

York Graduate Research School

Policy on Research Degrees 2020-21

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Policy on Research Degrees (PoRD; 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, Progression 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 UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees (2018). 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](#)).
- 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 option for members of staff is detailed separately in the University's regulations (Regulation 2.9). Therefore, this policy refers to all research students unless otherwise stated.
- 1.5 There are additional regulations that apply to:
 - PGR programmes by distance learning: Appendix 5
 - Collaborative split-site and off-site PhDs: Appendix 6
 - Integrated PhD programmes: Appendix 7.

Responsibility for research students and research degree programmes

- 1.6 Research students, their department and the University are responsible for maintaining records relating to a student's research degree programme, including supervision, progress and training. The primary system used to maintain such records is SkillsForge and students and their supervisors are required to engage with this system.

Institutional responsibility

- 1.7 YGRS and University Research Committee are responsible for maintaining an oversight of strategic policy relating to research degree students and programmes.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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 account 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 annual progression at the first and second attempt (from Research Student Administration: RSA)

- submission and completion times and rates (from the Business Intelligence Unit and RSA)
- pass, referral, fail and withdrawal rates (from RSA)
- 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.

1.10 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 through annual progression to final examination and award	Research Student Administration (RSA)
Research degree programme approval, monitoring and review	Academic Support Office (ASO) (plus the Planning Office for consideration of new programme proposals and major modifications)
Research student induction and training	Research Excellence Training Team (RETT)
Training for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA)	Academic Practice
Research policy framework	Research Strategy and Policy Office (RSPO)
Research ethics	University Research Committee (URC) and disciplinary Research Ethics Committees'
Training for supervisors	Research Excellence Training Team (RETT)

Departmental responsibility

1.11 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) led by a Graduate Chair. In the rest of the document, 'department' is used to represent a student's home department or centre, and Graduate School Board (GSB)/Graduate Chair is used to represent whichever departmental committee/individual has formal responsibility (either directly or under delegated powers) for research students and research degree programmes.

Approval of research degree programmes

1.12 All new research degree programmes require the approval of the departmental Graduate School Board, the relevant Faculty Learning and Teaching Group (FLTG) for planning approval and the Policies and Programmes Sub-Committee (PPSC) on behalf of YGRSB for academic approval.

- 1.13 Where a department is planning to bid for a Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) or Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) (as lead or member institution), the University approval stage (i.e. FLTG and YGRSB) 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.
- 1.14 For approval, the relevant ASO pro forma must be submitted with the required supporting documentation, which may include comments (on the relevant pro forma) from one or more external assessors. The Chair of YGRSB 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.
- 1.15 Modifications to research degree programmes require departmental approval and, in the case of major modifications (which may include significant changes to progression processes and departmental training requirements), the approval of PPSC and sometimes the relevant FLTG.

Approval of taught awards and taught components of research degree programmes

- 1.16 Students who embark on a research degree programme at the University may be eligible to receive a taught award in three circumstances – as an additional taught award, as an exit taught award or as a teaching award (not covered by this policy).
- 1.17 An ‘additional taught award’ means that research students are permitted or required to enrol on a taught programme (e.g. a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma) alongside their research degree programme for training purposes. Students who successfully complete the taught programme and the research degree programme receive *both* awards (students who successfully complete just the taught programme may still receive the taught award). In the case of an Integrated PhD programme, successful completion of the taught programme is required for progression. In the case of other research degree programmes, successful completion of the taught programme may or may not be a requirement for progression (as approved by PPSC).
- 1.18 An ‘exit taught award’ is conferred where research students have successfully completed sufficient credit-bearing modules, taken for training purposes, to be eligible for an existing taught award (e.g. a Postgraduate Certificate) but who withdraw, have their enrolment terminated or are not awarded a research degree on final examination. Students only receive an exit taught award if they do not receive a research degree.
- 1.19 Additional taught awards and exit taught awards must align with the York pedagogy and be presented on the standard new programme documentation for taught awards. Modules contributing to additional taught awards and exit taught awards should be on the module catalogue. The standard taught programme design and assessment rules apply to additional taught awards and taught exit awards and such programmes must be overseen by an external examiner in line with standard procedures for taught programmes.
- 1.20 The approval process for additional taught awards and exit taught awards ensures that a single committee is responsible for final approval for clarity of decision making, while safeguards are in place to ensure consistency and sharing of good practice across all the University’s taught awards.
- 1.21 Where additional taught awards or exit taught awards are available to postgraduate taught students as well as to research degree students then UTC procedures for new programme approval should be followed. Once a programme has been approved by UTC, PPSC may approve the programme as an additional taught award or exit taught award for a named research degree programme.

- 1.22 Where additional taught awards or exit taught awards are **only** available to research degree students, PPSC is the committee that makes final decisions regarding programme approval, following consultation with UTC. The approval process is as follows:
- (i) The views of two appropriately qualified external assessors should be sought and they should complete the external assessor report form for taught programmes. The proposing department should provide a written response to their comments;
 - (ii) The proposal should be approved by the departmental Board of Studies;
 - (iii) The proposal should be approved by the relevant FLTG (if planning approval required);
 - (iv) The proposal should be considered by the UTC departmental contact for the proposing department and the Chair of UTC or their nominee. The UTC departmental contact and Chair (or their nominee) should comment on the programme and the proposing department should provide a written response to their comments;
 - (v) The proposal (including the documentation related to iv above) should be considered by PPSC for approval in accordance with its normal procedures.
- 1.23 PPSC will also be responsible for approving modifications to additional taught awards or exit taught awards as they apply to research degree students.
- 1.24 Any credit-bearing modules created specifically for a research degree programme and not part of an existing taught programme require departmental approval (and may require PPSC approval). Modules should be on the module catalogue and should be overseen by a taught external examiner.

Four-year PhD programmes

- 1.25 Departments can propose to FLTG and PPSC 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. The University recognises two distinct types of four-year PhD programmes: (i) four-year PhD programmes and (ii) four-year Integrated PhD programmes.
- 1.26 Four-year PhD programmes are normally developed in response to the requirements of research councils and other funding bodies. The four-year duration may recognise the time that students are required to spend on additional activities (i.e. those not primarily directed towards research or thesis preparation) and/or reflect the funder's desire that students should submit within the funded period (whilst recognising that this may not be possible within a three-year period). Four-year PhD programmes are similar to the University's standard three-year PhD programmes but with a different normal and minimum period of enrolment (see section 7). Four-year PhD programmes do not normally have a continuation year (see section 7).
- 1.27 Integrated PhD programmes are often developed in response to particular departmental needs, namely to facilitate the admission of students who meet the University's minimum PhD admission requirements and demonstrate the potential to undertake a PhD but whose educational background means they are unsuited to a three-year PhD programme (e.g. a student moving between disciplines or whose Master's programme did not provide the right academic preparation for PhD work). Integrated PhD programmes have their own policy framework (see Appendix 7).

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 Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), and third cycle (Doctoral) qualifications within *A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* (QF-EHEA)).
- 2.3 The degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc (by research) are Master's degrees (level 7 of the FHEQ, and second cycle qualifications within the QF-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 discipline¹.

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:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
 - 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.

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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 the UK's 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

¹ This is a York-specific addition to the FHEQ's descriptor for Master's level programmes.

community, maintained with reference to a framework of University policies ([including the Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance](#), the [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#) and the [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 engaging in, and learning about, research.
- 3.4 The University assures itself that departments are providing an appropriate research environment by: (i) YGRSB's consideration of Annual Programme Review reports and URC's consideration of Annual Departmental Research Review reports from departments, and, (ii) monitoring, by YGRSB, 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 Corporate and Information Services Directorate, Humanities Research Centre and Research Centre for Social Sciences) 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) access to photocopying, and printing, (ii) library resources (including training and relevant electronic resources), (iii) appropriate computing provision for their research project (hardware, software, training and support), and (iv) 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, equitable 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 Admissions Policy](#), which is reviewed and updated annually by Student Recruitment and Admissions. The Admissions Policy (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 Graduate Chair (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 Student Recruitment and Admissions).
- 4.3 Before an offer of a place on a research 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 Graduate Chair, particularly if the supervisor is inexperienced or thinks it would be helpful to have a second opinion). The purpose of the interview is to allow the department to take a view on the broad viability of the project as well as the credibility of the potential student.
- 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 Departments are strongly encouraged to limit the number of entry points to research degree programmes to facilitate the participation of new students in University, Graduate Student Association (GSA) and departmental induction and training events, and to ensure that students feel part of a cohort.
- 4.6 The University, together with the GSA, provides Welcome Week induction events for all postgraduate students. Welcome Week occurs before the formal start of the academic year; details are available on the [New Students Welcome Site](#).
- 4.7 All new research students are required to complete the online 'Research Integrity Tutorial' prior to their first Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) meeting (see also section 11). Research students are also expected to complete the 'Being an Effective Researcher' (BERT) and 'Information Security Awareness' tutorials within six months of the start of their programme. Students can access the tutorials on the VLE (vle.york.ac.uk). Departments are responsible for ensuring that their students have completed the tutorials.
- 4.8 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 content should be planned with reference to the Induction Checklist issued by YGRS, and 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.
- 4.9 Departments should provide new research students with an appropriate handbook in hardcopy or online for reference. This handbook should be created using the template issued annually by YGRS in order to ensure consistency and accuracy of messaging to all new research students.

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 their delegate), in consultation with the Graduate Chair.
- 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 staff on a permanent contract *or* a fixed-term contract that extends beyond the expected completion date of their student's research degree programme *and* they should not be planning to leave the University's employment before the student's expected completion date. The main supervisor will normally be on a minimum of grade 7 (lecturer equivalent). Where a main supervisor's contract does not specify research supervision and/or the member of staff is at grade 6 (associate lecturer equivalent), it is the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure that the appointment is appropriate. The main supervisor must have an appropriate level of current expertise in the student's field of research and the supervisor's ability to meet their responsibilities should not be 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. Emeritus, honorary and probationary academic staff are eligible to serve as subsidiary supervisors.
- 5.6 A subsidiary supervisor must be appointed if the main supervisor has not yet seen (either as the main supervisor or as an active subsidiary supervisor) a student through to successful completion of the research degree in question (or a research degree at a higher level*). The Graduate Chair 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). In this case, the role of the subsidiary supervisor is to serve as an advisor/mentor to the main supervisor, in addition to providing additional supervisory support for the student. The individual appointed as a subsidiary supervisor should, therefore, be a member of University's ART staff with experience of successful research student supervision. (**i.e. if a supervisor has overseen the successful completion of a PhD student, they may then serve as the sole supervisor for PhD, MPhil and MA/MSc (by research) students but a supervisor who has only overseen the successful completion of a MA/MSc (by research) student may only serve as the sole supervisor for MA/MSc (by research) students.*)
- 5.7 Where a subsidiary supervisor is appointed, there should be clear agreement, preferably in writing, 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. Where a subsidiary supervisor is appointed from another department/centre within the University, it is

recommended that the fees are split as follows: 20% to the lead department/centre, and the remainder of the fees split between the supervising departments/centres in line with the supervisory load.

Training and monitoring of supervisors

- 5.8 New supervisors (including those based outside the University of York) are expected to undertake the Becoming an Effective Supervisor (BEST) online tutorial. It is also recommended to existing supervisors in need of a refresher course.
- 5.9 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 student through to successful completion of the research degree in question (or a research degree at a higher level) should be paired with an experienced subsidiary supervisor (see above for details).
- 5.10 Departments should encourage those new to supervision, or in need of updating their skills and knowledge, to take a training course in supervision. RETT 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.
- 5.11 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 their delegate).

Supervisory meetings

- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 Formal supervisory meetings, at which substantial discussion of, and feedback on, research progress and plans and a conversation about development and training needs take place, are vital for ensuring that a student's research project remains on target. Formal supervision meetings must be held at least every 6-7 weeks throughout the calendar year for both full-time and part-time students (including visiting students) during the normal enrolment period and more frequently if a Graduate School Board prescribes. This equates to a minimum of eight formal Supervision meetings per calendar year. 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.
- 5.14 A record of each formal supervisory meeting should be drawn up by the research student, approved by the supervisor, and saved on SkillsForge, in order to be accessible to both. The record should include the date of the meeting, a summary of the content of the meeting and future actions to be performed, including agreed training.

Absence and replacement of a supervisor

- 5.15 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.
- 5.16 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 Graduate Chairs 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.
- 5.17 During the normal period of enrolment, if a student's research project is dependent on the supervision of a *single, specialist* member of academic staff and that member of staff leaves the University, or is otherwise unable to continue supervising the student, then the department must seek to make alternative, comparable arrangements to supervise the student to complete their research degree. This may involve supporting the student's transfer to another institution (see section 7), or it may involve seeking comparable specialist supervision from outside the University so that the student can complete their research degree at York.
- 5.18 If a research student is unhappy with their supervision they should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss this directly with their supervisor, or the problem remains unresolved having done this, then they should feel free to talk confidentially about the problem with another member of their Thesis Advisory Panel, the Graduate Chair, the Head of Department or other relevant departmental officer. If the problem remains unresolved, or if the student feels unable to approach the aforementioned members of their department, the student should arrange to speak in confidence to the Dean of YGRS, who will advise the student on the options available to them, which might include mediation with the department (see also section 14 on complaints). The GSA can also provide independent advice.
- 5.19 If a supervisor is unhappy with their supervisory relationship with their research student they should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss this directly with their student, or the problem remains unresolved having done this, then they should raise the matter with the Graduate Chair or their Head of Department.
- 5.20 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), supervisory responsibilities can be changed, at the request of either the research student or a supervisor.
- 5.21 The academic judgement as to whether an alternative supervisory arrangement is adequate for the student's research project ultimately rests with the Board of Studies.

