for example relating to student selection, induction and training) normally taken by individual institutions (normally at departmental level at York) may be taken at DTC level by a body comprising representatives from all the partners. Approval for research degree programmes operating through DTCs, including any special features and/or exceptions to the University's Policy on Research Degrees) must be obtained from YGRS.

Approval of research degree programmes

1.11   All new research degree programmes require the approval of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board, Planning Committee and YGRS.

1.12   Where a department is planning to bid for a doctoral training centre (as lead or member institution), the University approval stage (i.e. Planning and YGRS) for the associated research degree programme should run in parallel with the initial drafting of the bid in order to identify and address any issues early on in the process and build up staff expertise and cooperation.

1.13   The Chair of YGRS may decide that comments from an external assessor on a new research degree programme are not required, e.g. if the programme has already undergone external review as part of a bid to a research council or other sponsor/funding body.

1.14   Modifications to research degree programmes require departmental approval and, in the case of major modifications (including significant changes to departmental training requirements), the approval of YGRS and sometimes Planning Committee.

1.15   Any credit-bearing modules created specifically for a research degree programmes (i.e. not part of existing taught masters programmes) require departmental approval (and may require YGRS approval). Such modules need to be presented on the usual module forms and the department will need to ensure that they will be overseen by a taught external examiner.

1.16   Approval for taught early exit awards (awarded to students who have successfully completed credit-bearing modules but who withdraw, have their enrolment terminated, or are not awarded a research degree following examination) or, more exceptionally, taught interim awards (awarded to students who have successfully completed credit-bearing modules whilst still registered for their research degree) must be sought from YGRS. The modules comprising the award should form a coherent whole. A programme specification must be provided for each award and the standard taught postgraduate assessment rules should apply.

Four-year PhD programmes

1.17   Departments can propose to Planning Committee and York Graduate Research School for consideration and approval four-year PhD programmes (and part-time equivalents), in addition to their existing three-year PhD programme(s). Students may be admitted to a four-year PhD programme only if the programme has the necessary approval.

1.18   A four-year PhD programme is distinct from a 1+3 programme (a masters year followed by a separate three-year PhD programme) in that students are enrolled on a research degree programme from the outset (and may engage with their substantive research project from the start). A four-year PhD programme must be qualitatively distinct from a three-year PhD programme and to this end must contain at least *six months of activities and material* that is not in the three-year PhD programme. These distinctive elements can be spread over the four years and departments must provide a full programme for students in the fourth year.

1.19   While both three-year and four-year programmes lead to the same qualification (PhD), four-year programmes need to bear a distinctive title which indicates the longer duration and enhanced nature of the programme.

2.   The criteria for the award of research degrees

2.1   The degrees of PhD, EngD, MPhil and MA/MSc by research are all obtained by research and are assessed through the submission of a thesis (or equivalent) and, in the majority of cases, an oral examination.

2.2   The degrees of PhD and EngD are doctoral degrees (level 8 of *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), third cycle qualifications within *The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* (FQ-EHEA)).

2.3   The degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc by research are master's degrees (level 7 of the FHEQ, second cycle qualifications with the FQ-EHEA).

2.4   A thesis will be a piece of work which a capable, well-qualified and diligent student, who is properly supported and supervised, can complete successfully within the normal period of enrolment for the degree in question.

The descriptor for the award of the degrees of PhD and EngD

2.5   The degrees of PhD or EngD are awarded to students who have demonstrated all of the following:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

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

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

2.6   A PhD or EngD thesis (or equivalent) must contain a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding.

The descriptor for the award of the degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc by research

2.7   The degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc by research are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques available to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
    - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
    - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses;

- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of knowledge, applications or understanding of the discipline.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
    o the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
    o decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
    o the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

2.8   The MPhil is a degree of considerable distinction in its own right and an MPhil thesis (or equivalent) is expected to display a good general knowledge of the field of study, a comprehensive knowledge of some part or aspect of the field of study, and a recognisable original contribution to knowledge or understanding.

2.9   An MA/MSc by research programme is shorter than an MPhil programme (one year full-time as opposed to two years full-time) and consequently, an MA/MSc by research thesis (or equivalent) will be narrower in scope than an MPhil thesis, although it should still contain some original work

3.   The research environment

3.1   The University of York is a leading research-intensive institution, with national and international recognition, and an excellent track record in successive Research Assessment Exercises (RAEs) (now termed the Research Excellence Framework). The University aims to build on its previous success through its Research Strategy, which is overseen by the University's Research Committee.

3.2   The University is committed to the highest standards of research integrity within its research community, maintained with reference to a framework of University polices (including the Code of practice on ethics (www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/policies/ethics-code), the Code of practice on research integrity (www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/policies/research-code/) and the Policy on research data management (www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/information-directorate/information-policy/index/research-data-management-policy/) as well as legal and funder frameworks.

3.3   Research students are provided with an appropriate research environment, that is: (i) where excellent research, recognised by the relevant subject community, is occurring and, (ii) where appropriate support is provided for doing, and learning about, research.

3.4   The University assures itself that departments are providing an appropriate research environment by: (i) York Graduate Research School's consideration of annual research reports from departments, and, (ii) monitoring, by York Graduate Research School, of the research student experience. The University will take action to address any identified weaknesses.

3.5 A department, through its Graduate School Board, should assure itself that it can provide an appropriate research environment by considering whether for an individual research student:

- appropriate supervision of the proposed research topic can be provided by existing members of staff
- there are sufficient numbers of research students and high calibre research-active staff in the student's chosen field and related areas
- there is an active, collegial research community to support the student, for example in terms of the provision of regular research seminars etc.
- the necessary facilities and training etc. to support the student can be provided.

Facilities and resources

3.6 Departments (working in conjunction with the relevant central services, e.g. the Information Directorate, where relevant) are responsible for ensuring that research students have the facilities and resources they need to pursue their approved research. Guidance on the facilities and resources provided should be included in the department's handbook for research degree students. Departments are also responsible for ensuring that students undertaking work away from the University (e.g. fieldwork and research visits) have the facilities and resources they need.

3.7 Facilities and resources should normally include: (i) personal study space (NB this may not necessarily be a designated desk space and will usually be in a shared room - ideally with access to basic kitchen facilities, storage facilities (preferably some lockable), and communal space for academic-related purposes), (ii) access to a telephone, photocopying, and printing, (iii) library resources (including training and relevant electronic resources), (iv) computing provision (hardware, software, training and support), (v) where relevant (e.g. for laboratory-based subjects), access to specialist facilities and materials and/or technical support. Departments should also ensure that there is a well-publicised and transparent procedure for allocating funding for conference attendance.

4. Selection, admission and induction of students

4.1 The selection and admission of students to research degree programmes will be undertaken in accordance with the University's Postgraduate Admissions Policy and Procedures (www.york.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/apply/), which is reviewed and updated annually by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Office. The Policy and Procedures (which includes guidance on equal opportunities, accreditation of prior learning, minimum academic and English language standards, and the use of references and interviews) is designed to ensure that: (i) the decision-making process is clear, consistent, fair, and demonstrates equality of opportunity; and (ii) that only appropriately qualified and prepared applicants, for whom an appropriate research environment (see above) can be provided, are admitted to research degree programmes.

4.2 A decision to admit an applicant will involve at least two members of academic staff, normally including the Chair of the departmental Graduate School Board (or other departmental officer) and the prospective supervisor. The department should ensure that individuals involved in admitting research students have received training and guidance to prepare them for this role (normally at least one individual should have attended the training provided by the Admissions Office).

4.3 Before an offer of a place on a MPhil, PhD or EngD programme is made, applicants will be interviewed, either in person or, where this is not practicable e.g. in the case of international applicants, by telephone or video-conferencing. The interview will normally involve the prospective supervisor (but may involve other staff e.g. the Chair of the departmental Graduate School Board, particularly if the supervisor is inexperienced or thinks it would be helpful to have a second

opinion). Departments are encouraged to interview for places on MA/MSc by research programmes.

4.4   Successful applicants will receive an offer letter from the University which sets out the key details of the programme of study, any conditions attached and which draws attention to the regulations, policies and guidance applicable to research students. The offer letter forms a binding contract on the University and, upon acceptance, on the applicant.

Induction and handbook

4.5   The University, together with the Graduate Student Association (GSA), provides Welcome Week induction events for all postgraduate students, some of which are compulsory. Welcome Week occurs before the formal start of term; details are available on the New Students Welcome Site (www.york.ac.uk/students/new/postgraduate/welcome/)

4.6   All new research students are required to complete the online Research Integrity Tutorial prior to their first Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) meeting (see also 11.4). Research students are also expected to complete the 'Becoming an Effective Researcher' tutorial within six months following the start of their programme. The induction serves to provide information on the skills training and support available and is intended to encourage research students to reflect on their development as professional researchers. Students can access the online tutorials on the VLE (vle.york.ac.uk). Departments are responsible for ensuring that their students have completed the online tutorials.

4.7   Departments should provide a comprehensive induction programme for all new research students (including those who do not commence their studies at the start of the academic year, are part-time or working at a distance) that dovetails with the central provision. Induction should include departmental-specific information on supervisory arrangements, research and skills training, networking opportunities, facilities, good research conduct, and health and safety, including (where appropriate) health and safety while undertaking work away from the University (e.g. fieldwork and research visits). 'Induction' requirements should be considered as a whole, not simply as an activity for the first few weeks of the student's programme.

4.8   Departments should provide new research students with an appropriate handbook in hardcopy or online for reference.

5.   Supervision

5.1   Supervisors play a fundamental role in supporting research students throughout their studies. The University recognises, however, that the exact nature of the supervisory process will vary depending on the academic discipline and associated research environment.

Appointment of supervisors

5.2   Each research student will have one or more supervisors. Supervisors are appointed by the Head of Department (or his/her delegate), in consultation with the Chair of the Graduate School Board.

5.3   Where more than one supervisor is appointed, one supervisor will be clearly identified as the main supervisor and first point of contact for the student.

5.4   The main supervisor must be a member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching (ART) staff on a minimum of grade 7 (lecturer equivalent) and on a permanent contract *or* a fixed-term contract that extends beyond the expected completion date of the research degree programme *and* should not be planning to leave the University's employment before the expected completion

date of the research degree programme. In appointing a supervisor, the department concerned should ensure that the supervisor has an appropriate level of expertise in the student's field of research and that the supervisor's ability to meet his/her responsibilities is not put at risk as a result of an excessive volume or range of other responsibilities.

5.5   A subsidiary supervisor (departments are free to use the term second or co-supervisor if they prefer) should normally be appointed when research is being conducted across departments, across institutions, or based in industry or professional practice: in the case of research being conducted across institutions, or based in industry or professional practice, the appointment may be external to the University. A subsidiary supervisor might be appointed when a research project is highly interdisciplinary.

5.6   A subsidiary supervisor should also be appointed if a main supervisor has not yet seen a research student (PhD/EngD/MPhil) through to successful completion (as a main or subsidiary supervisor). *In this case*, the role of the subsidiary supervisor is not only to provide additional supervisory support for the student but also to serve as an advisor/mentor for the main supervisor: the individual appointed should, therefore, be a member of University's ART staff with experience of successful research student supervision. The Chair of the Graduate School Board shall have the authority to determine whether a main supervisor's previous experience is sufficient for them to be appointed as a sole supervisor (where applicable).

5.7   Where a subsidiary supervisor is appointed, there should be clear agreement between the research student and the supervisors with regard to how the relationship will be managed, for example the respective responsibilities of the supervisors, how the formal supervisory meetings will be arranged, and how information will be shared between the parties.

Training and monitoring of supervisors

5.8   The University believes that effective supervision is a skill that is best learnt experientially, with the support of more experienced colleagues (the apprenticeship model). Departments should, therefore, encourage staff who are new to supervision to gain experience of the supervisory process through serving as subsidiary supervisors and on Thesis Advisory Panels. A main supervisor who has not seen a research student (MPhil/EngD/PhD) through to successful completion should be paired with an experienced subsidiary supervisor (see above).

5.9   Departments should encourage those new to supervision, or in need of updating their skills and knowledge, to take a training course in supervision. Learning and Development provides training opportunities for new and existing supervisors and an introductory session on supervision is an optional component of the University's Postgraduate Certificate of Academic Practice for new academic staff.

5.10   Research students are asked about the supervision that they receive at every Thesis Advisory Panel meeting. Departments should ensure that any problems highlighted through this mechanism are dealt with appropriately by the Head of Department (or his/her delegate).

Supervisory meetings

5.11   The purpose and likely frequency of supervisory meetings, both formal and informal, at different stages of the research degree programme, should be made clear to the research student by the supervisor, at the departmental induction at the outset of the programme, and in the department's handbook for research students. Research students and supervisors are jointly responsible for ensuring that regular and frequent contact is maintained and both parties should feel able to take

the initiative when necessary. A meeting with the supervisor, if requested by the student, should normally take place within one week.

5.12   Formal supervisory meetings, at which substantial discussion of, and feedback on, research progress and plans takes place, are vital for ensuring that a student's research project remains on target and should be held at least twice a quarter for both full-time and part-time students during the normal enrolment period and more frequently if a Graduate School Board prescribes. This requirement may only be temporarily waived by the Graduate School Board of the department concerned where the research student is absent on academic grounds and unable (e.g. due to the fieldwork location) to participate in a supervisory meeting by alternative means, normally video-conferencing. Formal supervisory meetings normally take place in person but where this is not possible (e.g. due to a student being on placement or a supervisor on sabbatical) alternative means, preferably video-conferencing, may be used.