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 **at least every 6-7 weeks** and more frequently if a Graduate School Board prescribes);
- (iii) preparing adequately for meetings with supervisors and Thesis Advisory Panels, and for progression reviews;
- (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 and principles for good ethical governance, the Code of Practice on Research Integrity and the Research Data Management Policy) 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 their 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 (see section 9);
- (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 and principles for good ethical governance, Code of Practice on Research Integrity and the Research Data Management Policy) 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](#);
- (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, 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 (named four-year version)	four years	eight years	three years and five months	seven years and five months	four years*	eight years
Integrated PhD	four years	eight years	three years and nine months	seven years and six months	five years	nine years
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

**An exceptional fifth year can be approved by PPSC as part of the programme in exceptional circumstances. These limits do not include any allowance for leave of absence/extension of submission, the criteria for which are outlined below.*

- 7.2 Research students are expected to submit their theses within the normal period of enrolment (for funded students, and where required by the funder (e.g. Research Councils), within the funded period) and supervisors and departments should actively encourage students to do so. The final deadline for submission is at the end of the maximum period of study and is recorded in e:Vision. Failure to submit by the final submission deadline (last day of enrolment, or the next working day if a weekend or Bank Holiday) will result in failure of the degree.
- 7.3 The normal period of enrolment for part-time research students 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 the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA). In such circumstances the student will still be required to pay the full fees for the programme of study.
- 7.5 The maximum period between the student's initial registration and the submission of the thesis,

including any leave of absence or extensions, is normally the maximum period of study plus four years. In the case of parental leave the maximum period of study will normally be extended to accommodate this.

- 7.6 The end of the maximum period of study is the final deadline for submission of the thesis. All students should plan their research so that they will submit within the normal period of enrolment or, in the case of students on funded programmes, within the funded period (where the funded period extends beyond the normal period of enrolment but ends before the maximum period of study).

Continuation period

- 7.7 MPhil, three-year PhD, Integrated PhD and EngD programmes have a normal period of full- or part-time enrolment and a maximum period of study, which is in all cases the normal period of enrolment plus 12 months. For MA/MSc by research programmes the maximum period of study is the normal period of enrolment plus 3 months. This extended period of study is known as the continuation period. Four-year (or equivalent part-time) PhD programmes do not normally have a continuation period (an exceptional fifth year can be approved by PPSC as part of the programme specification in exceptional circumstances). Only the University Special Cases Committee (SCC) can grant an extension to the maximum period of study for a student and this will only be done in [exceptional circumstances](#).
- 7.8 The continuation period provides a contingency against the research project not going according to plan and thus it is only exceptionally for primary research or data analysis. In particular, it is expected that students should not normally be undertaking any laboratory, archival or fieldwork during their continuation period. Access to laboratory, archival or fieldwork facilities for students in a continuation period must be agreed by the relevant Graduate School Board on the basis of exceptional circumstances and for a specified and limited time only, and any permission for additional access to laboratory, archival or fieldwork facilities cannot be used as grounds for a request for an extension of the submission deadline.

Students who exceed the normal period of enrolment with permission

- 7.9 Research students who have permission to exceed the normal period of enrolment, i.e. those in a continuation period or those who have had an extension of submission deadline approved or those who have been given the opportunity to resubmit their thesis for examination, will pay an annual continuation fee (which can be refunded if students submit within three months) to remain as candidates for the degree concerned, and to retain access to computing and library facilities. 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. Whether a funder will pay the continuation fee will be determined by the terms and conditions of a student's award. Departments should provide written guidance on the facilities available to students who have exceeded the normal period of enrolment.
- 7.10 Students who exceed the normal period of enrolment with permission are responsible for maintaining contact with their supervisors until they are ready to (re)submit their thesis for examination, and, where applicable, to meet obligations under the [University Attendance Policy](#). Departments should provide written guidance for students on the level of supervisory support that can be expected if the normal period of enrolment is exceeded with permission. 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 (re)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 normally 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 take a break from their studies. Access to University resources is limited to those needed to prepare for their return to study.

Extensions of submission deadline

- 7.15 An extension of submission deadline is required for a research student who has not submitted their 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 exceptional medical, personal or employment reasons. 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 continuation period.
- 7.16 An extension request will not be considered until the student is within three months of their submission deadline. 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 (except in the case of MA/MSc by Research, where the total period of extension that may normally be approved is a maximum of one year).

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) to an MPhil or PhD/EngD programme, or from an MPhil programme to a PhD/EngD programme, the department should ensure that this decision is considered in detail at a TAP meeting, prior to approval by the Graduate Chair. Transfers should take place prior the submission of the thesis (for students initially enrolled on a MA/MSc (by research) and wishing to transfer to an MPhil or PhD/EngD) or normally prior to the first formal progression point (for students initially enrolled on an MPhil and wishing to transfer

to a PhD/EngD) to ensure that there is the same rigorous assessment of the student's ability to complete the MPhil/PhD/EngD degree within the required timeframe as for students initially enrolled for those degrees.

- 7.19 Where a student opts to transfer from an MPhil/PhD/EngD to a MA/MSc (by research):
- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard three-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
 - if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have a three-month MA/MSc (by research) continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Where a student opts to transfer from a PhD/EngD to an MPhil:

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard 12-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have a 12-month MPhil continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

- 7.20 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 SCC, and on the understanding that the student will complete any 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 SCC.

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

- 7.21 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 RSA. Recommendations will be considered by RSA and approved under delegated authority or referred to SCC for consideration where necessary (www.york.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/issues/academic/research/ and <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic/change/>).

Working hours, employment and voluntary work

- 7.22 Full-time research degree programmes are based on a notional 1800 working hours per year (which includes time spent on the research project, and time for personal and professional development where this forms part of the research degree programme) (this equates to around 40 hours/working week). Actual working hours will vary for a number of reasons including the nature of the research and the timing within the programme but students and supervisors should ensure that working hours are not excessive.
- 7.23 Subject to any conditions imposed by the student's research council (or other sponsor/funding body), any UKVI restrictions, and the approval of their supervisor, students on full-time programmes may undertake a maximum of twenty hours of paid employment (this includes teaching and demonstrating and the associated preparation and marking; it also includes 'on-call' hours where a student is not actively engaged in work but where they have to be in a particular place) and/or voluntary work per week during designated periods of study (i.e. excluding annual leave).

Supervisors and students should ensure that the time spent on paid employment and/or voluntary work does not jeopardise the on-time submission of the thesis, or compromise well-being.

- 7.24 For certain categories of paid employment or voluntary work closely related to the programme of study, exceptions to the working hours maximum may be made by PPSC (at the programme level) or the Graduate School Board (for individual students) on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board or supervisor respectively. Such exceptions may not be possible if students are subject to UKVI restrictions.

Holidays

- 7.25 Students are strongly encouraged to take reasonable holidays (annual leave). Subject to any further conditions imposed by the research council (or other sponsor/funding body), the annual leave allocation for full-time research students is 27 days (plus public holidays and University closure days) in any year. Students are responsible for requesting and recording their annual leave in line with departmental policy.
- 7.26 Departments should have a system in place for the approval and tracking of PGR students' annual leave that involves one or more members of staff additional to the supervisor and which enables the department to maintain an oversight of the take up of annual leave and ensure that requests for leave are not turned down without good reason.

Transferring into or out of the University of York

- 7.27 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.
- 7.28 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 Research Data Management Policy).
- 7.29 If a research student wishes to transfer from another university to York, they must apply through the normal channels (see section 4). The application will then be considered by RSA on behalf of SCC for exceptional entry and the research to date, where applicable, will be subject to a light touch ethical review (in accordance with the University's Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance). 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.).
- 7.30 If a student transfers to an MPhil or PhD at York following less than one year's enrolment (or part-time equivalent) on that degree at their previous institution they must undertake York's first formal review of progress no later than 12 months after their enrolment on the programme (i.e. calculating from their MPhil or PhD start date at their previous institution). If a student transfers to a PhD at York following less than two years' enrolment (or part-time equivalent) on that degree at their previous institution they must undertake York's second formal review of progress no later than 24 months after their enrolment on the programme (calculated as above). This is to ensure that any issues with student progress are picked up in good time. Departments may make a case for an extension to the progression deadline in accordance with stated policy.

International students

- 7.31 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](#) . Sponsored international students must be monitored by departments in accordance with the [University's Attendance Management Policy for Sponsored International Students](#); this includes the monitoring of formal supervisory meetings and Thesis Advisory Panel meetings (and the additional points of contact required 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 they are given the support they need to make improvements. Formal supervisory meetings and routine meetings of Thesis Advisory Panels (see below) form a key part of this regular review process. In addition, MPhil and PhD/EngD students are subject to formal reviews of progress (see below). Additional progression points may be introduced when proposed by a department and approved by YGRSB.
- 8.2 Departments are encouraged to specify milestones for research students to monitor their progress against (which may or may not be assessed as part of formal reviews of progress). 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

- 8.3 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 (PDP), and to supplement, where appropriate, the advice and guidance given to the student by the supervisor(s).
- 8.4 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. The TAP should be chaired by a non-supervisory member who is at grade 7 or above or has considerable experience of supervising research degree students. 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. Not all TAP members need to be present at each TAP however the minimum attendance is two, including one who is not a supervisor.
- 8.5 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 (including any role of the TAP in respect to formal reviews of progress, see below). Emeritus, visiting staff and staff on probation may be additional members of a TAP.
- 8.6 If a research student is unhappy with the TAP that they have been allocated they should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss this directly with

their TAP, or the problem remains unresolved having done this, then they should feel free to talk confidentially about the problem with the Graduate Chair, the Head of Department or other relevant departmental officer. If the problem remains unresolved, or if the student feels unable to approach the aforementioned members of their department, the student should arrange to speak in confidence to the Dean of YGRS, who will advise the student on the options available to them, which might include mediation with the department (see also section 14 on complaints). The GSA can also provide independent advice.

TAP meetings

- 8.7 For full-time students, the TAP will meet with the student at least once within every six-month period (i.e. in months 1-6, 7-12, etc., for a full-time research student). 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 but may be integrated with progress review meetings (see below). 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 SkillsForge. RSA will monitor the timeliness of TAP meetings using SkillsForge and will contact the Graduate Chair if any meetings do not take place on schedule. Reports may be checked by the University to ensure that it is meeting its statutory obligations and duty of care to its students.
- 8.9 In preparation for a TAP meeting, a research student should complete the University TAP preparation form via SkillsForge and provide relevant supporting documentation in order to reflect on and summarise progress on their work during the review period and outline their future objectives. The supervisor should provide a comprehensive, honest, and constructive written report on the student's progress.
- 8.10 During or immediately 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 meeting record form via SkillsForge where it will be accessible to the student (in order to ensure feedback on their progress and to inform the next steps in their research) and TAP members. The Graduate Chair will monitor TAP forms to ensure process and quality are appropriate.
- 8.11 If the TAP structure is not operating properly, a research student should contact the Graduate Chair or Chair of the Board of Studies or Head of Department. If the issue remains unresolved, a student should contact the Dean of YGRS for advice.

Review of supervision

- 8.12 Research students should be given an opportunity to comment confidentially on the quality of their supervision on a regular basis using the (paper-based) Review of Supervision form. The student will indicate on the form whether they wish any concerns they may raise to be discussed with the supervisor. 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 permission of the student.
- 8.13 Departments should clarify to students who receives the Review of Supervision form (this should normally be the Graduate Administrator) and how it is dealt with subsequently i.e. who is responsible for approaching the student to discuss possible solutions to any issues raised (this

would normally be the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) or their nominee).

- 8.14 Departments may encourage students to complete the Review of Supervision Form at each TAP meeting in the absence of the supervisor. The independent (non-supervisory) member(s) of the TAP should discuss the form with the student, offering the student 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 in this way, it is the role of the independent TAP member(s) to discuss possible solutions with the student prior to the form being dealt with as above.
- 8.15 Where departments encourage the completion of the Review of Supervision form during TAP meetings, research students should nonetheless be free to complete the form outside the TAP process.
- 8.16 Concerns raised via the Review of Supervision Form should be managed sensitively by the Graduate Chair, 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. 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 department in order to improve the situation.

Formal reviews of progress for MPhil, PhD and EngD students

NOTE: Students registered on PhD and EngD programmes before 1st September 2016 are subject to the [Confirmation of Enrolment process](#).

Purpose and overview of formal reviews of progress

- 8.17 A student is admitted to a PhD/EngD or MPhil programme on the basis of an assessment of their potential at the admissions stage. Remaining on the PhD/EngD or MPhil programme is conditional on the student making satisfactory progress with respect to their research project and the other elements of their PhD/EngD or MPhil programme.
- 8.18 The purpose of formal reviews of progress is, therefore, to ensure that students on PhD/EngD and MPhil programmes are making satisfactory progress. Formal reviews of progress take place on an annual basis for full-time PhD/EngD and MPhil students (towards the end of a student's academic year) and on a biennial basis for part-time PhD and MPhil students. Formal reviews of progress are not required for entry into a continuation period, where this is permitted.
- 8.19 In a formal review of progress, a PhD, EngD or MPhil student is assessed against the relevant University progression criteria by a progression panel. Students are permitted a maximum of two opportunities to meet the relevant University progression criteria at each formal review of progress. If a student has not met the relevant University progression criteria after two attempts they will be deemed to have **failed** the progression point and they will be transferred to an alternative programme or their enrolment will be terminated. Progression decisions are approved by the SCA on behalf of Senate.
- 8.20 Full details on formal reviews of progress are provided in Appendix 2. Whilst the framework for formal reviews of progress is set out by the University, many of the details (including the exact timing, the evidence requested, and the composition and operation of panels) are determined departmentally within the parameters set by the University. A department must obtain PPSC approval for its approach to formal reviews of progress (i.e. including in relation to the timing, evidence and panels) and any major changes to that approach.

Composition of the progression panel

- 8.21 The progression panel for a PhD/EngD or MPhil student should comprise at least two individuals and be independent of the student's supervisor(s). The progression panel should be chaired by a senior academic member of the same or cognate department who has experience of successful research student supervision in the broad disciplinary area within which the student is based.
- 8.22 Progression panels are not expected to make detailed judgements about a student's research project, nor to direct the student's future work; rather, they are required to determine, on the basis of the evidence from the student and the supervisor's report, if the student meets the relevant University criteria for progression (which are threshold requirements).

Timing of formal reviews of progress

- 8.23 Formal reviews of progress will take place according to the schedule below. Students must complete all aspects of the review, and the recommendation of the progression panel must be submitted via SkillsForge, by the deadline.
- 8.24 ***Maximum Period of enrolment prior to progression reviews*** (departments must set their own timelines within these broad University parameters – see Appendix 2):

	FT Student First Attempt	FT Student Second Attempt	PT Student First Attempt	PT Student Second Attempt
PhD/EngD & MPhil First Formal Review of Progress	9-12 Months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	18-24 Months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
PhD/EngD Second Formal Review of Progress	21-24 Months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	42-48 Months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
4 Year PhD/EngD Third Formal Review of Progress	33-36 Months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	66-72 Months	No more than 6 months first attempt the date of the first progress review meeting

Evidence considered by the progress review panel

- 8.25 Departments determine (subject to PPSC approval) what evidence (written and often oral) PhD/EngD and MPhil students should provide to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria (see Appendix 2). Evidence from the student is considered alongside the supervisor's report on the student's progress and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports.

Progression criteria

- 8.26 The University's progression criteria for PhD/EngD and MPhil programmes set out the *threshold* requirements for progression to the next stage. They should be understood by reference to what a conscientious research student might reasonably expect to have achieved in the time available. Details of the University's progression criteria are provided in Appendix 2.

Progress review meetings

- 8.27 The progression panel will consider the evidence from the student alongside the supervisor's report, and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports at a progress review meeting. Based on these elements the progression panel will make a decision as to whether the student has met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria, and make a recommendation regarding student progression.
- 8.28 If a department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a student will, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting.
- 8.29 If a department's evidence requirements do not include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a student will not, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting. **If, however, a progression panel does not feel able, on the basis of the evidence provided by a student and/or the supervisor's report and/or the agreed TAP reports (if applicable), to recommend that an individual student be progressed, then a meeting at which the student in question is present, along with at least two members of the progression panel, must be scheduled as soon as possible (and within the department's specified window for progress review meetings) to give the student every opportunity to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria.**

Second attempt at meeting the criteria

- 8.30 If, at a student's first attempt, a progression panel decides that a student has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria (including on the grounds of non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), it must recommend a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, programme transfer or withdrawal.
- 8.31 The progression panel will provide the student with clear written feedback about why the progression criteria were not met and its reasons for recommending a second attempt, programme transfer or withdrawal. The progression panel will specify, in broad terms, what the student would need to do to meet the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt.
- 8.32 In the case of a recommendation for programme transfer or withdrawal, the student may choose to accept the recommendation or, alternatively, decide to make a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria against the advice of the progression panel. The student must inform their department of their intention (i.e. second attempt, transfer or withdrawal) within two weeks of being informed of the panel's recommendation (if a student does not respond within this timeframe it will be treated as an assumed withdrawal). See Appendix 2 **for full details of making a second attempt at meeting the progression criteria, including the requirement for the recording of a second progress review meeting, if required.**
- 8.33 If the progression panel decides that the student has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, it should recommend that the student be progressed. If,

however, the progression panel decides that the student has *not* met the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt (including on the grounds of the non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), the student will be deemed to have failed the progression point and the progression panel must recommend that the student be transferred to an MPhil programme (for students enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or* that the student be transferred to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or* that the student's enrolment with the University be terminated. The progression panel should provide reasons for its recommendation.

- 8.34 If a student progresses at the second attempt this does not alter the timing of the next formal review of progress (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the deadline for submission of the thesis.
- 8.35 Transfer to an alternative programme is subject to the approval of any extensions, if required, and the student will be bound by the regulations and requirements of their new programme.
- 8.36 A student retains the right of appeal against a failure to progress, as outlined in the Regulation 2.8.

Extensions to progression deadlines

- 8.37 An extension request will not be considered until the student is within two months of their progression deadline. Any extension will normally be limited to two months. The total period of extension that may normally be approved is a maximum of four months.
- 8.38 Any extension to the deadline for a formal review of progress does not alter the timing of the next formal review of progress (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the deadline for submission of the thesis.

9. Development of research and other skills

- 9.1 In line with The [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and [UK Research and Innovation's Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training](#), 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) complete the 'Being an Effective Researcher' (BERT) online tutorial, and (ii) engage with the University's professional development planning process (see section 9). Students are also required to undertake the Research Integrity Tutorial prior to their first TAP (see section 11) and Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) training prior to teaching or demonstrating (see below). They may also be required by their departmental Graduate School Board to undertake subject-specific training (see below).
- 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 [RETT](#). RETT offers a comprehensive suite of personal and professional skills training. Training is also provided by external partners, for example within collaborative Doctoral Training Centres and nationally (for example vita.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 SkillsForge system provides for recording of training and other activities alongside records of professional development 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 are entitled and expected to spend a minimum of 10 days (pro rata for part-time students) per year (can be averaged across years) engaged in activities and training to support their professional and career development. Supervisors must respect this time and discuss and review the activities undertaken during formal supervisory meetings.
- 9.6 Research students are expected to complete, in consultation with their supervisor and with guidance from RETT, a [Professional Development Plan](#) (PDP). A 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 a student maintains a PDP 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 should 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 their 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 TAP meeting, there should be a discussion (noted in the University TAP form) about the progress that the student has made in addressing their 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 progression process (MPhil, PhD and EngD students only).
- 9.7 Research students are encouraged to take advantage of the careers [advice and guidance](#) available to them. All York students can register using their York email to access the [extensive Vitae Careers Resources](#).

Departmental training requirements, including taught modules

- 9.8 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 YGRSB for approval (normally by Chair's action).
- 9.9 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).

- 9.10 YGRSB would not normally expect a three-year or four-year PhD programme (not including iPhDs or other programmes with an enhanced training component where this has been explicitly approved by PPSC e.g. a DTP/CDT programme) to include significantly more than a total of 600 hours of additional activities (i.e. activities not primarily directed towards research or thesis preparation) in order to ensure that students have sufficient time to spend on their research and thesis preparation to submit within the four-year deadline (or part-time equivalent). For credit-bearing modules, departments are reminded that 10 credits is equivalent to a notional 100 hours of student work.
- 9.11 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 they might be eligible to gain an exemption from certain compulsory methodology courses/modules). Where students are required to pass, for progression or for award, non-credit-bearing courses and/or credit-bearing modules, it must be clear what reassessment opportunities, if any, are available.
- 9.12 Where research students are required to undertake a module for credit, they should be registered for the module in the University 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 YGRSB and specified in the department's handbook for research students.
- 9.13 All modules taken for credit by research students must be overseen by a taught external examiner in line with University's standard procedures. Where research students undertake modules for credit that form part of a taught Master's programme, the external examiner for that programme should be asked to take responsibility for overseeing the marks awarded to research students registered on that module. Where research students undertake modules for credit that do not form part of a taught Master's programme, the department must request the appointment of a new taught external examiner for the module(s) in question (or the addition of responsibilities to an existing external examiner for a related taught Master's programme if applicable) from the SCA.

Failure to meet departmental training requirements

- 9.14 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 meet the relevant University progression criteria). Failure to meet departmental training requirements should not, on its own, be grounds for a student to be discontinued from their programme or to fail a formal progression point unless this option is explicitly approved for a particular research degree programme by YGRSB.

Role of research students in teaching and demonstrating

- 9.15 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 GTAs is compliant with the [University Policy Graduate Teaching Assistants](#), which is reviewed and updated annually by UTC, and which includes the circumstances in which research

students can become GTAs, training and support for GTAs, selection of GTAs, and quality assurance and enhancement for GTAs.

- 9.16 Departments are responsible for ensuring that GTAs meet the minimum requirements outlined in the University Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants before undertaking any teaching or demonstrating, namely having participated in the Introduction to Learning and Teaching course *and* having undergone appropriate departmental training. GTAs and those who are intending to pursue an academic career are encouraged to take advantage of the central training on offer, including the accredited 'York Learning and Teaching Award' programme.

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 annual progression), and (iii) reviewing examiners' reports. Departments may wish to consider whether feedback might usefully be requested from other interested parties e.g. sponsors, research student 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. 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 and Periodic Reviews, a department should ensure that research students and their programmes are fully covered and, where relevant, issues are flagged for consideration by YGRSB.
- 10.6 YGRSB 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 GSA represents all postgraduate students on YGRSB, UTC and the SCA.

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 and principles for good ethical governance](#), the [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#) and the [Research Data Management Policy](#)).
- 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 and principles for good ethical governance, 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 and principles for good ethical governance](#) **before** the research commences. Confirmation of ethical approval (where needed) is required for formal reviews of progress and at the point of thesis submission.

Training for research integrity and ethics

- 11.3 The University (via RETT) 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 TAP meeting. Confirmation of successful completion is required for MA/MSc by research students when the thesis is submitted for examination, and by MPhil, PhD and EngD students at the first formal review of progress (or, for pre-August 2016 entry MPhil and PhD students at thesis submission/confirmation of enrolment respectively). Students who have not completed the task will not be examined/considered for progression.
- 11.5 Students are expected to have an appropriate data management plan in place by the first formal review of progress. The data management plan should be updated as required and checked at subsequent progression points (where applicable).

Academic misconduct

- 11.6 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. Research students are expected to familiarise themselves and conform to the [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#) in all their work.
- 11.7 Allegations of misconduct by research students in any part of their formal assessments (including but not limited to reviews of progress, the thesis and the oral examination) will be dealt with under the Assessment Misconduct Policy for PGRs (Appendix 3). No decision about the student's progression or the outcome of the examination may be made until the misconduct has been investigated.
- 11.8 Where the misconduct occurs in a taught module that is part of a student's progression requirements, then the allegation will be dealt with according to the Academic Misconduct Policy for taught students, with a report being made to the Progression Panel
- 11.9 Where the alleged misconduct occurs outwith the assessment process, whether or not it is published or otherwise disseminated, this is covered by the [University Policy and Procedure for the Investigation of an Allegation of Research Misconduct](#). Where there is doubt, that policy takes precedence. Serious research misconduct can result in the termination of the student's enrolment at the University. Where a member of staff is also a research student and their employment is research related, the staffing elements of the policy will take precedence.
- 11.10 If research misconduct is alleged during the assessment process but is investigated under the Policy

on Research Misconduct, then no decision about the student's progression or the outcome of the examination may be made until the misconduct has been investigated

12. Assessment

- 12.1 Assessment rules for research degrees are overseen by the SCA and exceptions to these rules for individual students must be approved by the SCA.

Nature of the thesis

- 12.2 Assessment for the award of a research degree will normally be on the basis of a thesis, but with the approval of YGRSB 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.
- 12.3 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.
- 12.4 Where a research degree by creative practice has been approved, a department must require that any creative products (musical compositions, performances, films, novels etc.) should be accompanied by a written element which puts the creative practice into its research context.
- 12.5 If a student wishes to deviate from the approved departmental requirements for the thesis (or other materials prescribed for the programme concerned) this must be approved by SCA on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board.
- 12.6 A Graduate School Board may decide to permit research students within the department to submit a thesis comprising papers in refereed 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).
- 12.7 Research degree candidates are required to prepare and to submit for examination their thesis as specified in the [University's requirements](#). Material submitted for examination (or, following referral, for re-examination) remains the property of the University.