5.13   A record of each formal supervisory meeting should be drawn up by the research student and approved by the supervisor, with copies kept by both the student and the department concerned (or saved on the student records system, e:Vision, by the department in order to be accessible to both). The record should include the date of the meeting and a summary of the content of the meeting and of future actions to be performed, including agreed training.

Absence and replacement of a supervisor

5.14   Students should be informed of who would be their first point of contact if their main supervisor were to be temporarily unavailable. This would normally be the subsidiary supervisor, if one has been appointed, or, if not, another member of their Thesis Advisory Panel (but note 8.16).

5.15   In the event of a main supervisor becoming unable to continue supervising a research student, a replacement supervisor should be appointed, after consultation with the student, within one month of the main supervisor becoming unavailable. In the meantime, the designated person (see above) should assume the role of the main supervisor. Heads of Departments should liaise with Chairs of departmental Graduate School Boards regarding forthcoming resignations from the University of members of staff with supervisory responsibility for research students. Chairs should as soon as practicable inform research students formally in writing if their supervisor resigns, giving information on the arrangements for continued supervision.

5.16   In the event of a main supervisor transferring to another institution, a research student may wish to move with them (see 7.23). Alternatively, s/he may remain at York with a replacement supervisor being appointed as above. The former main supervisor may be appointed as a subsidiary supervisor to provide continuity of supervision for the student concerned.

5.17   If a research student is unhappy with his/her supervision s/he should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If s/he feels unable to discuss this directly with his/her supervisor, or the problem remains unresolved having done this, then s/he should feel free to talk confidentially about the problem with another member of their Thesis Advisory Panel, the Chair of the Graduate School Board, the Head of Department or other relevant departmental officer. If the problem remains unresolved, the student should arrange to speak in confidence to the Assistant Registrar: Student Progress who will advise the student on the options available to them, which might include mediation with the department (see also section 14 on complaints).

5.18   By mutual agreement between the research student and the department, and where permitted by the terms of the research council (or other sponsor/funding body) agreement, supervisory responsibilities can be changed, at the request of either the research student or a supervisor.

6. Responsibilities of research students and supervisors

6.1   The responsibilities of research students include:

(i)   taking responsibility for their own personal and professional development, including, where possible, recognising when they need help and seeking it in a timely manner;

(ii)   maintaining (a joint responsibility with supervisors) regular contact with supervisors (both full-time and part-time students are required to attend formal supervisory meetings not less than twice a quarter and more frequently if a Graduate School Board prescribes);

(iii)   preparing adequately for meetings with supervisors and Thesis Advisory Panels;

(iv)   setting and keeping to timetables and deadlines, including planning and submitting required work and generally maintaining satisfactory progress with the programme of research;

(v)   making supervisors aware of any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect their work;

(vi)   attending any development opportunities (research-related and other) that have been identified when agreeing their development needs with their supervisors;

(vii)   adhering to the University's regulations, policies and guidance regarding research degree programmes, including those relating to health and safety, and intellectual property;

(viii)   conducting research with integrity, in accordance with the University's policy framework (including the Code of practice on ethics, the Policy on research integrity (under development) and the Policy on research data management (under development)) and any legal compliance and/or funder requirements;

(ix)   ensuring (a joint responsibility with supervisors) that appropriate ethical approval is obtained before research commences;

(x)   maintaining records of their Professional Development.

6.2   The responsibilities of the main supervisor of a research student include:

(i)   introducing the student to the department, its facilities and procedures, and to other research students and staff;

(ii)   providing satisfactory advice and guidance on the conduct of the research and on the preparation of the thesis;

(iii)   monitoring the progress of the student's research programme, reporting on progress to the departmental Graduate School Board, and ensuring the student is aware of the need to submit the thesis by the specified deadline;

(iv)   encouraging the student to participate fully in the planning of his/her research and to take personal responsibility for the decisions made;

(v)   establishing and maintaining (a joint responsibility with the student) regular contact with the student, including during any periods in which the student is working on their research away from the University, and being accessible to the student to give advice;

(vi)   having input into the assessment of the student's development needs, and ensuring that instruction is provided in research methods and other academic skills relevant to the student's research;

(vii)   monitoring and supporting the student's Professional Development;

(viii)   providing timely, constructive and effective feedback on the student's work and overall progress within the programme;

(ix)   ensuring that the student has a clear understanding of the need to exercise probity and to conduct research according to the University's policy framework (including the Code of practice on ethics, the Policy on research integrity (under development) and the Policy on research data management (under development)) and any legal compliance and/or funder requirements, and of the implications of research misconduct;

(x)   ensuring that, in the case of students undertaking laboratory work, there is an appropriate level of supervision and monitoring, including regular checks on data-recording and notebooks and occasional checks on the day-to-day conduct of experiments:

(xi)   ensuring (a joint responsibility with the student) that appropriate ethical approval is obtained before research commences;

(xii)   ensuring that the student is aware of relevant sources of advice within the University, including those relating to careers guidance;

(xiii)   ensuring that they meet their responsibilities to the student under the University's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy Statement and Arrangements (www.york.ac.uk/admin/hsas/);

(xiv)   providing effective pastoral support and, where appropriate, referring the student to other sources of such support within the University;

(xv)   helping and encouraging the student to interact with others working in the field of research (for example, encouraging the student to attend relevant conferences and supporting him/her in seeking funding for such events), and to keep themselves informed of developments within their subject;

(xvi)   where appropriate, helping and encouraging the student to submit conference papers and articles to refereed journals;

(xvii)   maintaining the necessary supervisory expertise;

(xviii) exercising sensitivity to the diverse needs of individual students, including international students and those with a disability.

6.3   Although supervisors may encourage their supervisees to seek advice on particular academic topics from other members of staff, the supervisor has the primary responsibility for directing the research to a satisfactory conclusion. It is, therefore, essential that the supervisor should approve the general content and planning of the research.

7.   Periods of enrolment, and changes to students' status and personal circumstances

Periods of enrolment and modes of attendance

7.1   The normal and maximum periods of study (i.e. from initial enrolment to the submission of the thesis) for full-time PhD, EngD, MPhil, MA/MSc by research programmes are as follows:

Degree	Normal period of enrolment (full-time)	Normal period of enrolment (part-time)	Minimum period of enrolment (full-time)	Minimum period of enrolment (part-time)	Maximum period of study (including any continuation period) (full-time)	Maximum period of study (including any continuation period) (part-time)
PhD (standard)	three years	six years	two years and nine months	five years and six months	four years	seven years
PhD (separately named four-year version)	four years	Not currently available.	three years and nine months	Not currently available.	four years	Not currently available.
EngD	four years	Not currently available.	three years and nine months	Not currently available.	five years	Not currently available.
MPhil	two years	four years	one year and nine months	three years and six months	three years	five years
MA/MSc by research	one year	two years	nine months	one year and nine months	one year and three months	two years and three months

7.2   Research students are expected to submit their theses within the normal period of enrolment and supervisors and departments should actively encourage students to meet this deadline. The final deadline for submission is at the end of the maximum period of study and is recorded in eVision.

7.3   The normal period of enrolment for research students registered part-time is pro rata to the period of full-time study. Normally part-time students are 0.5 full-time-equivalent.

7.4   A student who wishes to submit a thesis before the end of the minimum period of enrolment may only do so on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board concerned and with the permission of Standing Committee on Assessment. In such circumstances the student will still be required to pay the full fees for the programme of study.

7.5   The overall maximum completion period for students, including any suspensions or extensions, is the maximum period of study for the programme plus five years.

Continuation period

7.6   Students on an MPhil, three-year PhD, and EngD programme who have not submitted their theses within the normal period of full-time or part-time enrolment are permitted a further period of up to one year in which to submit their thesis. Students on an MA/MSc by research programme who have not submitted their theses within the normal period of full-time or part-time enrolment are allowed a further period of up to three months in which to submit their thesis. The continuation

period, if required, is for finalising the thesis ready for submission and not for primary research or data analysis.

7.7   Students following four-year (or equivalent part-time) PhD programmes should submit their thesis by the end of the normal period of enrolment (there is no submission pending period as a four-year programme is not required to contain more than six months of extra material (relative to a three-year programme) and is intended by its very nature to accelerate completion and to increase the prospects of submission within four years).

Students who exceed the normal period of enrolment

7.8   Research students who exceed the normal period of enrolment (i.e. those in a continuation period where this is permitted and/or who have had an extension of submission deadline approved) will pay an annual continuation fee (which can be refunded if students submit within three months of the end of their normal period of enrolment) to remain as candidates for the degree concerned, and to retain access to computing and library facilities. They will not, however, be in formal enrolment with the University. The normal period of enrolment is not necessarily linked to the length of funding and this means that continuation fees will be payable even if a student is still in receipt of a research council (or other sponsor/funding body) award.

7.9   Students who exceed the normal period of enrolment should not expect to conduct further research and may make use of departmental facilities only with the written agreement of the Chair of the departmental Graduate School Board.

7.10   Students who exceed the normal period of enrolment are responsible for maintaining contact with their supervisors until they are ready to submit their thesis for examination; for many theses, a supervisor's advice is at its most valuable and essential at the stage of writing the final draft. Departments should make clear to students the level of supervisory support that can be expected if the normal period of enrolment is exceeded: students can expect to receive more limited support than is the expectation during the normal period of enrolment; nevertheless, students can expect their supervisor to provide some support and in particular to read and comment on the final draft of the thesis before submission.

Leave of absence

7.11   A leave of absence allows a research student to take an authorised break in their studies for a documented medical or personal reason.

7.12   Leave of absence will normally be granted for a maximum of one year at a time and a maximum of two years in total. If a research student wishes to take a leave of absence they must apply in advance for permission to do so: leave of absence that is entirely retrospective will not be considered or approved. A leave of absence will not be considered in the student's first month of enrolment.

7.13   Any student can apply for a leave of absence, however, approval for a leave of absence is not guaranteed. Leave of absence may be subject to the approval of the research council (or other sponsor/funding body) concerned. A student's visa may impose additional restrictions upon their ability to take leave of absence, which are beyond the control of the University.

7.14   During a leave of absence, research students are expected to spend their time away from the University and will not normally have access to University services and resources.

Extensions of submission deadline

7.15   An extension of submission deadline is required for a research student who has not submitted his/her thesis within the maximum period of study (i.e. the normal period of enrolment plus any permitted continuation period. Extensions of submission deadline are granted only in exceptional circumstances, namely, where the student's work has been hampered by documented medical, personal reasons, unexpected academic circumstances or exceptional circumstances arising from employment. The magnitude of the research task, or failure on the part of the candidate to perceive or act upon the magnitude of the research task, is not a sufficient reason for an extension, nor is the need, in itself, to take employment in any permitted writing up period.

7.16   An extension request will not be considered until the student is within the final three months of their continuation period. An extension of submission will normally be limited to six months, unless a compelling case is made for a longer period of up to a maximum of one year. The total period of extension that may normally be approved is a maximum of two years.

Transfer of programme

7.17   A student enrolled on a research degree programme may request a transfer to a different research degree where such degrees are available and provided that the transfer takes place before the thesis is submitted and subject to the particular restrictions noted below. A coherent and realistic plan for the completion and submission of the thesis within the required period must be submitted as part of the approval process.

7.18   Where a student wishes to transfer from an MA/MSc by research or MPhil programme to an EngD/PhD programme the department should ensure this decision is considered at a TAP meeting, prior to approval by the Chair of the Graduate School Board. Transfers should normally take place prior to the department's confirmation of enrolment examination to ensure that there is the same rigorous assessment of the student's ability to complete the EngD/PhD within the required timeframe as for students provisionally registered for those degrees.

7.19   A research student who has enrolled on a three-year PhD programme may transfer to a four-year PhD programme only exceptionally and with the express permission of Special Cases Committee, and on the understanding that the student will complete the additional requirements of the four-year programme. A student who has enrolled on a four-year PhD programme may transfer to a three-year PhD programme only exceptionally and with the express permission of Special Cases Committee.

Requesting a leave of absence, extension of submission deadline or transfer of programme

7.20   Research students requesting a leave of absence, extension of submission deadline or transfer of programme should first approach their supervisor. Recommendations for leave of absence, extensions or transfers should be made, with independent supporting evidence where appropriate, by the departmental Graduate School Board concerned to the Research Student Administration Team. Recommendations will be considered by the Research Student Administration Team and approved under delegated authority or referred to Special Cases Committee for consideration where necessary (www.york.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/issues/academic/research/ and www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/support/change/).

Paid employment and holidays

7.21   Full-time research students may undertake a maximum of twenty hours of paid employment per week (this includes teaching and demonstrating and the associated preparation and marking). This maximum is subject to any restrictions imposed by the student's research council (or other

sponsor/funding body) and the approval of his/her supervisor (on the understanding that it will not result in delayed submission of the thesis). Exceptions to these requirements may be made by YGRS (at the programme level) or the Graduate School Board (for individual students) on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board or supervisor respectively, for certain categories of employment closely related to the programme of study.

7.22   Subject to the agreement of the supervisor(s) and any conditions placed by the research council (or other sponsor/funding body), research students may take reasonable holidays not exceeding eight weeks (including public holidays) in any year (including up to four weeks holiday which may be taken at the end of the normal period of enrolment).