Examiner appointment

- 12.8 Examiners are appointed by the SCA, acting on behalf of Senate, on the nomination of the Graduate School Board concerned. RSA has delegated authority from the SCA to undertake external examiner approval within certain set parameters.
- 12.9 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.

- 12.10 Any candidate for a research degree award who, at any time, during the five years prior to the date on which they submit their thesis for examination, has been an Academic, Research or Teaching 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 SCA on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board concerned. Where a second external examiner is required, the candidate shall, in this instance, be liable for the examiner's fee.
- 12.11 Where two external examiners are used, and there is no internal examiner, an internal chair should be appointed, who should be a member of current academic staff in the relevant faculty (and not necessarily an expert on the subject of the thesis) other than the supervisor. The role of the chair is to communicate with the student and supervisor(s), arrange the oral examination, oversee the process, and to ensure that the examination is conducted according to the University's policies and regulations. One of the external examiners must be designated to fulfil the academic expectations normally assigned to the internal examiner following the examination.

Internal examiners

- 12.12 The roles of supervisor and examiner are quite separate and it is for this reason that the University has a policy that a candidate's supervisor(s) cannot be appointed as their 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 their supervisor(s) the submission of the thesis, any endorsement by the supervisor(s) of the intention to submit in no way prejudices 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 they are unable to predict how the examination will be conducted, or its outcome.
- 12.13 The internal examiner must be able to make an independent academic judgement on the candidate's thesis. The role of the internal examiner is to communicate with the student and supervisor(s), arrange the oral examination, oversee the process, and to ensure that the examination is conducted according to the University's policies and regulations. An internal examiner will normally be a member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff, other than the candidate's supervisor(s). Retired members of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff may also be engaged to be internal examiners at the external examiner rate where this is academically justified.
- 12.14 An internal examiner should not have had co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the candidate's current research project, and their work should not be the focus of the student's thesis. An internal examiner should not have served as an official or unofficial supervisor to the student concerned and should not have advised on the final drafting of the student's thesis.
- 12.15 A member of the TAP (other than the supervisor(s)) or a member of a student's progression panel may be appointed as an internal examiner, providing that the afore-mentioned conditions are met. Any doubts about the perceived suitability of the internal examiner should be referred to the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support).
- 12.16 If an internal examiner is appointed who has not had previous experience of being a PhD examiner, then their department should allocate an experienced mentor to guide the new internal through the process. The internal examiner should also be offered the opportunity for

the oral examination to be overseen by an independent chair (see above).

External examiners

- 12.17 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.
- 12.18 Examiners should be independent, impartial, of suitable professional standing and not have any known conflict of interest which might impinge on their role as external examiner, with reference to the current [Guidance for the appointment of examiners for research degrees](#) provided by the SCA. Where there is a question regarding potential conflicts, queries should be forwarded to the Dean of the YGRS. 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.
- 12.19 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.

Unexaminable theses

- 12.20 In cases of a thesis being rendered unexaminable as a result of remote (i.e. third-party) printing errors or file corruption, the examiners should notify RSA as soon as possible, and no later than four weeks after receipt. RSA will contact the student to request an examinable version of the thesis originally submitted for examination, to be submitted within five working days.

Requests for confidentiality

- 12.21 Where it has been agreed that the content of a candidate's 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

- 12.22 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 SCA 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. The decision as to whether or not to require a candidate to attend an oral examination should be made as soon as possible (and no later than six weeks) after the receipt of the thesis by the examiners.
- (ii) Where the oral examination is a requirement of the MA/MSc by research degree programme, the SCA 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.
- (iv) Where an oral examination is held for an MA/MSc by research candidate then the process should follow that for MPhil/PhD candidates. Where an oral examination is not required (see (i) above) then the examiners should exchange preliminary reports, before agreeing a joint examination report (which may refer to the preliminary reports).

The purpose of the oral examination

12.23 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 their 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.

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

12.25 In accordance with UK norms, oral examinations at York are 'closed', that is only the candidate and examiners are present (with the addition, in some instances, of an internal chair, independent observer or the supervisor). Where required as part of a joint or double PhD programme with an international university (see double and joint PhD programmes, section 15), a public defence (i.e. open to all) may supplement the closed oral examination.

12.26 Candidates are encouraged to access support in preparation for the oral examination. RETT 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

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

12.28 The oral examination should 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 SCA. The internal examiner should agree the date of the oral examination in consultation with the external examiner(s) and the candidate.

12.29 The candidate, the external examiner(s) and the internal examiner (or chair) should all be present at the oral examination. Where possible, this should be an in-person meeting at the University of York. The SCA may grant permission for the oral examination to be held elsewhere, as long as the premises are suitable for conducting an oral examination. Any proposal to SCA must include written

consent (e.g. by email) from the candidate and the external examiner(s).

- 12.30 The SCA may grant permission for one or more of the parties to participate in the oral examination by video-conferencing. Any proposal to SCA must include written consent (e.g. by email) from the candidate and the external examiner(s). Where participation by video-conferencing has been approved, participation in an oral examination should always start as an audio-video conference call. Should connection problems arise, the oral examination can move to audio-only (i.e. audio-only conference call *or* telephone call), but only if: i) all parties consent (and continue to do so: this consent should be recorded), and ii) the recording of the oral examination can be continued in an appropriate format. If consent to continue as audio-only is not given, the remainder of the oral examination must be rescheduled.
- 12.31 Each examiner should prepare a preliminary report on the thesis (on the correct form in the student's Google examination folder) which reflects their independent academic judgement and identifies the principal issues which they wish to raise in the oral examination. Each examiner will have access to the preliminary reports of the other examiner.
- 12.32 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, exceptional stress and/or cultural differences. At the request of the candidate, and with the consent of the examiners, the supervisor or another member of academic or professional support staff approved by the Graduate School Board concerned may be present at the oral examination as a silent spectator.
- 12.33 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, the department concerned should provide an internal chair (see above), the internal chair shall submit a brief report on the conduct of the oral examination to the SCA.
- 12.34 Care should be taken to make the candidate feel at ease at the examination. To this end, the layout of the examination room should be given careful thought and provision should be made for short breaks/refreshments etc. as required, particularly for longer oral examinations. 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 they consider to be the strengths of the thesis.
- 12.35 If the candidate has a disability, reasonable adjustments to the examination process (e.g. the provision of longer rest breaks) may be needed to accommodate this. As noted previously, the examiners should be made aware of any disabilities or other circumstances (e.g. exceptional stress) that may affect the candidate's performance.
- 12.36 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.

Recording the oral examination

- 12.37 A recording (audio or audio-visual) must 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 recording equipment available to departments for this purpose or departments may use a built-in record function when an oral examination is taking place via video-conferencing. 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 SCA 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.

- 12.38 Each department is responsible for ensuring that a recording is made of all oral examinations undertaken by research degree candidates, in accordance with Appendix 1. These requirements are not waived for oral examinations conducted via video-conferencing.

Examination outcomes

- 12.39 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 requirements for the degree concerned have been **satisfied** 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; in making this recommendation, examiners should be assured that students can make any necessary corrections in the allotted time, notwithstanding any other commitments such as full-time employment.

If the examiners agree that the requirements for the degree concerned **have not yet been satisfied** but that the thesis could be revised within one year to the appropriate standard (see section 2), they may recommend:

- (iii) that the candidate should be allowed a period not exceeding 12 months, from the date on which they 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.

If the examiners agree that the requirements for the degree concerned **have not been satisfied** they may recommend:

- (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 degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research) should be awarded with no corrections to thesis; *OR*
- (vii) that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research) 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*
- (viii) that no degree should be awarded.

Additionally, for EngD candidates:

- (ix) 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 requirements for the degree concerned have been **satisfied** 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 the examiners agree that the requirements for the degree concerned **have not yet been satisfied** but that the thesis could be revised within one year to the appropriate standard (see section 2), they may recommend

- (iii) that the candidate should be allowed a period not exceeding 12 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.

If the examiners agree that the requirements for the degree concerned **have not been satisfied** they may recommend:

- (iv) that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research) should be awarded with no corrections to thesis; *OR*
- (v) that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research) 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*
- (vi) that no degree should be awarded.

For MA/MSc by research candidates

If the examiners agree that the requirements for the degree concerned have been **satisfied** 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 the examiners agree that the requirements for the degree concerned **have not yet been satisfied** but that the thesis could be revised within three months to the appropriate standard (see section 2), they may recommend:

- (iii) that the candidate should be allowed a period not exceeding three months, from the date on which they 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.

If the examiners agree that the requirements for the degree concerned **have not been satisfied** they may recommend:

- (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

- 12.40 The examiners should submit a joint report (Joint Examiners Report) on the appropriate form (to be found in the student's Google examination folder) within two weeks of the oral examination (if held). The report should conclude with a clear recommendation indicating whether or not the student has satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned.
- 12.41 The examiners' report should contain sufficient detail to enable the SCA 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 above under 'the purpose of the oral examination' (see 12.23). 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.
- 12.42 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 by RSA of any corrections to be made to their thesis. Examiners should submit their list of corrections to RSA, alongside the Joint Examiners Report, within two weeks of the examination. RSA will process and send the corrections to the student within two weeks of receipt from the examiners.
- 12.43 The final version of the corrected thesis (including a 'tracked changes' and 'summary' document) must be submitted electronically to RSA (via the University Drop-Off system) within three months of the PhD/EngD/MPhil student being sent the list of corrections, or within one month for an MA/MSc by research candidate. Failure to submit the final version of the corrected thesis by the deadline will result in failure of the degree. Any consultation between the candidate and the internal examiner about the direction or appropriateness of corrections must happen during this period: no further revisions can be made after submission of the final version of the corrected thesis. RSA will send the corrected thesis to the internal examiner, who should consider the corrections and send a completed corrections approval form to RSA within two weeks of receipt of the corrected thesis.
- 12.44 In any case where the examiners recommend that the candidate should be awarded a degree for which they were 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, but not their academic judgement.

Consideration of the examiners' reports

- 12.45 The examiners' joint report should be submitted to the Graduate Chair 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.
- 12.46 After ratification, the Joint Examiners Report will be sent to RSA, who will forward it to the candidate and the supervisor. RSA will arrange for it to be approved by a member of the SCA, acting on behalf of the Committee.
- 12.47 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 the thesis in accordance with the [University's requirements](#). Deposited material remains the property of the University. Failure to submit the thesis in accordance with the University's requirements, and within the deadlines stipulated in the relevant correspondence from RSA, will mean that the candidate will not have met the requirements of the degree (see Regulation 2.7.9), and will be deemed to have failed.
- 12.48 The result of the examination will be formally communicated to the candidate by RSA 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 the thesis, whichever is the later.

Disagreement between examiners

- 12.49 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 SCA 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 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

- 12.50 If the examiners agree that the requirements for the degree concerned have not yet been satisfied but there is the potential for the requirements to be satisfied, they may recommend that the thesis should be revised and resubmitted for examination. RSA will send an official letter of notification to the candidate once the examiners' report has been received in RSA and has been approved by the SCA. 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 RSA if they do not receive this written guidance.
- 12.51 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 advice on the Corrections/Revisions form in the student's Google examination folder concerning the points which should be borne in mind by the candidate when revising the thesis.

- 12.52 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. If the student requires any clarification regarding the required revisions after receipt of the examination report, the student should contact their supervisor who can then judge if it is necessary to request further clarification from the internal examiner. Neither student nor supervisor should contact the external examiner directly without their express permission.
- 12.53 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 Graduate Chair of the departmental concerned, for another member of the department to take on responsibility for mediating feedback. Candidates in their revise and resubmit period will retain access to computing and library facilities.

Examination following revision and resubmission

- 12.54 The outcomes of the examination are the same recommendations as listed above under 'examination outcomes' except that a candidate's thesis may only be revised and resubmitted on one occasion i.e. that for PhD and EngD candidates recommendation 12.39 (a) (iii) does not apply, for MPhil candidates recommendation 12.39 (b) (iii) does not apply and for MA/MSc by research candidates recommendation 12.39 (c) (iii) does not apply.
- 12.55 The candidate should prepare and submit for examination their revised thesis as per the process for the original submission, and as specified in the [University's requirements](#). The candidate must pay the prescribed re-examination fee before submission.
- 12.56 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 SCA.
- 12.57 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 their 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 revisions 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 revisions, they may recommend (to the SCA) a further referral of the thesis.
- 12.58 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, although if the examiners are considering a downgrade (with or without corrections) or fail outcome, a second oral

examination must be offered. The decision on whether to require an oral examination should be made as soon as possible (and no later than six weeks) after the receipt of the revised thesis by the examiners. Each examiner must submit an independent preliminary report on the resubmitted thesis, whether or not an oral examination is required. If the examiners agree that an oral examination should not be held, they must specify their reasons for this decision in their preliminary reports. If an oral examination is held, it should be within three months of the submission of the revised thesis.

- 12.59 Unless an oral examination is held, the examiners' reports (i.e. the independent preliminary reports plus the joint report) on the revised thesis should be submitted to the Graduate Chair 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 The University requires all research students to obtain an [ORCID](#)(tm) personal identifier (ID). ORCID gives researchers and authors a single unique ID which works across the research landscape, ensuring that all research outputs and activities are correctly attributed. Students will be expected to submit their ORCID ID upon enrolment and, if not submitted at enrolment, required to have signed up for an ORCID ID by the first Thesis Advisory Panel meeting. Students are expected to comply with reasonable requests from the University and funding bodies (where applicable) for recording the outputs of research conducted as part of a research degree programme, and career progression information.
- 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 In line with the University's commitment to Open Research as evidenced by the [Policy on the Publication of Research](#), all theses deposited by research students after examination, in printed and electronic form, will be available to the general public for consultation and for reproduction (as permitted in copyright law), unless 13.4 or 13.5 applies.
- 13.4 A thesis may be embargoed for a fixed period or made available with redaction for the following reasons: (i) intent to publish; (ii) commercial sensitivity; (iii) data protection compliance; (iv) issues of health and safety; (v) unlicensed reproduction of third-party copyright material, or; (vi) exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Copyright guidance is provided by the [Library](#).
- 13.5 A thesis may be a candidate for permanent embargo in the following circumstances: (i) contractual agreement with an external sponsor; (ii) issues of national or personal security. All requests for permanent embargo should be referred to the SCA. The Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research may also determine that a thesis be permanently embargoed on behalf of the University where there has been a breach of the [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#).
- 13.6 With the approval of their supervisor(s), and following all appropriate considerations, including any

potential intellectual property issues and with reference to [Research Data Management expectations](#) a student may deposit a thesis with accompanying redactions or embargo as follows:

- (i) A redacted version of the thesis may be deposited for the electronic archive, with the examined copy held by the University. Redaction for third-party copyright infringement will be indefinite unless notification of clearance is received.
- (ii) The student is ultimately responsible for any redaction of the thesis.
- (iii) Access to the thesis may be withheld, and, with the exception of an abstract, none of the material contained in it should be reproduced, for a fixed period agreed with the supervisor(s), and commencing from the date on which the process of depositing the thesis with RSA after the examination is complete.
- (iv) If a dispute arises between student and supervisor(s) relating to withholding the thesis, the decision of the supervisor(s) is final.
- (v) An extension to a withholding period, on request by student or supervisor(s) to their Faculty, may be granted in accordance with University guidelines.
- (vi) Lifting an embargo in advance of the set date may only be done with the consent of both student and supervisor(s).

13.7 Except by formal agreement between the research student and an external organisation, copyright in the original material in a thesis is owned by the student. In many cases, however, other forms of intellectual property arising from the thesis, 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(s) 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](#)).

13.8 Where the studentship is sponsored by a commercial or other external organisation, such as RCUK, 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](#) 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 or bullying of any kind.

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](#). Responsibility for considering appeals has been delegated by the Senate to [SCC](#).

15. Research away from York (excluding students on distance learning PhD programmes)

15.1 Non distance learning research degree students may need to undertake research away from York for a variety of reasons. This may be for data collection (e.g. fieldwork, archival work) or consultation

with reference institutions (libraries/archives/museums). It may also be because they are undertaking their research in industry as part of an approved studentship or undertaking research in a partner academic institution. The ability of Tier 4 students to undertake research away from York may be limited by UKVI rules and the University cannot override these restrictions.

- 15.2 Where a student is undertaking research away from York, the main supervisor retains primary responsibility for maintaining an oversight of the student and their research project. Supervisory meetings and TAP meetings should continue as normal but may be held by video-conferencing rather than face-to-face. Consideration must be given as to how research training and participation in other academic activities can be facilitated while the student is away from York.
- 15.3 Where a student is undertaking research away from York, formal reviews of progress must be conducted in accordance with Appendix 2, and any standard attendance requirements of the department relating to this process must be met as normal unless permission is sought from the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support) for the use of video-conferencing.
- 15.4 Approval for undertaking research away from York at a partner academic institution (university or research institute) or in industry is covered below. Approval for undertaking research away from York for the purpose of data collection, or consultation with reference institutions, rests with the supervisor (for periods of under three months duration) or with the departmental Graduate School Board for periods of over three months duration or where this is indicated by a higher level of risk (e.g. some fieldwork and overseas travel). The period of time that a student may spend undertaking research away from York will normally be 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).
- 15.5 Research degree students are responsible for informing their departmental graduate administrator(s) when they will be conducting research away from York, and for completing the University's travel log prior to travel overseas. Departmental graduate administrators should inform the RSA when students are undertaking research away from York.
- 15.6 Students who enter into a continuation period may be based away from York for some or all of their continuation period. Tier 4 students who remain in the UK must continue to meet the obligations under the University's Attendance Policy.

PGR exchange agreements

- 15.7 Exchange agreements can be set up at PGR level (either exclusively PGR level or allowing some transference between taught and PGR numbers). PGR exchange agreements should follow the approval process set out in the Policy Statement on Study Abroad. The exchange must be approved by the departmental GSB and then by the Dean of YGRS on behalf of PPSC. Each incoming/outgoing student on a PGR exchange programme should receive an individual agreement that sets out the supervision and other practical arrangements that they will receive at York/their host institution.

Research degree programmes delivered in collaboration with others

- 15.8 The University recognises that there are circumstances in which the value of a research degree programme at York may be enhanced through collaboration with another academic institution (university or research institute) or with industry.
- 15.9 An external subsidiary (co-supervisor) for a student enrolled on a research degree programme at York should be approved by the department concerned (see section 5) and recorded on SkillsForge.

The department is responsible for ensuring that the subsidiary supervisor is qualified to take on the role (including undertaking right to work checks if required), that there is a written agreement between the parties concerned (see section 5), and that the subsidiary supervisor has an understanding of relevant York policies and procedures to enable them to undertake their role successfully.

Arrangements involving industry for individual York students

- 15.10 An individual may, with the approval of departmental Graduate School Board concerned have a subsidiary supervisor based in industry (see above) and/or undertake their research, or part of their research, at a suitably equipped company as part of an industry-based studentship award. Where a student is based wholly or partly in industry, the student, the department and the company will be bound by an individual student agreement which is approved by the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support).

Arrangements involving academic institutions for individual York students

External supervision and limited external academic input

- 15.11 An **individual** student enrolled on a research degree programme at York may, with the approval of the departmental Graduate School Board concerned, receive academic input from a partner academic institution (university or research institute) in the form of the appointment of a subsidiary supervisor (see above), training, taught courses, or membership of the Thesis Advisory Panel but not involving a period of research at the partner, enrolment as a student at the partner or an award from the partner (see below for alternative models). Any financial implications are the responsibility of the department concerned. Responsibility for monitoring such arrangements lies with the departmental Graduate School Board.

Outgoing visiting students

- 15.12 An individual student enrolled for a research degree programme at York may undertake a period of research at another academic institution (including enrolment as a visiting student) as part of their 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 which will normally be 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). The University's Policy Statement on Study Abroad should be consulted where an academic institution is based outside the UK.

Arrangements involving other academic institutions at programme level

Academic input from one or more partner institutions but leading to a University of York award only

- 15.13 A departmental Graduate School Board may seek approval from YGRSB for a research degree **programme** leading to a qualification of the University of York which requires or permits academic input from one or more academic partner institutions, for example where York is a member of an approved multi-institution Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) or international research collaboration. The academic input may be a requirement for a period of study at a partner (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) which may involve enrolment at the partner institution as a visiting student and/or academic input in the form of training, credit-bearing modules, appointment of subsidiary supervisors or external membership of Thesis Advisory Panels.

- 15.14 Where credit-bearing modules are taken at an academic partner, the partner 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.

Double and joint PhD programmes

- 15.15 Where strategically justified, the University may collaborate with other, mainly international, universities to offer double and joint PhD programmes. The rules that govern a double 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 considering a double or joint PhD programme, YGRSB will need to give approval to any exceptions to the PoRD and will only do this where there is good reason and when the Board can be assured that the standard of the PhD and the quality of the student experience will not be compromised. Senate approval must be sought for joint or double PhD programmes.

16. Arrangements for non-York students

Supervision of individual non-York students by York academics

- 16.1 An academic at York may serve as a subsidiary supervisor (co-supervisor) for an individual student enrolled on a research degree programme at another awarding academic institution subject to the constraints set out in the [University Policy on Work for Outside Bodies](#). Supervision by an academic from York under such an arrangement does not bestow on the student concerned any rights or benefits associated with enrolment at York, nor any entitlement to an award from York.

Incoming visiting students

- 16.2 An individual student enrolled at another awarding academic institution may enrol as a visiting research student at York, normally for a maximum period of eighteen 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 a PGR exchange scheme, see section 15), 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. Visiting students should receive the same supervisory input as registered students. Visiting students are not required to undergo TAP meetings or formal reviews of progress.

Programme level academic input from York that does not lead to a University of York award

- 16.3 A departmental Graduate School Board may seek approval from YGRSB for students enrolled at from another university in an approved multi-institution DTP or international research collaboration with York to be required or permitted to undertake a period of study at York and/or receive

academic input from York in the form of training, credit-bearing modules, appointment of subsidiary supervisors or external membership of Thesis Advisory Panels. Where appropriate, York may maintain outline 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.

Appendix 1: Policy on the recording of second progress review meetings and oral examinations for research degrees

In accordance with the PoRD, a recording is made of second and final progress review meetings (i.e. where a student is making a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria and the written evidence submitted is not sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the student has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria) and final oral examinations.

Purpose of the recording

- 1.1 The recording (audio or audio-visual) provides an objective record of a second progress review meeting/oral examination that can be used (i) in the event of an appeal (see below), or (ii), in the case of an oral examination only, 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) or (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

- 1.2 Graduate School Boards shall ensure that all second progress review meetings/oral examinations for which they are responsible are recorded, or, in the exceptional cases detailed below, that permission from the SCA 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 second progress review meetings/oral examinations for which they are responsible. Only the official recording is permitted; participants are not permitted to make their own recordings.

Notification of external examiners in the case of oral examinations

- 1.3 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.

Notification of students

- 1.4 Graduate School Boards are asked to ensure that their research students are aware that second progress review meetings/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.

Equipment

- 1.5 The recording will be made using equipment/technology authorised for this purpose by the SCA (and in the case of the former, supplied by departments from the University's Audio Visual Centre).

If the recording fails at any time during a second progress review meeting/oral examination, the progress review meeting/oral examination should continue unrecorded and RSA should be informed as soon as possible. Any notes taken by the examiners during the progress review meeting/oral examination should be copied by the department and sent to RSA where they will be kept for 12 months, or until the investigation of any appeal or complaint arising from the progress review meeting/examination is complete, whichever is later.

Recording the examination

- 1.6 The department is responsible for ensuring that a designated person is available before the start of the second progress review meeting/oral examination to assist the progression panel/examiners with recording equipment/technology. Before the second progress review meeting/oral examination, the designated person should ensure that the student's name and student number and the date of the second progress review meeting/oral examination is appropriately linked to the recording.
- 1.7 The chair of the progression panel/internal examiner (or, in cases where there are two external examiners and no internal examiner, the internal chair) will inform those present at the start of the second progress review meeting/oral examination that the recording is starting and at the end of the second progress review meeting/oral examination that it is being stopped. The recording should end when the second progress review meeting/oral examination is complete, and the student leaves the room prior to the private discussion of the progression panel/examiners. Neither the private discussion of the progression panel/examiners, nor any subsequent discussion between the student and the progression panel/examiners, should be recorded.
- 1.8 After the second progress review meeting/oral examination, the recording should be sent to RSA for secure storage. No copy of the recording should be made, nor should it be listened to in the department.

Storage of recordings

- 1.9 The recording will be stored securely by the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support). It will be erased one year after the final result of the progression attempt/final examination has been confirmed by the SCA, 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.

Status of the recordings

- 1.10 The recording has the status of examination script and is therefore exempt from subject access requests under the General Data Protection Regulation (the Regulation does not restrict the media that can constitute an examination script). However, this exemption does not extend to the progression panel/examiners' comments on the student's performance, or any other form of feedback or conversation beyond the requirements of the second progress review meeting/oral 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 student'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

1.11 Grounds for appeal:

- a) Students may not appeal against the academic judgement of progression panel/examiners;
- b) 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 exceptional circumstances can be shown which could not reasonably have been brought to the attention of the progression panel/examiners before a decision on the student's academic performance was reached.