Transferring into or out of the University of York

7.23   In exceptional cases, a research student may wish to transfer into or out of the University of York. This is most likely to be the case when the student's main supervisor is transferring from one institution to another and the student wishes to move with them.

7.24   If a research student wishes to transfer from York to another university, this will be dependent on the decision of the other institution to accept the student. Permission may also have to be gained from the research council (or other sponsor/funding body). A copy of the data produced by the student must be deposited with the University before departure (see the University's Policy on research data management).

7.25   If a research student wishes to transfer from another university to York, s/he will be considered by Special Cases Committee for exceptional entry and their research, where applicable, will be subject to a light touch ethical review (in accordance with the University's Code of practice on ethics) The Committee will ensure that the student is clear about the basis on which they are being accepted (including the length of enrolment (including any entitlement to a writing up period), any variation to standard progress and review arrangements, and any accreditation of prior learning to recognise courses and modules already undertaken etc.).

International students

7.26   For sponsored international students (i.e. those subject to Tier 4 visa regulations), all time limits and changes to status etc. are subject to current Home Office visa regulations (www.york.ac.uk/students/support/international/immigration/). Sponsored international students must be monitored by departments in accordance with the University's Attendance Management Policy for Sponsored International Students (www.york.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/issues/pbis/attendance/): this includes the monitoring of formal supervisory meetings, Thesis Advisory Panel meetings, and an additional point of contact point during the summer vacation period (with alternative points of contact for students who exceed the normal period of enrolment).

8.   Progress and review arrangements

8.1   Regular review of a research student's progress is essential to maximise the likelihood of the student completing the programme successfully within an appropriate timescale, and to ensure that if progress is unsatisfactory that s/he is given the support they need to make improvements. The routine meetings of Thesis Advisory Panels (see below) ensure that students are subject to regular formal reviews of progress throughout the duration of their programme.

8.2   PhD and EngD students are subject to a formal progression requirement, known as confirmation of enrolment (see below). Additional progression points (e.g. at the end of the first year of a PhD

programme) may be introduced when proposed by a department and approved by York Graduate Research School[1]. Students who fail a progression point may, nevertheless, be eligible for transfer to an alternative programme or an exit award.

8.3   Departments are encouraged to specify additional milestones for research students to monitor their progress against. This could include expectations regarding skills training (e.g. the completion of certain courses/modules by a particular point), and expectations regarding the dissemination of information (for example, in some disciplines, a typical PhD student might present a poster at an internal conference in year 1, present an internal seminar on their work in year 2, present their work at an external conference and be in the process of submitting a paper for publication by the time of thesis submission).

Thesis Advisory Panels

8.4   Each research student will have a Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP). The principal purposes of the panel are to review the progress of the student's research programme and Professional Development Plan, and to supplement, where appropriate, the advice and guidance given to the student by the supervisor(s).

8.5   The TAP consists of the supervisor(s) (the supervisory team) *and at least one additional* member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff (i.e. if there is a single supervisor the minimum TAP size is two; if there are two supervisors the minimum TAP size is three). The panel will be appointed within the first three months of the student's enrolment period, and the student will be informed of its membership.

8.6   Departments should consider carefully the composition of each TAP (in terms of the number of people, their expertise and their experience) to ensure that it can properly fulfil its purpose. In particular, departments must ensure that, in the case of EngD and PhD students, one non-supervisory member of the TAP fulfils the criteria for chairing the confirmation of enrolment panel (see 8.16). Emeritus and visiting staff and staff on probation can be additional members of a TAP.

TAP meetings

8.7   For full-time students, the TAP will meet with the student at least once within every six-month period. For part-time students, the TAP will meet with the student at least once a year. Any member of the panel, or the student, may request a panel meeting at other times. Meetings of the TAP are additional to formal supervisory meetings. The TAP is expected to meet only during the student's normal enrolment period. The purpose and target dates of the TAP meetings to be held during the research degree programme should be made clear to the student by the supervisor at the outset of the programme.

8.8   The main supervisor and research student are responsible for ensuring that TAP meetings take place on schedule. Departments should record the dates of each TAP meeting on the student record system. The Research Student Administration Team will monitor the timing of TAP meetings using the student record system and will contact the Chair of the departmental Graduate School Board if any meetings do not take place on schedule.

8.9   In preparation for a TAP meeting, a research student should complete the University TAP form (see Appendix 1 or departmental equivalent) and provide relevant supporting documentation in order to summarise progress on their work during the review period and outline his/her future

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[1] Where an additional progression point has been approved, the student's Thesis Advisory Panel is responsible for assessing whether students have met the criteria for progression (including the fulfilment of any departmental training requirements) and informing the SCA of the outcome of the assessment. Students should always be permitted a second attempt.

objectives. The supervisor should provide a comprehensive written report on the student's progress.

8.10   Following the TAP meeting, a brief report on the outcome and future actions, agreed by all the panel members, should be produced on the University TAP form (or the departmental equivalent). A copy of this form should be given to the Chair of the departmental Graduate School Board, and it should be uploaded by the department to the student record system (e:Vision) where it will be accessible to the student.

8.11   Research students should be given an opportunity to comment confidentially on the quality of their supervision at the TAP meeting in the absence of the supervisor. The discussion will be recorded in the Review of Supervision form, which is held by the department but not loaded onto the student record system, as it is not to be seen by the supervisor(s). If any concerns about the supervisory arrangements are raised by the student during this part of the TAP meeting, it is the role of the TAP member(s) to discuss possible solutions with the student.

8.12   If the TAP structure is not operating properly, a research student should contact the Chair of their departmental Graduate School Board or Board of Studies or Head of Department. If the issue remains unresolved, a student should contact the Assistant Registrar: Student Progress for advice.

Confirmation of enrolment for PhD and EngD students

Purpose of confirmation of enrolment

8.13   Research students embarking on a PhD or EngD programme will normally be enrolled provisionally for that degree.

8.14   Confirmation of PhD or EngD enrolment is a formal progression requirement that will determine whether or not a student will be allowed to continue with enrolment on a PhD or EngD programme. Confirmation of enrolment is determined by a confirmation of enrolment examination, which comprises two parts: a written submission by the student, and an oral examination of the student conducted by a confirmation of enrolment panel (hereafter Confirmation Panel) appointed by the Graduate School Board for the department.

Composition of the Confirmation Panel

8.15   The University aims to ensure that confirmation of enrolment examinations are conducted fairly and consistently, and that decisions about confirmation of enrolment are based on an informed and balanced judgement as to whether the student in question can complete the programme successfully within the required timeframe. To this end, the University permits supervisors, with their comprehensive knowledge of the student and research topic, to be part of the Confirmation Panel but requires that the oral examination is chaired by an independent member of the TAP (see below), and that the recommendation made by the Confirmation Panel is approved by the Graduate School Board (or its Chair) of the department concerned.

8.16   The Confirmation Panel is made up of all members of the TAP and should be chaired by a member of the TAP who: (i) is not part of the supervisory team (i.e. not the main or the/a subsidiary supervisor) and has not served in a quasi-supervisory capacity (i.e. has not provided significant advice, guidance or support to the student in question outside formal TAP meetings), and (ii) meets the criteria for appointment as a main supervisor (i.e. is a permanent member of staff on ART grade 7 or above). If no member of the TAP fulfils these criteria (e.g. if in a TAP of two the non-supervisory member has had to stand in for the supervisor) the Graduate School Board concerned must appoint someone who does meet the above criteria to chair the Confirmation Panel. It is also

acceptable for a department to decide that all Confirmation Panels should be chaired by the Chair of the Graduate School Board or their nominee (as long as an alternate is found if the individual concerned is also a student's supervisor).

Procedure for confirmation of enrolment

8.17   The confirmation of enrolment examination for PhD students (including those registered on four year programmes) should be held within the first eighteen months (for full-time students) or first three years (for part-time students) of enrolment. A final decision whether or not to recommend confirmation (i.e. the decision made as a result of any re-examination after failure) MUST be taken by the end of the second year of enrolment (for full-time students) or of the fourth year of enrolment (for part-time students). Confirmation of EngD enrolment should be considered within two-and-a-half years of enrolment (for students on a four-year full-time programme); a final decision whether or not to recommend confirmation must be taken by the end of the third year of enrolment.

8.18   The written submission must be provided to the Confirmation Panel no later than ten days prior to the scheduled oral examination. To inform the questions asked at the oral examination, the student must make available the following:

(i)   evidence that work relevant to the research project is under way and that appropriate research training has been undertaken;

(ii)   a substantial piece of written work produced by the student during the period of PhD/EngD enrolment and intended to contribute to their completed thesis; and

(iii)   a coherent and realistic plan for the completion and submission of the thesis within the required period.

8.19   The outcome of the confirmation of enrolment examination will be based on the following criteria: by the date of the confirmation of enrolment examination, the student should be able to:

(i)   identify and articulate a hypothesis or research question(s), which, if properly explored has the potential to lead to an original contribution to knowledge within the required period;

(ii)   identify, categorise, and critically engage with an appropriate amount of academic material already published in the area of their research (and with appropriate literature from industrial research and development where appropriate);

(iii)   articulate their methods and explain their research approach both in writing and in answer to direct questioning by the Confirmation Panel;

(iv)   produce a piece of academic writing which indicates to the examiners that the student has the ability to progress to writing a successful PhD or EngD thesis.

8.20   The outcome of the examination will be judged on the basis of pass/fail, where a 'pass' represents the passing of both the written and oral portion of the examination.

8.21   Where YGRS has given its explicit approval for the fulfilment of particular departmental training requirements (e.g. the successful completion of a certain number of credit-bearing modules) to form part of the confirmation decision, the department should ensure that these requirements have also been met.

8.22   A decision on whether or not to recommend confirmation of PhD or EngD enrolment will be made by the departmental Graduate School Board on the basis of a recommendation by the Confirmation Panel. The Graduate School Board (or its Chair) should have access to sufficient information (the student's full written submission (including the research timetable), and the confirmation of enrolment TAP report) to make an informed assessment of the Confirmation Panel's decision. If the Graduate School Board Chair is a member of the Confirmation Panel, the decision about that student should be referred to the whole committee or to a nominated deputy who has no formal relationship with the student.

8.23   Confirmation of PhD or EngD enrolment should only be recommended to, and will be approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA) on behalf of Senate, where the student has met the learning outcomes outlined above and is considered to be capable of completing a successful PhD or EngD thesis within the required period. Recommendations to the SCA must be made in accordance with the guidance from the Research Student Administration Team (www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/support/academic/enrolment-confirmation/), using the Recommendation for Confirmation of Enrolment form.

Failure of confirmation of enrolment

8.24   Should a student fail to satisfy the Confirmation Panel that they have met these requirements at the first attempt, the student must be provided with clear and detailed written feedback on the areas that have been deficient in both their written submission and their oral examination performance. The points raised by the Confirmation Panel should be specifically addressed by the candidate in the revision of the written submission, which will be re-examined. If the revised written submission is sufficient to satisfy the Confirmation Panel then the student will be deemed to have passed and a second oral examination is not required. If the revised written submission does not in itself satisfy the Confirmation Panel then a second oral examination must be held.

8.25   In the event that a second oral examination is held, this attempt must be audio recorded and the Chair of the Graduate School Board (or an appropriate alternate appointed by the Chair) must attend in order to protect both the student and the department in the event of any appeal against the outcome. If the student is unsuccessful at the second oral examination, the student will be deemed to have failed to progress, and 8.26 of this document will apply.

8.26   If a Graduate School Board decides not to recommend confirmation of PhD or EngD enrolment to the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA, acting on behalf of Senate) following a student's second attempt, the student's enrolment on that programme will be terminated. The Graduate School Board may recommend to the SCA that the student should be allowed to submit a thesis for the award of either an MPhil degree or an MA/MSc by research degree (where those degrees are available), subject to the normal regulations and requirements for those degrees. In such a case, if the SCA approves and the student agrees, they will be transferred onto the alternative programme. Extensions of normal enrolment period for these degrees may be considered in light of the change of the student's circumstances, but the Confirmation Panel must be satisfied that the student can complete the degree to which s/he will be transferred within a reasonable period (from the date of failing confirmation at the second attempt), normally three months if an MA/MSc by research is recommended, and six months if the recommendation is that the student be allowed to write up for an MPhil.

8.27   The student retains the right to appeal against failure of confirmation of enrolment, on the basis of procedural irregularity as outlined in the Regulations.

9   Development of research and other skills

9.1   In line with The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat) and the Research Council UK's Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training (www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/statementofexpectation.pdf), research students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the training made available to them to support their research, to enhance their employability and to assist their career progress after completion of their degree.

9.2   Research students are expected to: (i) Take the 'Becoming an Effective Researcher' online tutorial (see 4.5), (ii) engage with the University's professional development planning process (see 9.5). Students are also required to undertake the Research Integrity tutorial prior to their first TAP (see 11.4) and PGWT training prior to teaching or demonstrating (see 9.14). They may also be required by their departmental Graduate School Board to undertake subject-specific training (see 9.7 - 9.12).

9.3   Much of the training that research students receive is informal (e.g. instruction on techniques or the use of equipment and other resources) and comes from their supervisor(s), TAP, or wider research group. Formal training is provided by departments, and by the Researcher Development Team (RDT) (www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/researcher-development/students/). The RDT offers a comprehensive suite of personal and professional skills training, including courses for those involved in teaching/demonstrating and/or those who wish to pursue an academic career. Training is also provided by external partners, for example within collaborative Doctoral Training Centres and nationally (for example vitae.ac.uk).

9.4   Research students are responsible for keeping an accurate and comprehensive record of the training (whether provided centrally, departmental or externally) and other enrichment activities that they have undertaken (e.g. presentations made, conferences attended, teaching, demonstrating, or internships undertaken, etc.). The Skills Forge system provides for recording of training and other activities alongside records of PDP engagement. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that students are aware of any training or development requirements imposed by a research council (or other sponsor/funding body) and for ensuring that opportunities are available to satisfy any such requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that these requirements are met.

Professional development planning

9.5   Research students will complete, in consultation with their supervisor and with guidance from the RDT, a Professional Development Plan (PDP) (www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/researcher-development/students/professional-development-planning.htm). The PDP is a record of the skills developed throughout a student's research programme and its purpose is to prompt reflection on, and discussion about, the student's personal, professional and career development. The process for ensuring that the PDP is maintained is as follows:

(i)   *initial analysis* (by six months for full-time PhD/EngD/MPhil students, by three months for full-time MA/MSc by research students)*.* Students will undertake a training needs analysis (TNA) and discuss the results with their supervisor in order to identify appropriate short, medium and long term development goals. These goals will be recorded on the PDP.

(ii)   *review and updating.* Students should review their goals against their TNA and update their PDP by reflecting on their personal, professional and career development. Supervisors are encouraged to discuss and review each student's PDP as part of their regular supervisory meetings. At each Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) meeting, there should a discussion (noted in the University TAP form) about the progress that the student has made in addressing his/her PDP (students are encouraged to share their PDP with TAP members as

appropriate). The PDP will be formally approved by the TAP as part of the confirmation process (PhD and EngD students only).

9.6   Research students are encouraged to take advantage of the careers advice and guidance available to them, including the Employability Tutorial for Postgraduate Research Students (www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/support/careers/).

Departmental training requirements, including taught modules

9.7   The Graduate School Board is responsible for deciding whether students on a particular research degree programme should be subject to any formal training requirements (for example auditing or passing particular courses or credit-bearing modules, and/or completing a certain number of hours/days of training per annum), taking into the account, where applicable, the expectations of the relevant research council (or other sponsor/funding body). The introduction of, or significant changes to, formal training requirements should be considered a major modification to a programme and submitted to YGRS for approval (normally by Chair's action).

9.8   The Graduate School Board should ensure that formal departmental training requirements are: (i) necessary (directly relevant to students' research degree programmes), (ii) reasonable (achievable within the time-frame available without negative impact on a student's research, see below), and (iii) equitable (for example, within the department or inter-institutional Doctoral Training Centre or equivalent).

9.9   For research programmes where YGRS has *not* formally approved a package of training (i.e. excluding, for example, YGRS -approved doctoral training centre PhD programmes), YGRS would not normally expect formal departmental training requirements (including credit-bearing modules[2] and non-credit-bearing courses) to exceed 500 hours in the first year of a three-year PhD programme and 700 hours in the first year of a four-year PhD programme (note that these are maximums not norms) in order to leave sufficient time for a student to begin their research.

9.10   Departmental training requirements must be explained to the students at departmental induction and specified in the department's handbook for research students. Research students must be told how they may obtain an exemption from departmental training requirements (including those relating to credit-bearing modules) through the recognition of prior learning (e.g. if a PhD student has already completed a relevant MRes programme s/he might be eligible to gain an exemption from certain compulsory methodology courses/modules). Where students are required to pass non-credit-bearing courses and/or credit-bearing modules, it must be clear what reassessment opportunities, if any, available.

9.11   Where research students are required to undertake a module for credit, they should be registered for the module in the student records system and will be eligible for an academic transcript. Credits within a research degree programme will normally be at masters or doctoral level. The level of attainment required should be that normally expected of the module (i.e. for masters level modules the pass mark should be 50%) and the assessment tasks should be the same as for any other students registered on the module. It should be clear whether credit-bearing modules can be compensated or re-assessed and these rules must be approved by YGRS and specified in the department's handbook for research students.

Failure to meet departmental training requirements

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[2] With credit-bearing modules, the normal notional hours of study should be used i.e. 10 credits is a notional 100 hours' worth of study.

9.12   Failure to meet departmental training requirements (including those relating to credit-bearing modules) can be used to inform progression decisions (for example, if as a consequence of failure to meet departmental training requirements, a student does not achieve the learning outcomes required for confirmation of enrolment). Failure to meet departmental training requirements should not, on its own, be grounds for a student to be discontinued from his/her programme or to fail a formal progression point unless this option is explicitly approved for a particular research degree programme by UTC.

Role of research students in teaching and demonstrating

9.13   Departments are encouraged to offer PhD, EngD and MPhil students opportunities to engage in teaching or demonstrating, where available. Departments must ensure that their practice with regard to Postgraduates Who Teach (PGWT) is compliant with the University Policy on Postgraduates Who Teach (www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/resources/policy/postgraduates-who-teach.htm), which is reviewed and updated annually by Human Resources, in consultation with University Teaching Committee, and which includes the circumstances in which research students can become PGWT, training and support for PGWT, selection of PGWT, and quality assurance and enhancement for PGWT.

9.14   Departments are responsible for ensuring that PGWT meet the minimum requirements outlined in the University Policy on Postgraduates Who Teach before undertaking any teaching or demonstrating, namely having participated in the Introduction to Learning and Teaching course *or* the PGWT residential (both run by the Research Development Team, which can supply departments with attendance registers) *and* having undergone appropriate departmental training. PGWT and those who are intending to pursue an academic career are encouraged to take advantage of the extensive training on offer from the RDT, including the accredited 'York Learning and Teaching Award' programme (www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/researcher-development/pgwt/).

10   Evaluation of research degree programmes

10.1   Departments must have in place appropriate mechanisms for: (i) research students and recent graduates, and their supervisors to evaluate their experience, (ii) monitoring TAP reports (including those relating to confirmation of enrolment), and (iii) reviewing examiners' reports. Departments may wish to consider whether feedback might usefully be requested from other interested parties e.g. sponsors, research administrators, alumni, employers and collaborating organisations.

10.2   At the end of each Thesis Advisory Panel meeting students are asked to comment confidentially on the quality of the supervision received and on the student/supervisor relationship (see 8.11). Departments should ensure that there is a process in place for attempting to resolve any issues raised in this way.

10.3   Departments also receive feedback from research student representatives. Each department must ensure that there is at least one research student on its Graduate School Board (or equivalent).

10.4   Graduate School Boards should consider the data noted above in the context of centrally distributed data (including PRES data, submission and completion data etc.) and ensure that any issues raised are dealt with appropriately.

10.5   When undertaking Annual Programme Review, a department should ensure that research students and their programmes are fully covered and, where relevant, issues are flagged for consideration by the York Graduate Research School (YGRS).

10.6   YGRS will work with UTC to ensure that the institution's Annual Programme Review and Periodic Review processes pay due attention to research students and their programmes. A member of the Graduate Students Association represents all postgraduate students on YGRS, UTC and the Standing Committee on Assessment.

11   Research integrity and ethics

11.1   In line with the UUK Concordat to support research integrity, research students and their supervisors are expected to maintain the highest standards of research conduct and to act in accordance with the University's policy framework (the Code of practice on ethics (www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/policies/ethics-code), the Code of practice on research integrity (www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/policies/research-code/) and the Policy on research data management (www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/information-directorate/information-policy/index/research-data-management-policy/): www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/.

11.2   Any ethical issues relating to a student's research (including any issues relating to the University's duty of care to the research student) must be identified at the earliest opportunity (ideally before admission) by the supervisor and the research student, with reference to the University's Code of practice on ethics, and seeking advice where necessary from the department's ethics committee. Where formal ethical approval from an internal ethics committee and, where necessary, an external body is needed, the supervisor and the research student will be jointly responsible for securing this in accordance with the Code of practice on ethics (www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/policies/ethics-code/) before the research commences. Confirmation of ethical approval (where needed) is required for confirmation of enrolment (PhD and EngD students) and at the point of thesis submission.

Training

11.3   The University (via the RDT) and departments will provide research students with guidance on good research practice, with reference to the University's policy framework , and the avoidance of academic misconduct.

11.4   Research students are required to complete successfully the University Online Research Integrity Tutorial before their first Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) meeting. Confirmation of successful completion is required for MPhil and MA/MSc by research when the thesis is submitted for examination, and by PhD and EngD students at confirmation of enrolment. Students who have not completed the task will not be examined/considered for confirmation of enrolment.

Academic misconduct

11.5   The University expects the highest standards of integrity from its research students and regards any form of academic misconduct as an extremely serious matter. Research students must not, by implication or otherwise represent the work of others as their own, represent work done in collaboration with others as their own unaided work, or present work for assessment which suggests that factual information has been collected which has not in fact been collected, or which falsifies factual information. All sources, whether published books or articles or unpublished material of any kind, must be explicitly acknowledged, and quotations or close paraphrases correctly attributed. The University has a procedure for dealing with academic misconduct by research students (www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/academic-misconduct/), which contains an illustrative list of offences and penalties; penalties include termination of enrolment.

12   Assessment

Nature of the thesis

12.1   Assessment for the award of a research degree will normally be on the basis of a thesis, but with the approval of York Graduate Research School the assessment for a specified programme may be on the basis of other materials arising from research. The assessment will be wholly on the basis of the thesis (or other materials prescribed for the programme concerned), and of an oral examination (viva voce), if required.

12.2   The length of a thesis (or the exact nature and extent of other materials prescribed for the programme concerned) shall be determined by the departmental Graduate School Board, taking into account the type and length of the programme and disciplinary norms, and shall be specified in the department's handbook for research degree students

12.3   A Graduate School Board may decide to permit research students within the department to submit a thesis comprising papers in referred journals (or similar), with an integrative chapter which summarises the aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions of all the work submitted, and explains how it forms a coherent body of work and makes an original contribution to knowledge or understanding. Where co-authored works are submitted, the candidate must provide a written statement, signed by the candidate and by the major contributory co-authors, specifying the candidate's individual contribution. This option for thesis presentation should not be confused with the PhD by Publication (see Regulation 2.9).

12.4   Research degree candidates are required to prepare and to submit for examination copies of their thesis as specified in the University's requirements (www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/support/academic/thesis/). The copies of the thesis submitted for examination (or, following referral, for re-examination) remain the property of the University.

Examiner appointment

12.5   Examiners are appointed by the Standing Committee on Assessment, acting on behalf of Senate, on the nomination of the Graduate School Board concerned.

12.6   At least two, and not more than three, examiners, including at least one external examiner, shall be individually appointed for each candidate. Where three examiners are appointed, two shall be external examiners.

12.7   Any candidate for a research degree award who, at any time, during the five years prior to the date on which s/he submits his/her thesis for examination, has been an Academic/Research/Teaching (ART) member of staff (at grade 7 or above) of the University shall normally be examined by at least two, and not more than three, examiners, two of whom shall be external examiners. Exemptions from this requirement may only be made by the Standing Committee on Assessment on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board concerned.

12.8   Where two external examiners are used, and there is no internal examiner, the department concerned should, in these circumstances, always provide an internal chair, who should be a member of academic staff in the relevant discipline (but not necessarily an expert on the subject of the thesis) other than the supervisor. The role of the chair is to oversee the process, and to confirm that the oral examination is conducted according to the University's policies and regulations.

Internal examiners

12.9   The roles of the supervisor and the examiner are quite separate and it is for this reason that the University has a policy that a candidate's supervisor(s) shall not be appointed as his/her internal examiner. A supervisor's main responsibility is to help the student to pursue his or her research and to present the results to best advantage. The role of the examiner is to determine whether the results so presented meet the academic standard required. Thus, when a student discusses with his/her supervisor(s) the submission of the thesis, any endorsement by the supervisor(s) of the intention to submit in no way prejudges the outcome of the subsequent assessment, which is entirely a matter for the examiners. The supervisor(s) may discuss with the candidate the purpose and possible nature of the oral examination, while making it clear that he/she is unable to predict how the examination will be conducted, or its outcome.

12.10   An internal examiner will be a member of the University's ART staff, other than the candidate's supervisor(s). A member of the TAP, other than the supervisor(s), may be appointed as an internal examiner, providing that the individual concerned has not served in a quasi-supervisory role to the student concerned (see 8.16) and has not advised on the final drafting of the student's thesis. Retired members of the University's ART staff may be engaged to be internal examiners at the external examiner rate.

An internal examiner should not have had substantial co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the candidate's work, and their work should not be the focus of the student's thesis. Any doubts about the perceived independence of the internal examiner should be referred to the Head of the Research Student Administration Team.

External examiners

12.11   An external examiner will normally be a member of the academic staff of another higher education institution in the United Kingdom, or be of comparable academic standing. External examiners should have appropriate levels of expertise and experience, and the capacity to command authority and the respect of their colleagues in their particular field, Departments should provide a CV for each external examiner nominated. Where a nominee for appointment as external examiner is not a UK-based Professor or a Reader or of equivalent status, evidence should be provided that the nominee meets the foregoing criteria. An external examiner should not have had co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the candidate's work, and their work should not be the focus of the student's thesis.