Procedure for consideration of appeals:

- a) In considering an appeal the Chair of SCC may request information from the academic department concerned or other relevant parties concerning any matter raised by the appellant. The 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;
- b) 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;
- c) The Chair will give reasons for any decision that an appeal should not be heard;
- d) If the Chair decides, wholly or partly on the evidence of the recording, that the appeal should be heard, a copy of the 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 a recording

1.12 The circumstances in which permission may be sought to employ an independent observer in place of a recording are if recording would present a student with difficulties on medical or psychological grounds. In these circumstances, the Graduate Chair must seek permission from the SCA for an independent observer to attend the second progress review meeting/oral examination, supplying appropriate documentation from a medical practitioner or counsellor. The Graduate Chair shall nominate the proposed observer (on the form for the appointment of examiners in the case of an oral examination).

1.13 The independent observer should be an academic member of University staff in the student's discipline or a related area, but need not be an expert on the subject of the thesis. The student's supervisor cannot fulfil this role. The observer will submit a brief report to the SCA on the conduct of the second progress review meeting/oral examination, noting the main subjects discussed and any areas of concern voiced by the progression panel/examiners. They must be prepared to provide an independent viewpoint on the second progress review meeting/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 SCC. 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 second progress review meeting/oral examination unless an exceptional situation should arise.

1.14 It is essential that these arrangements are made well in advance of the second progress review meeting/oral examination and conveyed to the student and progression panel/examiners.

Appendix 2: Policy on PhD/EngD and MPhil Student Progression

Where there is any inconsistency between the PoRD and this Policy in relation to formal reviews of progress, this Policy applies.

Formal reviews of progress: purpose

- 1.1 A student is admitted to a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme on the basis of an assessment of their potential at the admissions stage. Remaining on the PhD, EngD or MPhil programme is conditional on the student making satisfactory progress with respect to their research project and the other elements of their programme.
- 1.2 The purpose of formal reviews of progress is to ensure that students on PhD, EngD and MPhil programmes are making satisfactory progress. A formal review of progress should give a PhD, EngD or MPhil student a clear sense of the progress they are making, providing reassurance for those who are performing to or beyond expectations and providing a means by which those who are underperforming can be identified in a timely manner and given the advice and support they need to address the situation.
- 1.3 The University's approach to progression (which is aligned with national expectations and sector norms), aims to ensure that students are treated fairly and equitably, whilst respecting disciplinary differences.

Formal reviews of progress: key elements

- 1.4 Formal reviews of progress take place on an annual basis for full-time PhD, EngD and MPhil students (towards the end of a student's academic year) and on a biennial basis for part-time PhD and MPhil students.
- 1.5 Formal reviews of progress are not required for entry into a continuation period, where this is permitted. This means that a student on a three-year PhD programme (and part-time equivalent) will have two formal reviews of progress, a student on a four-year PhD or EngD programme (and part-time equivalent) will have three formal reviews of progress, and a student on an MPhil programme will have a single formal review of progress.
- 1.6 In a formal review of progress, a PhD, EngD or MPhil student is assessed against the relevant University progression criteria by a progression panel. The progression panel is independent of the student's supervisor(s) to gain an external perspective on the progress that a student is making, and to ensure that the supervisor's relationship with the student is developmental, rather than judgemental.
- 1.7 Students are permitted a maximum of two opportunities to meet the relevant University progression criteria at each formal review of progress. If a student has not met the relevant University progression criteria after two attempts they will be deemed to have failed the progression point and they will be transferred to an alternative programme or their enrolment will be terminated.
- 1.8 Whilst the framework for formal reviews of progress is set out by the University, many of the

details (including the exact timing, the evidence requested, and the composition and operation of panels) are determined departmentally within the parameters set by the University. A department must obtain PPSC approval for its approach to formal reviews of progress (i.e. including in relation to the timing, evidence and panels) and any major changes to that approach.

Overview of the process

- 1.9 The timing of formal reviews of progress is determined by departments, within parameters set by the University.
- 1.10 Departments determine (subject to PPSC approval) what evidence (written and oral) PhD, EngD and MPhil students should provide to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria. Evidence from the student is considered alongside the supervisor's report on the student's progress and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports.
- 1.11 The progression panel will consider the evidence from the student and the supervisor's report (and the agreed TAP reports if applicable) at a progress review meeting. Based on these elements, the progression panel will make a decision as to whether the student has met, exceeded² or not met the relevant University progression criteria and also make a recommendation regarding student progression.
- 1.12 If the progression panel decides that the student has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, it should recommend:
- (i) that the student be progressed;
- if, however, the progression panel decides that the student has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria, it may recommend:
- (ii) that the student be given a second opportunity to meet the relevant University progression criteria); *or*
 - (iii) that the student be invited to transfer to an MPhil programme (for students enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or*
 - (iv) that the student be invited to transfer to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or*
 - (v) that the student be invited to withdraw from the University.
- 1.13 Recommendations from progression panels are considered by the relevant departmental Graduate School Board (GSB). The role of the GSB is to oversee the process within the department, ensuring that formal reviews of progress have been carried out in accordance with University and departmental policy and identifying and resolving any issues arising from the process. In addition, the GSB is responsible for ensuring that consistent standards are being applied across progression panels (see below). The GSB is not expected to question the academic judgement of a progression panel.
- 1.14 Progression decisions (i.e. for progression or, after a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, for programme transfer or withdrawal) are approved by the SCA, on behalf of Senate. The SCA will not question the academic judgement of a progression panel. SCA has delegated its authority with respect to the approval of progression decisions to the RSA (which manages this process in SkillsForge) but RSA will refer any difficult cases to SCA.

² Note that departments are not required to use the 'exceeded' category if they do not wish to.

- 1.15 Research students are reminded that the decision of a progression panel does not serve as a prediction for the outcome of the final examination.

University progression criteria

- 1.16 The University's progression criteria for PhD, EngD and MPhil programmes set out the *threshold* requirements for progression to the next stage. They should be understood by reference to what a conscientious research student might reasonably expect to have achieved in the time available.

Progression criteria for a first formal review of progress

- 1.17 For progression into year 2 of a full-time PhD/EngD or MPhil programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time PhD or MPhil programme), a student must demonstrate that they:

- can articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses;
- have planned in a realistic fashion the second year (or equivalent) of their research, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have sufficient acquaintance with the relevant field of knowledge to place their research into context;
- have sufficient proficiency in the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches to move their research to the next stage;
- have undertaken all required training (including successful completion of the Research Integrity Tutorial);
- have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

Progression criteria for a second formal review of progress

- 1.18 For progression into year 3 of a full-time PhD/EngD programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time PhD programme), a student must demonstrate that they:

- can articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses and how this will lead to a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have planned in a realistic fashion the third year (or equivalent) of their research, based on the expectation that the project will be completed and the thesis submitted on time, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have the ability to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer reviewers and examiners;
- have begun to acquire the wider background knowledge of their research field required for the degree of PhD;
- can apply the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches required to make an original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have undertaken all required training;
- have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

Progression criteria for a third formal review of progress

- 1.19 For progression into year 4 of a full-time four-year PhD/EngD programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time four-year PhD programme), a student must demonstrate that they:

- have planned in a realistic fashion the final year (or equivalent) of their research, based on the

expectation that the project will be completed and the thesis submitted on time, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;

- have started to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer reviewers and examiners;
- have acquired much of the wider background knowledge of their research field required for the degree of PhD;
- can apply the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches required to make an original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have undertaken all required training;
- have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

Progression panels

- 1.20 The progression panel for a PhD, EngD or MPhil student should comprise at least two individuals and be independent of the student's supervisor(s). The progression panel should be chaired by a senior academic member of the same or cognate department who has experience of successful research student supervision in the broad disciplinary area within which the student is based. The chair and membership of the progression panel should be approved by the relevant departmental GSB. A member of a progression panel may serve as an internal examiner subject to certain conditions.
- 1.21 Progression panels are not expected to make detailed judgements about a student's research project, nor to direct the student's future work, rather they are required to determine, on the basis of the evidence from the student and the supervisor's report, if the student meets the relevant University criteria for progression (which are threshold requirements).
- 1.22 The student should be informed of the membership of their progression panel at the start of the academic year, but with the understanding that, in some circumstances, it may become necessary to change the panel membership.

Alternative models for progression panels

- 1.23 Some departments may choose to convene progression panels for each student on an individual basis. In this case, the non-supervisory member(s) of the student's TAP will often be part of the progression panel. This approach has the advantage of allowing the progression panel to be tailored to the student's research project but the department must have a means of ensuring consistent decision making (e.g. by the Graduate Chair and/or Deputy Graduate Chair being a member of all the progression panels, or the Chair and/or Deputy reviewing the recommendations of individual progression panels).
- 1.24 Other departments may choose instead to convene a small number of progression panels, each with a pool of suitably qualified individuals (to enable supervisors to stand aside when their own student is under consideration), to deal with all the progress review meetings for a cohort of students. This approach has the advantage of helping to improve efficiency and consistency of decision-making.

Timing of the review process

- 1.25 Formal reviews of progress take place within the University timeframe (this refers to submission of progression panel recommendations in SkillsForge) as follows:

Maximum period of enrolment prior to progression reviews

	FT Student First Attempt	FT Student Second Attempt	PT Student First Attempt	PT Student Second Attempt
PhD/EngD and MPhil First Formal Review of Progress	9-12 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	18-24 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
PhD/EngD Second Formal Review of Progress	21-24 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	42-48 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
4 Year PhD/EngD Third Formal Review of Progress	33-36 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	66-72 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting

1.26 Working within the University timeframe, a department must specify for their standard cohort entry point (i.e. September/October) and any additional cohort entry points (e.g. January) and for each progression point:

- key dates (including the submission date for written evidence (a single date for each cohort), and the timing of presentations, if applicable);
- a six-week window within which progress review meetings will be held;
- key dates applicable to students making a second attempt.

1.27 Where a student commences a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme outside a cohort entry point or when a student's journey goes out of sync with the rest of their cohort (e.g. due to a leave of absence) the dates specified above will need to be calculated for that individual.

Guidance for students

1.28 Every department should provide its PhD/EngD and MPhil students with a comprehensive briefing on the department's requirements for formal reviews of progress as part of induction and, ideally, also at a later date e.g. after their first TAP meeting, in addition to this information being included in the department's PGR handbook. Information should include the composition of the progression panel, the evidence requirements, and key dates.

Evidence from the student

1.29 Departments are responsible for specifying, for each formal review of progress, how PhD, EngD and MPhil students should demonstrate to the progression panel that they have met the relevant University progression criteria. This approach enables disciplinary differences within and between departments to be catered for. A department's requirements in terms of the evidence that its students should provide must, however, be carefully calibrated against the University progression

criteria and, for this reason, are subject to University approval.

- 1.30 The department's requirements in terms of the oral and/or written evidence that its students must provide should be clearly communicated to students in the department's research student handbook and as part of the departmental induction process. The requirements should be presented alongside any formal requirements for TAP meetings so that all the key milestones for a student's programme are available in a single location. When some variation in evidence requirements is permitted within a *single* named PhD/EngD/MPhil programme, the department must have a robust process for ensuring that there is clarity for individual students.
- 1.31 A department's requirements in terms of the evidence that its students must provide should include:
- **written evidence**, for example:
 - (some of the following) a progress report, research plans, a bibliography, a literature review, preliminary results, draft chapters or parts thereof, and draft or published academic papers
 - details of training completed and ethical approval obtained

and will often include (see below):

- **oral evidence**, for example from:
 - discussion between the student and their progression panel at the progress review meeting
 - a presentation from the student followed by a question and answer session.

Notes on evidence from students

- 1.32 Written evidence of substantive length must contribute directly to the thesis (e.g. an introductory or substantive chapter) or an academic paper or similar: this is to ensure that production of the written submission does not distract from the research project itself.
- 1.33 Oral evidence from discussion between the student and their progression panel at the progress review meeting is recommended as an effective and efficient means for a progression panel to determine if a student has met the relevant University progression criteria and because it provides the student with a valuable opportunity to practise explaining and justifying their work to informed academics (as required for the final oral examination).
- 1.34 Oral evidence from a presentation from the student followed by a question and answer session may form part of the progress review meeting. Alternatively, a presentation may take place in advance of the progress review meeting, as long as all members of the progression panel are present. If the presentation is separate from the progress review meeting, it may be open to the wider department, including the supervisor.
- 1.35 Where a department expects students to audit or pass taught modules (e.g. research methods) or other courses, this should be built into the evidence requirements. With respect to taught modules, departments should specify how many credits and at what level, the pass mark required (and whether for individual modules or an average) and reassessment opportunities.

Variation in departmental evidence requirements

- 1.36 Where departments have four-year PhD/EngD programmes and/or specific DTP/CDT PhD programmes it is expected that these programmes will have different evidence requirements from the standard three-year PhD programmes because of the increased focus on taught elements,

particularly in the first year.

- 1.37 Within a single named PhD/EngD/MPhil programme, a department may also permit some variation in evidence to accommodate different styles of research project. For example, a social science department might permit some variation in evidence requirements within their standard three-year PhD programme to cater for research projects with a scientific focus vis-à-vis those with a humanities focus, and a science department might permit some variation in evidence requirements within their standard three-year PhD programme to cater for research projects based on field work vis-à-vis those based on laboratory work or to cater for research projects using existing scientific apparatus vis-à-vis those which involve building scientific apparatus.