12.12   Examiners should be independent, impartial and not have any known conflict of interest which might impinge on their role as external examiner. Where there is a question regarding potential conflicts, queries should be forwarded to the Dean of the York Graduate Research School. The same external examiner may be appointed to examine no more than two research degree candidates in the same department in any 12-month period, and no more than four research degree candidates in the same department in any 36-month period.

Former students or members of staff may not normally be nominated for appointment as an external examiner unless a period of five or more years has elapsed since they left the University. The candidate's supervisor or proposed internal examiner should not normally be appointed, currently or within the last six months, to examine a research student in the proposed external examiner's department. An external examiner for a taught degree may be nominated for appointment as an external examiner for a research degree.

12.13   For an MA/MSc by research programme, the Standing Committee on Assessment may approve a request from a department to retain a pool of external examiners over a specified period, who could examine individual students where they have appropriate expertise.

Poorly presented theses

12.14   In cases of exceptionally poor presentation, the examiners may jointly recommend that a thesis should be returned to the candidate for revision and resubmission prior to the oral examination. In such cases the examiners' advice to the candidate shall be limited to advice, in general terms, about the deficiencies in presentation (not the content of the thesis), and the candidate will be required to resubmit the thesis normally within one month. If the examiners receive for examination a thesis which either considers to be unacceptable on grounds of presentation, the examiners should consult in the first instance, and the internal examiner should consult with the Research Student Administration Team.

Requests for confidentiality

12.15   If a candidate requests that the content of his/her thesis should not be divulged publicly, the examiners should honour the request: this may be particularly important in the case of commercially-sponsored studentships and/or in the very rare cases where access to a thesis is to be restricted. In such cases the candidate may be asked to provide an abstract suitable for placing in the public domain.

Requirement for an oral examination

12.16   The requirement for an oral examination is as follows:

MPhil, PhD, EngD

(i)   Every candidate for the MPhil, PhD or EngD degree is required to attend an oral examination on the subject of the thesis and on related matters. The oral examination forms an important part of the examination for the award of the degree; it is by no means simply a formality.

(ii)   Very exceptionally, the Standing Committee on Assessment may grant exemption from the oral examination for an MPhil/PhD/EngD candidate on the recommendation of the examiners concerned where the thesis has met the requirements for the degree, but the candidate is permanently unable to present themselves for oral examination for medical or compassionate reasons. The examiners should always accompany their recommendation with a full explanation of the particular circumstances. The approval of the Committee for waiving the oral examination must be obtained before the examiners submit their joint report (see below). The oral examination may not be waived, except with the candidate's consent, in cases where the thesis fails to satisfy the examiners.

MA/MSc by research

(i)   Candidates for the degrees of MA/MSc by research may be required, as a condition of their degree programme, to attend in person an oral examination on the subject of the thesis (or other materials submitted for examination) and on related matters. Where not required by the programme, an oral examination may nevertheless be required for an individual candidate, at the discretion of the examiners, in order to ensure that the work submitted for examination is the candidate's own or that the candidate meets the standard required for the degree. In both cases, the oral examination forms an important part of the examination for the award of the degree; it is by no means simply a formality.

(ii)   Where the oral examination is a requirement of the MA/MSc by research degree programme, the Standing Committee on Assessment may, very exceptionally, grant

exemption from the oral examination on the recommendation of the examiners concerned where the thesis has met the requirements for the degree, but the candidate is permanently unable to present themselves for oral examination for medical or compassionate reasons. The examiners should always accompany their recommendation with a full explanation of the particular circumstances. The approval of the Committee for waiving the oral examination must be obtained before the examiners submit their joint report (see below). The oral examination may not be waived, except with the candidate's consent, in cases where the thesis fails to satisfy the examiners.

(iii)   If an oral examination is not a requirement of the MA/MSc by research programme, the department should specify what other procedures (for example, an internal presentation by the candidate with the internal examiner present) are used to verify that the work submitted for examination is the candidate's work.

The purpose of the oral examination

12.17   The purpose of the oral examination is to allow the examiners the opportunity to explore and to satisfy themselves regarding the areas listed in points below:

MPhil, PhD, EngD

(i)   in the case of a PhD or EngD candidate, that the thesis represents a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding, and is worthy of publication, either in full or in an abridged form; or in the case of an MPhil candidate, that the thesis represents a recognizable original contribution to knowledge or understanding;

(ii)   that the candidate is well-acquainted with the general field of knowledge to which his/her research relates (the examiners should make a particular point of ensuring that the questions they ask at the oral examination serve to establish the candidate's wider background knowledge if this is not evident in the thesis);

(iii)   that there is evidence of training in, and the application of, appropriate research methods;

(iv)   that the work submitted is the candidate's own (or, if done in collaboration, that the candidate's share in the research is adequate);

(v)   that the mode of presentation is satisfactory.

MA/MSc by research

(i)   that the candidate has completed a piece of research commensurate with the period of study, including some original work;

(ii)   that the candidate has an adequate understanding of research methods;

(iii)   that the work submitted is the candidate's own (or, if done in collaboration, that the candidate's share in the research is adequate);

(iv)   that the mode of presentation is satisfactory.

12.18   The oral examination also allows the candidate an opportunity to respond to any shortcomings identified by the examiners.

12.19   Candidates are encouraged to access support in preparation for the oral examination. The Researcher Development Team offers sessions on preparing for the oral examination and departments should also provide support, such as offering their research students the opportunity to undertake a mock oral examination.

The organisation of the oral examination

12.20 It is the responsibility of the internal examiner (or of the member of staff appointed as internal observer (see 12.8), if no internal examiner is appointed) to make arrangements for the oral examination.

12.21 The oral examination shall normally be held within three months of the date of submission of the thesis. Permission to hold the oral examination more than three months after this date must be obtained from the Standing Committee on Assessment. The internal examiner should agree the date of the oral examination in consultation with the external examiner(s) and the candidate.

12.22 The candidate, the external examiner(s) and the internal examiner (or observer) should all be present in person at the oral examination. In exceptional cases only, the Standing Committee on Assessment may grant permission for a candidate or an examiner to participate in the oral examination by video-conferencing.

12.23 The oral examination should normally be held at the University of York, but may be held elsewhere under arrangements approved in advance by the Standing Committee on Assessment. Any proposal to hold the oral examination elsewhere must have the approval of the external examiner(s), and the internal examiner (or observer) must provide the Committee with confirmation that he/she has obtained the candidate's consent. The examination should be held in premises appropriate to an oral examination.

12.24 Before the oral examination, each examiner should prepare an independent preliminary report on the thesis on the appropriate form, identifying the principal issues which he/she intends to raise in the examination. These reports should be brought to the examination, deposited with the internal examiner (or observer), and subsequently attached to the examiners' joint report when it is forwarded to the Examinations Office.

12.25 Before the oral examination the supervisor should ensure that the examiners are informed if the candidate needs specific arrangements to be put in place because of disability or exceptional stress or cultural differences. At the request of the candidate, and with the consent of the examiners, the supervisor or another member of academic staff approved by the Graduate School Board concerned may be present at the oral examination as a silent spectator.

12.26 In order to ensure that the oral examination is conducted fairly, the internal examiner should act as chair of the examination and shall ensure that it is conducted in accordance with this Policy. Where two external examiners are used, and there is no internal examiner, one examiner shall be asked to act as Chair, as well as being an examiner. The department concerned should, in these circumstances, always provide an internal observer, who should be a member of academic staff in the relevant discipline (but not necessarily an expert on the subject of the thesis) other than the supervisor. The internal observer should not intervene in the examination unless an exceptional situation arises. The internal observer shall submit a brief report on the conduct of the oral examination to the Standing Committee on Assessment.

12.27 Care should be taken to make the candidate feel at ease at the examination, especially if there is any issue of disability or exceptional stress. To this end, the layout of the examination room should be given careful thought. In addition, the examiners should consider, for example, starting with general comments or questions, or whether positive points can be made about the thesis. It is also important to give the candidate ample opportunity to talk about what he/she considers to be the strengths of the thesis.

12.28 Students should bring a copy of their thesis to the oral examination, and this may be annotated, but they should not bring any additional materials to the examination without the prior agreement of the internal and external examiners (to allow, for example, a candidate to demonstrate a

computer simulation). No new material should be presented as part of the thesis at the oral examination.

Audio-recording the oral examination

12.29 An audio-recording should be made of all oral examinations for research degrees, as a means of providing an objective record of the oral examination in the event of an appeal. The University makes appropriate equipment available to departments for this purpose. Recordings will be stored centrally in a secure manner, and will be listened to only if an appeal is received from the candidate based on the conduct of the examination, or by an additional examiner subsequently appointed where the examiners have failed to agree between themselves whether or not the candidate has satisfied the requirements for a particular degree and the departmental Graduate School Board has been unable to resolve the disagreement (see below). Recordings will be destroyed one year after the final result of the examination has been confirmed by the Standing Committee on Assessment or, if an appeal is received, after consideration of the appeal within the University or subsequently by the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education has been concluded.

12.30 Each department is responsible for ensuring that an audio-recording is made of all oral examinations undertaken by research degree candidates, in accordance with the University's Policy on the audio-recording of oral examinations for research degrees (Appendix 1).

Examination outcomes

12.31 Following the (oral) examination of a candidate for a research degree, the following recommendations are open to the examiners:

For PhD and EngD candidates:

If the examiners agree that the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned they may recommend:

(i)   that the degree should be awarded with no corrections; *OR*
(ii)   that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within three months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners;

if, however, the examiners agree that the candidate has not satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned they may recommend:

(iii)   that the candidate should be allowed a period not less than three months and not exceeding one year, from the date on which s/he received notification of the revisions to be made, in which to revise and resubmit the thesis for examination (referral); *OR*
(iv)   that the degree of MPhil should be awarded with no corrections to thesis; *OR*
(v)   that the degree of MPhil should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within three months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners; *OR*
(vi)   that the candidate should be allowed a period not less than three months and not exceeding one year, from the date on which s/he received notification of the revisions to be made, in which to revise and resubmit the thesis for examination for the degree of MPhil;
(vii)   that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research), if offered by the department concerned, should be awarded with no corrections to thesis; *OR*

(viii)	that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research), if offered by the department concerned, should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within one month of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners; *OR*

(ix)	that no degree should be awarded.

Additionally, for EngD candidates:

(x)	that the degree of MSc should be awarded.

Note that the EngD also has Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate exit awards from the taught component of the programme.

For MPhil candidates:

If the examiners agree that the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned they may recommend:

(xi)	that the degree should be awarded with no corrections; *OR*

(xii)	that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within three months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners;

if, however, the examiners agree that the candidate has not satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned they may recommend:

(xiii)	that the candidate should be allowed a period not less than three months and not exceeding one year, from the date on which s/he received notification of the revisions to be made, in which to revise and resubmit the thesis for examination (referral); *OR*

(xiv)	that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research), if offered by the department concerned, should be awarded with no corrections to thesis; *OR*

(xv)	that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research), if offered by the department concerned, should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within one month of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners; *OR*

(xvi)	that no degree should be awarded.

For MA/MSc by research candidates:

If the examiners agree that the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned they may recommend:

(i)	that the degree should be awarded with no corrections; *OR*

(ii)	that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within one month of receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners;

if, however, the examiners agree that the candidate has not satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned they may recommend:

(iii)	that the candidate should be allowed a period not exceeding three months, from the date on which s/he received notification of the revisions to be made, in which to revise and

resubmit the thesis for examination (referral). A candidate will normally be given only one opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis; *OR*

(iv)   that no degree should be awarded.

It should be noted that a mark-scale is not applicable to an MA/MSc by research, and the degree of MA/MSc by research may not be awarded with distinction or merit.

Examiners' reports

12.32   The examiners should submit a joint report on the appropriate form (www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/exams/examiners/) within two weeks of the oral examination. The report should conclude with a clear recommendation indicating whether or not the student has satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned.

12.33   The examiners' report should contain sufficient detail to enable the Standing Committee on Assessment to assess the scope and significance of the work contained in the thesis. In particular, it should give a brief description of the subject matter. The report should go on to contain specific statements about each of the matters listed in 12.17 above. The examiners' report form contains a separate section for comments on the oral examination (where applicable). The examiners should give a brief account of the length of the examination, the ground covered in it, and the level of the candidate's performance. If the examiners have had to use the oral examination to establish the candidate's wider background knowledge, this should be stated; and they should also give an indication of how well the candidate responded to the questions concerned.

12.34   If the examiners recommend that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections (where corrections means changes to the scholarly part of the thesis, including the correction of typographic errors, but not requiring major re-working or re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis), a candidate must be notified in writing, normally by the internal examiner, of any corrections to be made to his/her thesis. Candidates will normally receive the list of corrections at, or shortly following, their oral examination (if applicable). The final version of the corrected thesis must be received by the internal examiner (or another of the examiners) within three months of a PhD/EngD/MPhil candidate receiving the list of corrections or within one month of an MA/MSc by research candidate receiving the list of corrections. The examiner should consider the corrections and send a completed corrections approval form to the Research Student Administration Team within two weeks of the deadline. Any consultation between the candidate and the examiner about the direction or appropriateness of corrections must happen before the deadline: no further revisions can be made after the deadline.

12.35   In any case where the examiners recommend that the candidate should be awarded a degree for which s/he was not enrolled (i.e. an MPhil or MA/MSc by research if a PhD or EngD candidate; an MA/MSc by research if an MPhil candidate), it is important that the examiners' report should include a clear and full statement as to why they are not prepared to recommend that the candidate should be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit the thesis. In such cases it may be open to the candidate to appeal against the examiners' recommendations on the grounds of unfair or improper conduct of the examination, or prejudice on the part of the examiners.

Consideration of the examiners' reports

12.36   The examiners' joint report should be submitted to the Chair of the departmental Graduate School Board in the department concerned for ratification as soon as possible, and in any case within two weeks of the date of the oral examination. Where no oral examination is held (for example, in the case of a candidate for the MA or MSc by research), the examiners' report should be submitted to

the department concerned as soon as possible and in any case within three months of the date of the submission of the thesis for examination.

12.37   After ratification, the examiners' joint report will be forwarded to the candidate, the supervisor and the Research Student Administration Team, where it will be approved by a member of the Standing Committee on Assessment, acting on behalf of the Committee. The Research Student Administration Team will also be provided with copies of all preliminary reports.

12.38   If the examiners recommend that the degree should be awarded, and following the completion, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners, of any corrections which the examiners may require, the candidate shall deposit copies of the thesis in accordance with the University's requirements (www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/support/academic/thesis/). These copies of the thesis remain the property of the University.

12.39   The result of the examination will be formally communicated to the candidate by the Research Student Administration Team normally within two weeks of receipt of the examiners' report from the department concerned or within two weeks of the deposit by the candidate of copies of the thesis, whichever is the later.

Disagreement between examiners

12.40   In the rare cases where the examiners fail to agree between themselves whether or not a candidate has satisfied the requirements for a particular degree and the departmental Graduate School Board is unable to resolve the disagreement, the examiners should prepare individual reports for the consideration of the Graduate School Board which should forward them to the Standing Committee on Assessment together with a recommendation for the appointment of an additional external examiner. The additional external examiner will decide, on the basis of the other examiners' reports, of the thesis, and of the audio-recording of the oral examination (where available) whether or not the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the degree. The decision of the additional external examiner, which will be communicated by the University to the other examiners, will be final.

Revision and resubmission of the thesis

12.41   If the examiners agree that the candidate has not satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned and recommend that the thesis should be revised and resubmitted, the Research Student Administration Team will send an official letter of notification to the candidate (once the examiners' report has been received in the Research Student Administration Team and has been approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment). This letter will state, among other things, that the candidate's internal examiner or internal chair will provide him/her with written guidance as to the revisions needed to bring the thesis up to the required standard. It will also ask the candidate to get in touch with the Research Student Administration Team if he/she does not receive this written guidance.

12.42   Where a recommendation for the revision and resubmission of a thesis is made, the examiners should, within two weeks of the date of the oral examination, provide the candidate with advice in writing concerning the points which should be borne in mind by the candidate when revising the thesis.

12.43   The candidate should *not* expect to receive a mechanical list of revisions to be made, particularly when the revisions required involve major improvements in the depth, intellectual quality, analysis, argument or structure of the thesis.

12.44   The University expects that candidates will be given a fair and reasonable opportunity to revise the thesis to the required standard, whatever the circumstances of the resubmission. To this end, the candidate should be offered the opportunity of an initial meeting with the supervisor to discuss the examiners' requirements for revision. Thereafter, the need for further meetings will vary from case to case, according to, for example, the availability of the student and the extent of the revisions needed. The University accepts that there may be cases in which the student/supervisor relationship comes under strain as a result of the examiners' decision to refer the thesis; and in these cases it may be more appropriate, at the discretion of the Chair of the departmental Graduate School Board concerned, for another member of the department to take on responsibility for mediating feedback.

Examination following resubmission

12.45   The outcomes of the examination are the same recommendations as listed in 12.31 except that a candidate's thesis may only be revised and resubmitted on one occasion (i.e. that 12.31 (iii), (vi) and (xiii), and *MA/MSc by research* (iii) do not apply).

12.46   The candidate should submit two copies of the revised thesis to the Research Student Administration Team, and pay the prescribed re-examination fee.

12.47   The re-examination of a candidate following the revision and resubmission of the thesis will normally be conducted by the individuals who conducted the original examination. In exceptional circumstances (for example due to a substantial change in the health or employment circumstances of an examiner), a new examiner or examiners may need to be appointed by the Standing Committee on Assessment.

12.48   Where an examiner must be replaced between an initial examination and a re-examination of the thesis, the second examination will normally have the same status as any other re-examination. The new examiner should have access to the original examiners' reports in order to inform his/her assessment, but the primary measure of success should be the academic judgement of the examiners as to whether the standards of the award have been met, rather than whether the corrections outlined by the original examiner have been made. Exceptionally, where the examiners agree that the change of examiner may have resulted in conflicting views about the nature of appropriate corrections, they may recommend (to the Standing Committee on Assessment) a further referral of the thesis.

12.49   The decision as to whether or not to require a candidate to attend an oral examination following the revision and resubmission of a thesis is left to the discretion of the examiners. The decision should be made as soon as possible (and no later than one month) after the receipt of the revised thesis by the examiners. If an oral examination is held, it should be within three months of the resubmission of the revised thesis.

12.50   Unless a further oral examination is held, the examiners' report(s) on the revised thesis should be submitted to the chair of the departmental Graduate School Board in the department concerned as soon as possible and in any case within three months of the date of the resubmission of the revised thesis for examination.

13   Dissemination of research results, intellectual property rights and responsibilities

13.1   All theses deposited by research students after examination, in printed or electronic form, will normally be available for consultation and for reproduction (subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement). A student may, however, request that access to the thesis should be withheld, and that none of the material contained in it should be reproduced, for a period not exceeding two

years from the date on which the printed copy (or copies) of the thesis is deposited with the Research Student Administration Team after the examination.

13.2   Research students will be encouraged to make presentations on the results of their research in the University and at external meetings, and where appropriate to different audiences (e.g., academic peers, undergraduate students, school pupils). They should receive appropriate training for this purpose. Students should also be encouraged to submit work for publication during the course of their studies, where appropriate. Students are bound by the University's Policy on the publication of research, and authorship of publications should be decided in line with University policy on authorship.

13.3   Except by formal agreement between the research student and an external organisation, copyright in the research thesis is the intellectual property of the student (although all theses shall be available for consultation and reproduction, subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement). In many cases, however, other forms of intellectual property, including patentable inventions and software, may be subject to contractual conditions, for example with sponsors of the research, which may require ownership to be vested in a third party or in the University. Furthermore, in many instances, intellectual property is jointly conceived by a student together with his or her supervisor or with other colleagues in the same research group. In such cases, the University would expect to own such IPR but would share any benefits accruing from its exploitation with the student according to the University's Intellectual Property Regulation (Regulation 12).

13.4   Where the studentship is sponsored by a commercial or other external organisation to which the University owes contractual responsibilities, the supervisor will ensure that the research student receives and, where appropriate, signs a copy of the contract covering the research.

14   Research student complaints and appeals

14.1   The University has a complaints procedure (www.york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals/) for dealing with complaints of an academic and non-academic nature from research students and others. There is a separate procedure for dealing with complaints relating to harassment of any kind (www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/Harassment/).

14.2   Research students may appeal if, following examination, they fail to achieve the qualification sought, or in a number of other circumstances concerning their academic progression set out in Regulation 2.8 (www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/governance-documents/ordinances-and-regulations/regulation-2/). Responsibility for considering appeals has been delegated by the Senate to the Special Cases Committee (www.york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals/).

15   Academic input from other institutions for individual students, including outgoing and incoming visiting students (see section 16 for collaborative research degree programmes and section 17 for Doctoral Training Centre programmes)

15.1   An individual student enrolled for a research degree programme at York may, with the approval of the departmental Graduate School Board concerned, receive academic input from another institution (not involving enrolment as a student at that institution), in the form of training, taught courses, additional supervision, or external membership of the Thesis Advisory Panel. Any financial implications are the responsibility of the department concerned. Responsibility for monitoring such arrangements lies with the departmental Graduate School Board.

15.2   An individual student enrolled for a research degree programme at York may enrol as a visiting student at another academic institution for a limited period, as part of the York programme. Such students will not be awarded a qualification by the other institution. They will maintain their enrolment at York and (unless specific alternative arrangements are agreed by the University) will continue to pay tuition fees at York during this period (normally up to twelve months for a full-time PhD student, nine months for a full-time MPhil student or six months for a full-time MA/MSc by research student or equivalent periods for part-time students). Approval of such arrangements must be given by departmental Graduate School Boards. Students must remain under the general supervision of their supervisor at York and appropriate arrangements must be made for Thesis Advisory Panel meetings, research training and participation in other academic activities. Face-to-face meetings between the student and the York supervisor may be suspended during the period, providing formal interactions are held at least twice a term, at which substantial discussion of research progress and plans takes place, and of which a record is drawn up by the student and approved by the supervisor. A decision on confirmation of PhD enrolment (if applicable) must be taken by the deadline specified in the Policy on Research Degrees, and at a meeting of the Thesis Advisory Panel at which the student is present.

15.3   An individual student enrolled at another academic institution may enrol as a visiting research student at York, normally for a maximum period of twelve months. Applications must be made through the standard channels, and be considered by departments in the normal way. As a condition of admission, applicants must meet the University's normal admission requirements, including at least the University's minimum English language proficiency requirement. Unless specific alternative arrangements are agreed by the University (e.g., under an Erasmus scheme), visiting students pay tuition fees at York pro rata to their period of study. Visiting students are not eligible for the award of any qualification from York.

16   Collaborative research degree programmes (see section 17 for Doctoral Training Centre programmes)

16.1   The University recognises that there are circumstances in which the value of a research degree programme may be enhanced through collaboration with another academic institution. Senate approval must be sought for any collaborative programmes.

Dual and joint PhD programmes

16.2   Where strategically justified, the University may collaborate with other, mainly international, universities to offer dual and joint PhD programmes. The rules that govern a dual or joint PhD programme (e.g. in terms of selection, admission, induction, supervision, progress and review arrangements, training, and assessment) will normally be negotiated between the institutions, so that the minimum requirements of both can be met. When approving the a dual or joint PhD programme, University Teaching Committee will need to give approval to any exceptions to the University's Policy on Research Degrees and will only do this where there is good reason and when the Committee can be assured that the standard of the PhD and the quality of the student experience will not be compromised.

Collaborative programmes leading to a University of York award

16.3   A departmental Graduate School Board may propose to YGRS a research degree programme leading to a qualification of the University of York in which there is a requirement for a period of study (normally up to twelve months for a full-time PhD student, nine months for a full-time MPhil student or six months for a full-time MA/MSc by research student, or equivalent periods for part-time students) involving enrolment at another specified academic institution (or institutions) and/or there is a requirement for academic input from another institution (or institutions) (but not

involving enrolment as a student at that institution), in the form of training, credit-bearing modules, additional supervision or external membership of Thesis Advisory Panels.

16.4   Where credit-bearing modules are taken at a partner institution in accordance with 15.2 above, the partner institution will be expected to provide a transcript for the students and the result will be recorded on the students' records at York as recognition of prior learning.

17   Doctoral Training Centre programmes

17.1   York students in a Doctoral Training Centre consortium may be required to undertake a period of study at another consortium university and/or receive academic input from another consortium university (or universities) in the form of training, credit-bearing modules, additional supervision or external membership of Thesis Advisory Panels.

17.2   Conversely, students from another university in a DTC consortium that includes York may be required to undertake a period of study at York and/or receive academic input from York in the form of training, credit-bearing modules, additional supervision or external membership of Thesis Advisory Panels. To formalise this arrangement, and enable the students to access necessary York-based resources, York will maintain shadow student records for these individuals.

This Policy applies to all students who commenced a research degree programme after October 2013. The Policy also applies to research students who commenced a research degree programme before October 2013, with the exception that changes to the composition of existing supervisory teams and/or Thesis Advisory Panels are not required if the department believes that this would not be in the best interests of the students concerned.

This Policy is based on the former Code of practice on research degrees. It should be noted that most of the differences between the two policy documents are minor (arising from presentational changes, updating and consolidation of information, codifying existing good practice and clarifying areas of ambiguity).

Appendix 1: Guidance on the Meeting of Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) Form

This standardised form for the recording of Thesis Advisory Panels has been created to achieve a number outcomes including:

- To give students a tool to help them reflect on and be analytical of their academic and personal progress in preparation for meetings of their Thesis Advisory Panel
- To guarantee students honest and constructive feedback on their progress from their Thesis Advisory Panel
- To give students an opportunity to express praise or concern regarding the nature of their supervisory relationship in a confidential but potentially constructive manner
- To ensure that students and TAPs are meeting their obligations under the QAA Quality Code and the University of York Policy on Research Degrees

The standard TAP form, with the addition of the Review of Supervision form covers all the information, including a series of questions designed to assist students and departments to reflect on progress and to meet their reporting requirements. However, departments are free to add any additional questions they may need in order to meet discipline specific needs or those of funding bodies or departmental practice.

Departments may set their own practices with regards to TAP meetings (e.g. timing, structure, membership, the scheduling of meetings, etc.), so long as the minimum requirements in Section 8 of the Policy on Research Degrees are met.

Sections 1-3 must be completed by the student prior to the meeting and will be considered by the TAP in the TAP meeting.