Supervisor's report

- 1.38 Prior to a progress review meeting, the student's supervisor will be asked to give their opinion (on a standard University pro forma) as to whether the PhD, EngD or MPhil student meets the relevant University progression criteria. This will be shared with the student, who will be asked if they agree or disagree with their supervisor's report. Where there is more than one supervisor, all supervisors should contribute to a single report. The supervisor(s) should have access to their student's written evidence prior to writing the report, and the supervisor may also have to be present at their student's presentation (if applicable) unless this forms part of the progress review meeting.

Progress review meetings

- 1.39 At a progress review meeting, a progression panel considers the evidence from the PhD, EngD or MPhil student (see above), alongside the supervisor's report and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports. Based on these elements, the progression panel will make a decision as to whether the student has met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria, and also make a recommendation regarding student progression.
- 1.40 Progress review meetings are held in person to facilitate full discussion of a student's case. If, for good reason, a member of the progression panel has to participate remotely this should be by means of video-conferencing and this should be indicated on the progression panel decision/recommendation form. A supervisor may only attend a progress review meeting as an observer if their presence is requested by the student.

Student attendance at progress review meetings

- 1.41 If a department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a student will, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting. This ensures that a student has every opportunity to demonstrate to their progression panel that they have met the relevant University progression criteria and it enables the panel to address, with the student, any issues arising from their supervisor's report and/or agreed TAP reports (where required by the department). Where a student's presence in a progress review meeting is required, the student may be present throughout the meeting, or the panel may have private deliberations before and/or after their discussion with the student. If, for good reason, a student needs to participate remotely in a progress review meeting, permission must be sought in advance from the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support).
- 1.42 If a department's evidence requirements (see above) do *not* include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a student will not, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting. **If, however, a progression panel does not feel able, on the basis of the evidence provided by a student and/or the supervisor's report and/or the agreed TAP reports (if**

applicable), to recommend that an individual student be progressed, then a progress review meeting at which the student in question *is present*, along with at least two members of the progression panel (normally including the Chair), must be scheduled as soon as possible (and within department's specified window for progress review meetings). The purpose of requiring the progression panel (or part thereof) to meet with the student in this instance is to give the student (who is at risk of not progressing at the first attempt) every opportunity to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria. If, for good reason, a student needs to participate remotely in such a meeting, permission must be sought in advance from the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support).

Full or partial integration of TAP and progression meetings

- 1.43 Where a department requires its students to be present at their progress review meetings as a matter of course (as above, i.e. the department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting), the second TAP meeting of each year (full-time students) may be fully integrated within the review meeting (i.e. in addition to making a formal decision about the student's progress, the progress review panel (in the absence of the supervisor) works with the student to deliver the developmental aspect of the TAP meeting and to complete the TAP form). In this scenario, it is recommended that the progress review element is completed prior to the TAP element.
- 1.44 Alternatively, some departments may wish to schedule progress review and TAP meetings consecutively. It is recommended that the progress review meeting is scheduled first and the meeting reconvenes as a TAP meeting once the supervisor has joined.

Second attempt

- 1.45 If, at a student's first attempt a progression panel decides that a student on a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria (including on the grounds of non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), it must recommend a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, programme transfer or withdrawal (see above).
- 1.46 If a student has not met the relevant University progression criteria at the first attempt, in determining what recommendation to make, the progression panel should consider what would be in the best interests of the student concerned. If the student's performance at the first attempt is such that the progression panel thinks it is unlikely that the student will meet the progression criteria at the second attempt, or the panel believes that preparing for a second attempt would seriously compromise a student's likelihood of completion on time, then the progression panel should recommend programme transfer or withdrawal. To recommend programme transfer, the progression panel should agree that there is a realistic possibility of the student successfully completing the programme to which they would be transferred within a reasonable time period (taking into account the normal period of enrolment for the degree in question and the need for any extensions, if required, to be approved).
- 1.47 The progression panel will provide the student with clear written feedback about why the progression criteria were not met and its reasons for recommending a second attempt, programme transfer or withdrawal. The progression panel will specify, in broad terms, what the student would need to do to meet the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt.
- 1.48 In the case of a recommendation for programme transfer or withdrawal, the student may choose to accept the recommendation or, alternatively, decide to make a second attempt at meeting the

relevant University progression criteria against the advice of the progression panel. The student must inform their department of their intention (i.e. second attempt, transfer or withdrawal) within two weeks of being informed of the panel's recommendation (if a student does not respond within this timeframe it will be treated as an assumed withdrawal).

- 1.49 If the student accepts a recommendation for withdrawal this will be undertaken with immediate effect. If the student accepts a recommendation for transfer to an alternative programme, the student's enrolment will be transferred immediately, subject to the following considerations:

Where the student is being transferred from an MPhil/PhD/EngD to a MA/MSc (by research):

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard three-month continuation period to submit their thesis
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have a three-month MA/MSc (by research) continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Where the student is being transferred from a PhD/EngD to an MPhil:

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard 12-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have a 12-month MPhil continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Making a second attempt at meeting the progression criteria

- 1.50 If a student has a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria they will continue on their programme pending a decision regarding the second attempt.
- 1.51 Where a student makes a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, the final recommendation from the progression panel must be submitted via SkillsForge by the deadline specified above (i.e. for full-time students no later than three months after the date of the first attempt at progression, calculated from the date of the first progress review meeting). The department must ensure that the timetable for making a second attempt (including provision for a second and final review meeting, if required) enables this deadline to be met.
- 1.52 The relevant departmental GSB will supply the student with the date by which they must present new and/or revised written evidence (see above). The progression panel will also state whether the supervisor(s) will be required to submit a new supervisor's report in the light of the new and/or revised written submission from the student.
- 1.53 The student will need to work with the supervisor(s) to draw up an action plan and identify any support needs to cover the period leading up to the second attempt. The student is, however, ultimately responsible for ensuring that they address the points raised by the progression panel at the first attempt.
- 1.54 If the new and/or revised written evidence presented by the student - plus the new supervisor's report if required - is sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the student has now met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, then a second progress review meeting is not required.

- 1.55 If the new and/or revised written evidence presented by the student - plus the new supervisor's report if required - is not sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the student has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, then a second and final progress review meeting is required in which the progression panel (or at least two members of the panel, normally including the Chair) must meet with the student, normally face-to-face. If, for good reason, a student needs to participate remotely, permission must be sought in advance from the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support). Each department is responsible for ensuring that a recording is made of all second progress review meetings, in accordance with the University's Policy on the recording of second progress review meetings and oral examinations for research degrees (Appendix 1). This requirement is not waived for second progress review meetings conducted via video-conferencing.
- 1.56 If – based on the new and/or revised evidence, the new supervisor's report (if applicable) and discussion with the student in a second progress review meeting (if applicable) – the progression panel decides that the student has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, it should recommend:

- (i) that the student be progressed;

if, however, the progression panel decides that the student has *not* met the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt (including on the grounds of the non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), the student will be deemed to have failed the progression point and the progression panel must recommend:

- (ii) that the student be transferred to an MPhil programme (for students enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or*
 (iii) that the student be transferred to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or*
 (iv) that the student's enrolment with the University be terminated.

The progression panel should provide reasons for its choice of (ii)-(iv).

- 1.57 If a student progresses as a consequence of meeting or exceeding the University's progression criteria at the second attempt this does not alter the timing of the next formal review of progression (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the deadline for submission of the thesis.
- 1.58 If a student has not met the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, in determining whether to make a recommendation for transfer or termination, the progression panel should consider what would be in the best interests of the student concerned. To recommend transfer, the progression panel should agree that there is a realistic possibility of the student completing the programme to which they would be transferred within a reasonable period (taking into account the normal period of enrolment for the degree in question).
- 1.59 If the SCA approves a recommendation for termination of enrolment, the student's enrolment will be terminated immediately. If the SCA approves a recommendation for transfer, the student's enrolment will be transferred immediately, subject to the following considerations:

Where the student is being transferred from an MPhil/PhD/EngD to a MA/MSc (by research):

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard three-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have a three-month MA/MSc (by research) continuation period added

from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Where the student is being transferred from a PhD/EngD to an MPhil:

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard 12-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have a 12-month MPhil continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

1.60 A student retains the right of appeal against a failure to progress if they can establish grounds for doing so, as outlined in University Regulation 2.8.

Entry into a continuation period

1.61 There is no formal review of progress for research students entering into a continuation period, where this is permitted, because the expectation is that these students should be near to submitting their theses.

1.62 Departments are, however, asked to ensure that students who wish to enter a continuation period are asked to provide evidence to their TAP, in a form specified by their department, that they have started to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer reviewers and examiners, and have planned in a realistic fashion how the thesis will be completed to the required standard within the specified time limit.

1.63 This evidence should be scrutinised at the final TAP prior to the student entering the continuation period. Where the TAP has concerns about the evidence presented, the student should be advised to seek additional advice and support from their supervisor(s) and the GSB alerted so that they can monitor the situation.

Exceptional circumstances, including extension of progression deadlines

1.64 If a PhD or MPhil student does not produce the evidence required by their department for a formal review of progress (including non-attendance at a progression-related meeting, if applicable) and there are no exceptional circumstances then the student's progress review panel will deem the student not to have met the relevant progression criteria and should normally recommend that the student be withdrawn (first attempt at progression) or their enrolment terminated (second attempt at progression).

1.65 A department may grant an extension to a student for an *internal* (i.e. departmental) deadline for a formal review of progress (e.g. relating to the date for submission of written evidence or the timing of the progress review meetings) in line with their normal exceptional circumstance procedures as long as the University deadlines relating to formal reviews of progress (as set out above) can still be met.

1.66 A department may seek an extension to a *University* deadline for a formal review of progress (see above) only in the case of exceptional circumstances relating to an individual student (namely where a student's ability to complete the formal review of progress has been hampered by documented medical or personal reasons or, more rarely, extraordinary and unexpected academic circumstances which can be addressed without affecting the ability of the student to submit their thesis on time). The magnitude of the research task, or failure on the part of the student to perceive

or act on the magnitude of the research task, is not a reason for an extension.

- 1.67 A request for an extension to a University deadline for a formal review of progress due to exceptional circumstances relating to staff involved in the process (e.g. the absence of the supervisor) will not normally be considered as departments should make alternative arrangements in such circumstances so as not to disadvantage the students concerned.
- 1.68 A request for an extension to a University deadline for a formal review of progress will not be considered until the student in question is within two months of the deadline. An extension will normally be limited to two months and the total period of extension that may normally be approved will be four months.
- 1.69 Requests for extensions to University deadlines should be submitted to RSA. Requests will be considered by RSA in the first instance and approved under delegated authority or referred to SCC for consideration where necessary.
- 1.70 Any extension to the deadline for a formal review of progress will not alter the timing of the next formal review of progress (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the date for submission of the thesis.
- 1.71 Departments should use the formal reviews of progress as an opportunity to assess whether a student might benefit from a leave of absence to deal with exceptional circumstances, or a transfer of programme, or a change in the mode of study (e.g. from full-time to part-time) in line with the PoRD.

Appendix 3: PGR Academic Misconduct Policy

1. Scope

- 1.1. Allegations of academic misconduct by research students can arise in various ways, and are dealt with by different policies.
- This policy applies where academic misconduct by research students is alleged in any part of their formal assessments (including, but not limited to, formal reviews of progress, the thesis and the oral examination).
 - Allegations related to taught components that are part of a student's progression requirements are dealt with according to the Academic Misconduct Policy for taught students, with a report being made to the Progression Panel.
 - Misconduct in the research process (including, but not limited to, ethics approvals, data management and dissemination), even if identified through a formal assessment process, falls under the [Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#).

2. The forms of assessment misconduct

- 2.1. The University is committed to developing high standards of academic practice among its staff and students, and to safeguarding the standards of its academic awards to individuals. The University regards any form of academic misconduct as an extremely serious matter [see Regulations 2.7.7 and 5.7].
- 2.2. In order to be confident about the standards of academic awards it is essential that work submitted for assessment is a fair reflection of the abilities of the student having used legitimate resources and forms of support in the production of that work. The definitions listed below seek to make the boundaries between authorised and unauthorised support clear.
- **Plagiarism** – the presentation of ideas, material, or scholarship sourced from the work of another individual, group or entity without sufficient acknowledgement.
 - **Cheating** – failure to comply with the rules of closed/oral examination e.g. unauthorised access to materials in a closed/oral examination or personation.
 - **Commission and incorporation** – seeking to gain advantage by incorporating material in work submitted for assessment that has been inappropriately improved by, or commissioned, purchased or obtained from, a third party e.g. relatives, friends, essay mills or other students.
 - **Unacknowledged resubmission** – the submission of work that has already been submitted, in whole or in part, for the award of a degree or other qualification at this or any other university without proper acknowledgement of the work and any award which was granted for it. [See Regulation 2.7.2e.]