Section 4 must be completed by the members of the TAP. This can be done either in the meeting with input by the student or as a reflection of the students' progress recorded after the meeting. In any case, however, the student *must* have access to the responses contained in this section in order to ensure feedback on their progress and to inform the next steps in their research.

The Review of Supervision form will be completed by the student and at least one member of the TAP without the presence of the supervisor. The expectation is that this form will not be seen by the supervisor, and must be stored separately to the other sections of the form. The Review of Supervision form may not be shown to the supervisor, and the contents of it may not be discussed with the supervisor without the expressed permission of the student. This part of the meeting provides the student with an opportunity to provide feedback on their supervisory relationship in a safe environment. If any concerns about the supervisory arrangements are raised by the student during this part of the meeting, it is the role of the TAP member to discuss possible solutions with the student.

In the event of concerns being raised by the student, the TAP member will also need to explicitly ask whether the student would be happy for this to be raised with the supervisor and if so when and by whom (the student, a member of staff; in the current meeting or on a different occasion). If the student agrees that their concerns can be raised with the supervisor, the concerns should be managed sensitively by the TAP, and with due impartiality. Students should be aware that though the department has a responsibility to take complaints and concerns seriously, the documentation and potential investigation of concerns does not denote any institutional or personal acceptance of the veracity or appropriateness of the concern. However, if the student does not express any concerns or requests that their supervisor not be informed of any concerns they have reported, they cannot reasonably expect any action to be taken by the TAP or the department in order to improve the situation.

The TAP form will be stored on E:Vision, therefore after the meeting the department is responsible for uploading the form onto E-Vision. The Review of Supervision form should *not* be stored on E-Vision and will be given to the departmental postgraduate administrator to file within the department, unless the student has agreed that the supervisor may see the notes from the confidential part of the meeting. As the Review of Supervision form will not be uploaded, the TAP must confirm that the discussion about supervision has taken place in Section 4 of the TAP form for the record.

RSAT will run reports to check that the TAP forms have been uploaded on E-Vision.

Reports recorded in E:Vision will be routinely checked for the timeliness of TAP meetings, and may be used by the RSAT or Quality Assurance Office in order to ensure that the University are meeting their statutory obligations and duty of care to the students.

Department of …….

Meeting of Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP)

1. Student Details (*to be completed by the student in advance of the TAP meeting*)
Student name:
Student number:
Current registration status: MA/MSc by Research/ MPhil / PhD/ EngD
Supervisor(s):
TAP member(s):

Date registration began:
Date submission of thesis is due:
Mode of study: Full time/ part time
Subject/ Title of thesis:

2. Student's Reflection on Research Achievements and Future Research Goals (*to be completed by the student in advance of the TAP meeting*)

2.1   Please state any research objectives that were set out in the last TAP meeting and whether you have achieved these *(please ignore if this is your first TAP meeting)*.

2.2   What would you consider to be your greatest accomplishment in your research since the last TAP meeting?

2.3   If you have faced any difficulties during your research since the last TAP meeting, what were they and how did you overcome these issues?

2.4   What do you hope to achieve in your research before the next TAP meeting and how would this inform the thesis? How do you plan to accomplish this?

3. Student's Reflection on Professional Development Planning (*to be completed by the student in advance of the TAP meeting*)

3.1   Please state any skills and research training needs that were identified in the last TAP meeting and whether you have addressed these *(please ignore if this is your first TAP meeting)*:

3.2   What progress have you made in addressing your professional and career development goals? *You may find it helpful to share your personal development plan and/or Skills Forge record of training undertaken with the TAP meeting (for more information on this please see section 9 of the Policy on Research Degrees)*.

3.3.   What training do you plan to undertake in the future?

3.4   Do you have any training needs that are not currently being addressed?

4. TAP Meeting (*to be completed by members of the TAP and the student within ten working days form the date of the meeting*)

4.1   Date of TAP Meeting:
        Attended by (list supervisor(s) and TAP members present at the meeting):

4.2   Material submitted for TAP Meeting:

4.3   Report by supervisor on student's progress:
        This should give an overview of the student's progress over the last six months. Highlight any specific strengths or weaknesses and provide recommendations on how the student can build on their strengths and improve any weak areas. If any objectives were set in the previous TAP meeting please note whether these objectives have been achieved.

4.4   Additional comments from TAP members:

The evaluation given in this report refers to work done. It does not constitute a prediction of performance for the degree as a whole.

4.5   (a) Has the student's progress been evaluated and judged to be satisfactory? Yes/No
        (b) Have the student's skills and training needs been considered? Yes / No
        (c) Has the student had the opportunity discuss their supervision? Yes / No
        (*Please ensure the review of supervision document has been completed*)

4.6   Please state any research objectives that need to be achieved by the next TAP meeting:

4.7   Please state any skills and research training needs that the student should address by the next TAP meeting (*please note if such training is compulsory to meeting the requirements of their award*):

4.8   Has the student included a timetable for completion (*only if the student is enrolled on an MPhil/PhD/EngD and has been studying more than 12 months full-time or 24 months part-time*)? Yes / No

4.9   Do the members of the panel agree that this is a realistic timetable? Yes / No
        If no, please discuss with student how they can work towards meeting their deadline or any actions they may consider taking (leave of absence, extension, route/ mode change) to help them complete their studies. Please provide notes of that discussion here.

4.10   Provisional date for next TAP meeting:

Signed: Student   Date:

Signed: Supervisor   Date:

Signed: 2nd Supervisor   Date:

Signed: TAP member   Date:

Signed: TAP member   Date:

York Graduate Research School

Review of Supervision

This review is to *be completed by the student, facilitated by one or more TAP member(s), at the end of the TAP meeting in the absence of the supervisor(s).*

> Please note that this section is confidential (unless agreed otherwise) and must not be uploaded on the record system (unless agreed otherwise).

Please comment on:

1   Supervisory meetings (frequency, length)

2   Research guidance and support (is it sufficient for the stage the student is at in their PhD)

3   Feedback (Is feedback consistent, useful, of a timely manner, ..)

4   Any other comments:

5   (a) Has the student raised concerns, would they like these to be raised with their supervisor? Yes / No

(b) If yes, when and by whom? (By the student, the TAP Chair, or another member of staff; at the current meeting or on a subsequent occasion?)

(c) Comments from the TAP member:

Signed: (TAP member)

Signed: (Student)

Date:

Appendix 2: Policy on the audio-recording of oral examinations for research degrees

Purpose of the recording

1) The audio recording provides an objective record of the oral examination that can be used (i) in the event of an appeal (see below), or (ii) in the event that the examiners have failed to agree between themselves whether or not the candidate has satisfied the requirements for a particular degree and the departmental Graduate School Board has been unable to resolve the disagreement. In the latter case, the recording will be heard by the subsequently appointed adjudicating examiner. The recording will not be copied or replayed except in situations (i) and (ii) above, which are the sole purposes for which the recording is made. The University's understanding of the position in relation to statutory disclosure is set out below.

Responsibility for recordings

2) Graduate School Boards shall ensure that all oral examinations for which they are responsible are audio-recorded, or, in the exceptional cases detailed below, that permission from the Standing Committee on Assessment is obtained for the use of an internal observer. To ensure availability of equipment, a diary should be kept by each Graduate School Board of all prospective oral examinations for which they are responsible. Only the official audio-recording is permitted; participants in the oral examination are not permitted to make their own audio-recordings.

Notification of external examiners and students

3) Graduate School Boards are asked to inform external examiners prior to nomination that the oral examination will be recorded and to confirm their assent on the Appointment of Examiners form. Prospective external examiners should be notified that the recordings will be held and treated in confidence. If a prospective external examiner refuses to give assent and there is no other suitable examiner available, then the Chair of the Graduate School Board must seek permission from the Standing Committee on Assessment for an independent observer to attend the oral examination (see below).

4) Graduate School Boards are asked to ensure that their research students are aware that oral examinations will be recorded and understand the reasons for this. Students should be notified that the recordings will be held and treated in confidence. Students will be reminded by the Research Student Administration Team, when they submit their soft bound thesis, that the oral examination will be recorded.

Equipment

5) The audio recording will be made using equipment authorised for this purpose by the Standing Committee on Assessment. The University's Audio Visual Centre will maintain a stock of the approved equipment, which should be booked in advance by departments. Memory cards, which will be required for the recording and will have the status of an examination script, will be sent to MPhil/PhD/EngD internal examiners/observers when theses are sent out for examination. Internal examiners of MA/MSc by research candidates must collect the memory card from the Research Student Administration Team. If the recording fails at any time during the examination, the oral examination should continue unrecorded and the Research Student Administration Team should be informed as soon as possible.

Recording the examination

6) The department is responsible for ensuring that a designated person is available before the start of the examination to assist examiners with recording equipment. Before the examination, the designated person should enter the student's name and student number and the date of the examination on the cover of the audio-disk.

7) The internal examiner (or, in cases where there are two external examiners and no internal examiner, the internal observer) will inform those present at the start of the examination that the recording equipment is being switched on, and at the end of the examination that it is being switched off. The recording should end when the oral examination is complete, and the candidate leaves the examination room prior to the private discussion of the examiners. Neither the private discussion of the examiners, nor any subsequent discussion between the candidate and the examiners, should be recorded. The subsequent discussion between the examiners, and any subsequent discussion between the examiners and the student, should not be recorded.

8) After the oral examination, the audio-disk should be removed from the equipment by the designated person and delivered by hand by the designated person or a departmental official to the Research Student Administration Team for secure storage. No copy of the recording should be made, nor should it be listened to in the department.

Storage of recordings

9) The recording will be stored securely by the Assistant Registrar: Student Progress. It will be erased one year after the final result of the examination has been confirmed by the Standing Committee on Assessment, or, if an appeal is received, after consideration of the appeal within the University or subsequently by the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education has been concluded. Receipt and erasure of recordings will be documented.

Status of the recordings under the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act

10) The audio recording has the status of examination script and is therefore exempt from subject access requests under the Data Protection Act (the Act does not restrict the media that can constitute an exam script). However, this exemption does not extend to the examiners' comments on the candidate's performance, or any other form of feedback or conversation beyond the requirements of the examination. Provided these are not recorded, the recordings are exempt from data requests by the student. The recording cannot be released to a third party under the Freedom of Information Act because it holds the candidate's personal data, the wider disclosure of which is likely to be unfair and contrary to the purposes for which the data were obtained (see above).

Use of the recording in the event of appeal

11) Grounds for appeal:

   i. Students may not appeal against the academic judgement of examiners;
   ii. Students may appeal against a decision reached as a consequence of assessment if they believe that a procedural irregularity has occurred, or that the assessment was conducted unfairly or improperly; or if, for good reason, relevant mitigating circumstances can be shown which could not reasonably have been brought to the attention of the examiners before a decision on the student's academic performance was reached.

12) Procedure for consideration of appeals:

   i. In considering an appeal the Chair of the Special Cases Committee may request information from the academic department concerned or other relevant parties concerning any matter

raised by the appellant. The audio-recording may form part of the evidence considered by the Chair. The recording will not be released to the student or any other party as a means to preparing an appeal;

 ii. The Chair may ask the Graduate School Board concerned if, in the light of the evidence presented by the appellant, it is prepared to reconsider its recommendation or decision and the Board may agree to do so. The appellant will retain the right to appeal against a subsequent recommendation or decision;

 iii. The Chair will give reasons for any decision that an appeal should not be heard;

 iv. If the Chair decides, wholly or partly on the evidence of the audio-recording, that the appeal should be heard, a copy of the audio-recording or, at the Chair's discretion, of relevant parts, shall be made available to the members of the panel, the appellant and the other participants in the hearing.

Exceptional use of an independent observer in place of an audio recording

13) The circumstances in which permission may be sought to employ an independent observer in place of an audio recording are:

 i. if an External Examiner refuses to give assent to audio-recording and there is no other suitable examiner available;

 ii. if audio-recording would present a candidate with difficulties on medical or psychological grounds.

14) In these circumstances, the Chair of the Graduate School Board must seek permission from the Standing Committee on Assessment for an independent observer to attend the oral examination, supplying appropriate documentation from a medical practitioner or counsellor in case (ii). The Chair of the Graduate School Board shall nominate the proposed observer on the form for the appointment of examiners.

15) The independent observer should be an academic member of University staff in the candidate's discipline or a related area, but need not be an expert on the subject of the thesis. The student's supervisor cannot fulfill this role. The observer will submit a brief report to the Standing Committee on Assessment on the conduct of the oral examination, noting the main subjects discussed and any areas of concern voiced by the examiners. They must be prepared to provide an independent viewpoint on the oral examination should there be an appeal based on its conduct. In the event of an appeal, the observer's report will be made available to the Chair of the Special Cases Committee. If the Chair decides that the appeal should be heard, the observer's report will be made available to the members of the panel, the appellant and the other participants in the hearing. The observer should not intervene during the oral examination unless an exceptional situation should arise.

16) It is essential that these arrangements are made well in advance of the oral examination and conveyed to the candidate and examiners.

The Policy Framework for Distance Learning PhDs applies to distance learning PhD students. Where there is inconsistency between the Policy on Research Degrees and this framework for distance learning PhD students, the Policy Framework for Distance Learning PhDs applies.

Policy Framework for Distance Learning PhDs

Introduction:

1. This paper sets out a policy framework for PhDs by distance learning. It should be read in conjunction with the University's Policy on Research Degrees and with the University's Regulations for Research Degree Awards (Regulation 2).

2. All PhDs by distance learning require approval by the York Graduate Research School Board. Approval will be conducted with reference to the factors listed below.

3. References to Board of Studies below include departmental Graduate School Boards, where these operate under delegated powers from Boards of Studies.

Admission:

Principles:

4. Studying for a PhD by distance learning presents both unique opportunities and unique challenges. At admission, departments should carefully consider, and discuss with the applicant, whether it would be appropriate for the student to register on a PhD by distance learning as opposed to a standard, campus-based full-time or part-time PhD.

5. As guidance, PhDs by distance learning are most likely to be suitable where:

    a. the student has particular research interests which lend themselves to study conducted primarily at a distance (for instance, a work-based project or one requiring extensive field work);
    b. resources and facilities needed for the student's research project are available locally to the student or electronically / online;
    c. the student can dedicate the necessary time both for their PhD study and to meet the visit requirements (listed below).
    d. the student has the necessary self-motivation to succeed in independent study with minimal informal face-to-face support;
    e. the student has personal or professional circumstances which prevent study in standard mode but allow study in distance-learning mode.

6. Departments should make clear to all applicants, both in published information and in conversation, the limits imposed by distance-learning PhD study: for instance, that supervision will primarily be via video-conferencing; the limited access to central / departmental on-site resources and training; additional costs of visas (if appropriate), travel and accommodation for visits to York; and the limits placed on their professional development as academics from lack of availability of teaching opportunities.

Requirements:

7. The admissions requirements (for instance, English language requirements and prior qualifications) and admissions procedure for PhDs by distance-learning are the same as for other PhDs, with the following exception. All decisions for admission to PhDs by distance learning should be taken through evaluation of the factors listed on the following checklist, to be assessed through discussion with the applicant:

- That there are good reasons for applying to the distance-learning as opposed to standard PhD
- That the applicant has sufficient time available to engage in formal and informal supervision, and that time-differences between them and the supervisor will not inhibit this
- That the proposed supervisor is willing and able to undertake supervision remotely
- That the applicant has appropriate study space available to them
- That the applicant's research project can be conducted through learning resources and facilities which are available to the applicant locally and/or online, and that on-site resources or specialist facilities will be only minimally required
- That the applicant has appropriate internet connectivity, software and hardware to support research and video-conferencing, or that such will be provided by the Department
- That it is feasible for the applicant to engage in the Department's research community (taking into account infrastructure, logistics, time-differences)
- That the applicant will be able to engage in required departmental training
- That, taking into account the factors in the checklist and any local opportunities available to the applicant, that the Department and applicant are confident that it will be possible to meet the applicant's individual training and development needs

In addition to being discussed with the applicant, awareness of the following factors will also be assured via inclusion in the offer letter:

- That there needs to be sufficient time available to conduct their research throughout the duration of their programme
- That there are on-campus visit requirements which the applicant must organise and fund themselves
- That supervision will primarily be by video conferencing
- That there will be limited availability of / access to central training / on-site departmental training
- That paid teaching opportunities will necessarily be highly restricted, and will not be available at all for students who do not have the legal right to work in the UK.
- That as a distance learning student they may have limited ability to take advantage of Department funds for conference attendance
- That continued enrolment depends on their ability to secure short-term visitor visas for each block of visits on the programme, and that these visas cannot be guaranteed by the University.

8. Transfers from distance-learning PhDs to on-campus PhDs are possible, subject to consideration by the Board of Studies and other factors such as whether the student meets UKVI requirements (in the case of international students). Transfers from on-campus PhDs to distance-learning PhDs are likewise possible, subject to consideration by the relevant Board of Studies, which should evaluate the factors above as per a new applicant.

Attendance Requirements:

9. Students registered on PhDs by distance learning will be required to periodically visit the University. Visits will be used to support the students' research and academic development, integration into their department's research community, and their professional development. Expectations as to what students will do and achieve whilst visiting the University will be agreed between the student and supervisor in each instance, in sufficient time to allow the student to appropriately prepare for the visit.

10. The following visit requirements will apply for all such students (with no distinction between full- and part-time students):

a. a two-week visit at the start of their programme to support induction;
b. visit(s) comprising at least two weeks in each academic year to be held either as two week-long visits or a single fortnight-long visit, as agreed between the supervisor and student and to be held within a specified window;
c. visits to coincide with the student's confirmation of enrolment panel and final viva (see below), which it is intended will overlap with the visits in b. above.

11. The pattern (but not necessarily precise timings) of visits will be agreed prior to admission and at the start of each academic year. For international students, this will be conducted in sufficient time as necessary to meet applications for visas. The timing of visits will take account of constraints imposed by visa regulations (see below).

12. Students whose circumstances leave them unable to meet the visit requirements will be required to seek an exemption from Special Cases Committee via application to their Graduate School Board. Students who miss visit requirements without such approval will be placed on a formal warning that their enrolment is at risk (after the first missed visit), and ultimately have their enrolment terminated (after the second missed visit).

13. International students registered on a distance-learning programme will be required to apply for a short-term study visa to meet visit requirements. Under current regulations, short-term study visas allow short periods of study in the UK of no more than six months in length, totalling no more than six months in a twelve month period. In practical terms, this means that visits within an academic year need to take place within a specified six-month window, and the student cannot then visit the University for a further six months after the end of this window. UKVI have additional specific requirements as to what applicants are required to demonstrate to obtain a visa, and it is the student's responsibility to meet these requirements.

A new visa is required for each six-month visit window, and the student will need to apply and pay for a new visa each time. There is no overarching eligibility for short-term study visas across the lifetime of the programme. The University accordingly cannot guarantee that a student will be able to obtain a short-term study visa at each application. In the event that a student is unable to meet the visitation or progression requirements due to UKVI restrictions or the denial of a visa, they are likely to be required to apply for a Leave of Absence until the situation can be resolved. This would be subject to the University's standard limits for leave of absence.

14. International students will be provided with appropriate documentation from the University to support applications for short-term study visas.

15. The University will not provide funding for the cost of visas, travel and accommodation for visits: these additional costs do not form part of the student's tuition fees, and will need to be met by the student or their funder. The University will not be responsible for organising or providing travel or accommodation arrangements for visits. Students will be advised of the necessity of planning for, and funding, visits at application.

Induction and Handbooks:

16. In addition to attending the departmental induction for new research students, new students on PhDs by distance learning should also receive a separate departmental induction addressing their needs. This should encompass discussion of the pattern of informal engagement and formal visits, the implications of study in distance-learning mode such as the need for regular communication and good planning time-management, and means for the student to engage in the Department's research community. Departments should also ensure that students registered on PhDs by distance learning receive specific guidance regarding supervisory arrangements, access to facilities and resources during and outside visits and training opportunities.

17. All new PhD students are required to undertake two central induction sessions offered by the Researcher Development Team. It is permissible for students registered on distance learning to complete associated workbooks / online resources as opposed to attending these workshops in person. Graduate School Boards are responsible for ensuring that students either attend the central induction or complete these resources.

18. All students registered on PhDs by distance learning should receive a handbook in hardcopy or online. This should be a specific handbook (for instance, a tailored version of the standard departmental handbook) rather than simply the standard handbook for PhD students. Departments are responsible for producing this handbook. This will require departments to consider information in standard handbooks from the perspective of distance-learning students and amend / add as appropriate.

Period of Enrolment:

19. The period of enrolment for students registered on PhDs by distance learning will be the same as that for students registered on other PhDs, as set out in the Policy on Research Degrees.

Supervision and Staffing:

20. The formal supervision requirements set out in the University's Research Degree policy will apply to students on PhDs by distance learning.

21. The purpose and likely frequency of informal supervision meetings / contact should be made clear for the research student by their supervisor, at induction and within handbooks. Departments are strongly encouraged to ensure that some form of informal contact between the student and supervisor (e.g. an e-mail) occurs at least monthly.

22. Supervision meetings (whether formal or informal) will normally take place by video-conferencing, if they do not coincide with the student's formal visits to York. Students registered on distance-learning PhDs who are resident in the UK should nevertheless expect to receive supervision remotely: a standard PhD may thus be more appropriate for those students who prefer face-to-face meetings with their supervisor.

23. It is strongly recommended that departments with PhDs by distance learning appoint a programme director to oversee and manage the programme. This post can be (but does not have to be) filled by the Chair of the departmental Graduate School Board.

Progress and Assessment:

24. Thesis Advisory Panels (TAPs) may take place by video-conferencing if they do not coincide with the student's visits to York. Departments have discretion to devote visits to other work and preparation for TAPs rather than TAPs themselves.

25. Confirmation of enrolment panels should take place during visits to York rather than by video-conferencing. In exceptional cases only, the Standing Committee on Assessment may grant permission for a student to participate by video-conferencing. In the event of the student failing confirmation of enrolment and requiring a second oral examination, it is permissible for this to be held via video-conferencing, provided that the technology used is compatible with the need to audio-record the panel proceedings (for instance, Google Hangout). If panels are held by video-conferencing, the rooms used by both the student and panel members should be appropriate for the purpose (for instance, avoiding the likelihood of interruptions that would interfere with the proceedings).

26. In the eventuality of a student requiring a second oral examination for confirmation of enrolment held by video-conferencing, the student's subsequent TAP should be held in a face-to-face meeting in York.

27. The oral examination for final assessment of the student's thesis ('the viva') will normally be held in a face-to-face meeting in York. In exceptional circumstances only, the oral examination may be held via video-conferencing if approved in advance by Standing Committee on Assessment. Any proposal to hold the oral examination by video-conferencing must have the approval of the external examiner, and the internal examiner (or observer) must provide the Committee with confirmation that they have obtained the candidate's consent. The rooms used by both the student and the examination panel should

be appropriate to an oral examination (for instance, avoiding interruptions or noise that would interfere with proceedings), and appropriate technology should be used to allow a recording of the proceedings (for instance, Google Hangout). These arrangements also apply in the event of an examination being required upon resubmission of a thesis.

Title:

28. All PhDs by distance learning will carry a standard form of title: 'PhD in X by distance learning'. It is necessary for the programme to be clearly identifiable as distance learning to support applications for short-term study visas. However, students will exit with the same qualification as students doing an equivalent PhD in standard mode (i.e. there will be no distinction in the qualification), as the criteria for the qualification are the same.

Facilities and Resources:

29. Students registered on distance-learning PhDs will have access to the University's / department's on-site facilities and resources during formal visits to York. Outside of these visits, access will necessarily be limited to electronic and online resources (such as e-books and e-journals). Distance-learning PhD study is most likely to be appropriate for students who have particular interests where resources / facilities are available locally to support their research, or where their research can be conducted primarily via online resources. Departments should ensure that students have access to the resources necessary to their study (taking into constraints on access to on-site resources and any local resources) at admission, and monitor this throughout the student's programme.

Research Community:

30. The University is committed to ensuring that all research students benefit from a supportive research community. This presents a challenge for students studying at a distance: departments should demonstrate how they will overcome that challenge in cases for approval of PhDs by distance learning. Departments are encouraged to:

- Facilitate remote participation in research seminars and other research-related events (requiring consideration of infrastructure, time-differences, the outside commitments of students on PhDs by distance learning);
- Encourage students on PhDs by distance learning to attend relevant research events during their visits to York, and consider timing visits / events to coincide with one another to support this;
- Facilitate the ability of students on PhDs by distance-learning to give presentations / papers in the department, either in person on visits or remotely;
- Establish a staff-led online community for PhD students;
- Encourage communication between distance-learning PhD students and other PhD students, by e-mail or social networking;
- Consider recording research seminars and other research-related events.

Training and Development:

31. Students will have access to on-site central and departmental training during their visits to York: as such, access to this training will necessarily be limited. Departments should take proactive steps to make departmental training available to students on PhDs by distance learning. This might involve, for instance, recording training sessions; development of online resources or workbooks; bespoke sessions; remote participation in training sessions (this is strongly encouraged, but departments should note there may be difficulties in arranging it due to logistical problems and time-differences).

32. Departments should demonstrate how training will be provided to students in the case for approval of PhDs by distance learning.

33. Departments should consider the situation of distance-learning PhD students in their procedure for allocating funds for conference attendance, and make clear how the procedure applies to such students.

34. Access to paid teaching and demonstrating opportunities for students on PhDs by distance-learning will necessarily be very limited, as such teaching requires on-site attendance: such opportunities will not be available to students who do not have the right to work in the UK. Departments are, however, encouraged to consider if it is feasible to support this aspect of students' development in other ways (for instance by allowing students to observe teaching sessions during visits).

35. Students registered on distance-learning PhDs should expect to receive the majority of their training through electronic resources rather than onsite / face-to-face. Students who require greater on-site training and development than is available within distance-learning PhDs may be encouraged to transfer to study in standard on-site mode, where this is feasible.

Student Representation and Engagement:

36. Students registered on PhDs by distance learning should be included in departmental and University mechanisms for student representation and engagement, as per other PhD students.

Monitoring and Review:

37. Departments should carefully monitor the progress and outcomes for distance-learning PhD students. The effectiveness of PhDs by distance-learning should be specifically considered as part of the Annual Programme Review (APR) process. All PhDs by distance learning will be subject to a review by the University three years after approval, in addition to being reviewed as part of the standard Periodic Review process.