3. General principles

Standard of proof

- 3.1.** It is sufficient to establish cases of academic misconduct 'on the balance of probabilities', rather than 'beyond all reasonable doubt'. This means that the panel needs only believe that it is likely that misconduct occurred, rather than the process requiring that the evidence be indisputable that misconduct has occurred. Decisions must be supported by a rationale and, importantly, evidence which are both clearly explained to the student. The burden lies on the university to show, on the balance of probabilities, that the acts constituting the alleged academic misconduct occurred.
- 3.2.** In the case of mitigation of penalties (section 5.3) the burden of proof will be on students to prove their judgement was affected if they wish this to be taken into account in consideration of the appropriate penalty.

Responsibility of the student

- 3.3.** The student shall be considered responsible for the academic integrity of all work they submit for assessment. If insufficiently acknowledged material is discovered by examiners, the question of whether the student has behaved (or intended to behave) dishonestly or unethically must not be a factor in the decision to report the case to the relevant assessment officer or not. Expressions of guilt, remorse or lack of intent are neither to be accepted as justifications for any alleged misconduct nor taken into consideration when determining the penalty where such misconduct is established.

Sufficient acknowledgement of sources

- 3.4.** The aim in all assessed work should be for the student to make the clear distinction between their own ideas and those drawn from other sources. The University expects all scholars to be able to paraphrase source material with appropriate citations, include page references in the citations appropriately where material is quoted directly, present secondary citations in a way that makes clear the extent of their own scholarship, present data accurately, produce an accurate reference list and consistently follow the referencing system mandated by their department(s), or editors of journals and/or commissioners of other academic outputs.
- 3.5.** The extent to which students deviate from this expectation should be reflected in the panel's judgement about the work.

Improving of assessed work by third parties prior to submission

- 3.6.** The aim of assessment is to establish the level of understanding, skills and performance of the individual student enrolled on the programme rather than measuring the extent of the student's academic, social or familial networks' level of understanding, skills and performance. While third parties may comment and offer feedback on draft material, they should not make changes on the student's behalf to work which is to be submitted for assessment, other than standard proofreading.
- 3.7.** Proofreading should only be done in accordance with the [University Guidance on Proofreading](#). Students are responsible for making the guidelines on proofreading, and the rules against commissioning clear, to any third party they ask to check their work for English language usage and presentation.
- 3.8.** Support given in acknowledgement of a specific disability and agreed by the relevant Board of Studies, are not considered to be inappropriate support.

3.9. The following forms of improvement to work submitted for formal assessment by any third-party, undertaken on the student's behalf (rather than offered as comments or feedback by a supervisor or other researcher in the field) will be considered as a **commissioning** offence under this policy (see 2.2).

- adding or re-writing any of the student's sentences or sections of work
- rearranging passages of text, sequences of code or sections of other material for the student
- reformatting the material for the student
- contributing additional material to the original
- checking calculations or formulae
- rewriting formulae, equations or computer code
- re-labelling figures or diagrams

Academic judgement in relation to PGR assessment misconduct

3.10. For research students, the consideration of any alleged academic misconduct takes place prior to the examination process for that assessment (see Section 4). A PGR Academic Misconduct Investigatory Panel (AMIP) considers the evidence and comes to a conclusion about the nature and extent of the misconduct and makes a decision on the resulting penalty. If it is deemed appropriate to continue to the examination stage, then the AMIP will make a report on its findings to the examiners, if misconduct was identified.

3.11. Some aspects of this process will involve "academic judgement" which is defined as "a judgment that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential"³. Decisions made solely on the basis of academic judgement are not open to appeal (Regulation 2.8.1(b)). In considering academic misconduct cases, the AMIP members are chosen so that there is academic expertise to make decisions that may involve academic judgement.

Decisions that involve academic judgement

3.12. When the AMIP scrutinises assessed work as part of an academic misconduct investigation, they will seek to evaluate the evidence for misconduct in that piece of work and determine, on the balance of probabilities, whether an offence has been committed and the nature of that offence. They will also determine the extent of the academic misconduct - e.g. the extent to which the student misrepresented the work as their own. These decisions involve the exercise of academic judgement.

Decisions that do not normally require academic judgement

3.13. Once the panel have determined the nature and extent of the academic misconduct under step 1, they should apply the corresponding penalty set out on the penalty table in Section 5.2 of this policy, as modified where necessary for any mitigating factors as set out in Section 5.3. Once the level of misconduct has been established, the corresponding penalty that should be applied and any mitigation to be considered, would not normally involve academic judgement. Establishing matters of fact, based on evidence, (e.g. establishing whether or not there has been a breach of assessment rules) do not normally involve academic judgement.

Exceptional Circumstances

³ Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) glossary, 2019. <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/information/glossary/>.

- 3.14.** Where academic misconduct is alleged or suspected, a student may not use exceptional circumstances – as defined by the University's Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy – as a defence. The only exceptions are cases where, in the professional opinion of an appropriate professional, the student's condition at the time of the offence was such that they were unable to differentiate between right and wrong in relation to their actions (cf. The [Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy Section 23.4 xii](#)). Where the condition is longstanding, it can only be used as a defence where adjustments have not been made through no fault of the student. An investigation panel should not infer the inability to differentiate between right and wrong from a more general diagnosis of mental health issues; the professional evidence presented to the panel must specifically address this question in relation to the student's psychological state at the time of the alleged offence.
- 3.15.** For consideration of personal circumstances as a mitigation for the applied penalty, see Section 5.4.

Failure to detect academic misconduct in the past

- 3.16.** Where academic misconduct is alleged or suspected, a student may not use as a defence the failure of any member of academic staff to detect academic misconduct at an earlier point in time in their studies.
- 3.17.** When a suspicion is raised about a piece of work submitted for a given assessment, departments **may** examine work submitted for a previous assessment in order to gather evidence relevant to the alleged misconduct they are investigating. However, the previous work cannot be referred for investigation under this policy. Departments may also review previous work under the Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures (see also 9.1).

PGR Assessment Misconduct Investigation Panels (PGR AMIPs)

- 3.18.** One of the overarching aims of the Assessment Misconduct Policy is to ensure consistency of decision-making and judgements across academic departments and units in relation to the handling of academic misconduct cases. The PGR Assessment Misconduct Investigation Panels (PGR AMIPs) are the mechanism by which the University ensures that Assessment Misconduct procedures reflect the assessment principles of consistency, clarity, transparency and equity.
- 3.19.** When a case of academic misconduct requires investigation by a PGR AMIP, the panel will be formed and will be chaired by the Dean of the YGRS. The panel will comprise the Dean, the Graduate Chair from the student's department and one other Graduate Chair from the same faculty. All members of the panel should be independent of the student; the supervisor, examiners or Thesis Advisory Panel members should not be on the panel. If the Dean is disqualified from membership, then the panel should be formed of three Graduate Chairs.

4. The Assessment Misconduct procedures

These procedures should be followed for research students on all programmes.

Initiating procedures

4.1. *Initiating procedures in respect of plagiarism:*

Where the examiner(s) or other assessors believe that the assessed work contains evidence of plagiarism (i.e. the insufficient acknowledgement of sources) they must come to a decision about whether this should be referred to a PGR AMIP, using the following as guidance:

- (a) Where there is the occasional referencing error (i.e. where the same minor error is not frequently repeated or a pattern of mistakes cannot be seen), the assessor notes this in the feedback and is specific about the error. Work matching this description need not be referred to a PGR AMIP. Where such errors occur in a thesis submitted for examination, they should be corrected before the final deposit.
- (b) Where there is evidence of more widespread or systematic misunderstanding, or of badly executed paraphrasing or acknowledgement of sources, or of another misconduct offence then the assessor(s) should report this together with evidence of the errors/misrepresentation that is causing concern. Details should be sent by the Graduate Chair to research-student-admin@york.ac.uk:
 - i) The information provided must include the student's name, number, and programme of study, and the student's previous record in relation to academic misconduct.
 - ii) The assessors must provide a statement indicating the reasons for their suspicion, and evidence of the suspicious nature of the assessment (potentially including a Turnitin report, or annotated copy of the work). This statement should indicate specific pages, paragraphs or phrases which are raising concern, rather than simply being an indication of duplicated text, and should include enough detail to allow the panel to investigate without specialist knowledge of the specific research topic.

RSA will inform the Dean of the YGRS, and will convene a panel as above. The PGR AMIP will normally be assigned within 5 working days of the initial report.

4.2. *Initiating the procedures in respect of cheating:*

Where the assessment involves some form of closed or oral examination, other than the examination of a taught module required for Progression which would be covered by the Policy on Academic Misconduct for Taught Programmes, and the assessors have identified a suspected case of cheating, any unauthorised material must be removed, and a full report sent by the Graduate Chair to research-student-admin@york.ac.uk.

The information provided must include the student's name, number, and programme of study, and the student's previous record in relation to academic misconduct.

RSA will inform the Dean of the YGRS, and will convene a panel as above. The PGR AMIP will normally be assigned within 5 working days of the initial report.

4.3. *Initiating the procedures in respect of commissioning:*

Where the assessor(s) believes that the assessed work contains evidence of commissioning and incorporation (i.e. that a third party has either written or significantly contributed to a student's submission) they must provide a statement of suspicion of commissioning including references to specific pages, paragraphs or phrases which are raising concern and should include enough detail to allow the panel to investigate without specialist knowledge of the specific research topic. The Graduate Chair should send the statement to: research-student-admin@york.ac.uk.

In cases of suspected commissioning, the PGR AMIP should consider the evidence provided in the statement of suspicion of commissioning and any previous work submitted by the student for a comparison. The panel has further powers to request a compulsory interview with the student and to receive preparatory documents for the work under suspicion, for example, notes and drafts where available. Lack of preparatory work may be considered evidence of commissioning.

Documenting and considering evidence of commissioning

4.4. As with plagiarism, the identification of commissioning starts with an academic judgement. One of the difficulties of identifying this offence is that it will require solid evidence that an act of commission and incorporation has taken place. While at first the suspicion may appear as a gut feeling, the examiner must provide specific evidence of their suspicion of commissioning. This may include a combination of the following features:

- **Identifiable markers:** In certain cases the student may not remove features which identify another author in the paper, such as the name of a company.
- **Document properties:** Check properties of the submission for any unusual names, dates, editing times.
- **Academic level:** A suspiciously good piece of work which stands out from previous work submitted by the student.
- **Language level:** High level English writing which stands out from previous work.
- **Unusual/inappropriate references:** Reference to texts which have not been previously discussed with the supervisor(s) or research group, or are unrelated/inappropriate to the work.
- **Off topic:** Some or all of the submission may seem off topic and include references to a wide range of unrelated works which are tenuously linked to the research question.
- **Unusual referencing style or formatting:** Use of the wrong referencing style or unusual formatting of the submission.

Turnitin: Unfortunately, Turnitin does not help in identifying custom-written submissions, as the companies often have access to text-matching software packages and guarantee a 'plagiarism-free' essay.

Consideration by the PGR Assessment Misconduct Panel

- 4.5.** Each case follows a 2-stage process: an initial consideration, which decides whether there is a case to answer; if appropriate, this is followed by a full investigation, including interaction with the student involved.
- 4.6.** A PGR AMIP may meet virtually if they prefer and should consider the case in question against their experience of other judgements made in the past by such panels in order to ensure consistency and to try to eliminate risk of bias. The PGR AMIP has a designated member of RSA to advise them on any process issues. This RSA contact must be copied into all relevant electronic correspondence between members of the investigatory panel and provided with minutes of all meetings.
- 4.7.** The PGR AMIP should be convened as quickly as possible so as not to delay unnecessarily the progression or examination process. In the event that one of the members of the panel

becomes unavailable to consider a case, the chair of the panel should inform research-student-admin@york.ac.uk as soon as possible to allow a replacement to be assigned.

- 4.8.** On the basis of their initial consideration, the PGR AMIP makes a judgement as to whether the evidence presented suggests that a full investigation would be appropriate.
- a) The panel may determine that the evidence does not warrant further investigation. Nonetheless, if the work suffers from poor practice in attribution, a response is given to the marker, with a possible recommendation that the student should be advised to improve this aspect of their work. The student should be informed of this decision. Cases where a full investigation is not held will not count as formal cases of academic misconduct against the student's record.
 - b) If it is believed that the case warrants a full investigation, then the panel Chair informs the student that academic misconduct is suspected, provides the full details of the process followed, provides the full evidence that will be considered by the panel and identifies the offence which is suspected. The student can then respond to the panel within 7 days. The panel will not use any material to make its judgement unless the student has had sight of it in advance and the opportunity to respond. The student should be provided with any new evidence which the panel considers. The student(s) should also be encouraged to seek advice from supervisors and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA). The student can, in response, submit a written statement or request an interview with the PGR AMIP (students should be made aware that there is no inherent benefit to an interview).
 - c) The panel should also obtain a statement from the supervisor, giving the context for the submitted work along with details of any advice given or other relevant background information.
 - d) In the event that the student elects to attend an interview, or that the panel determines that an interview is the most appropriate way to determine the nature of the offence, the Chair of the panel must ensure that the student is afforded sufficient time (normally 7 days) before the interview to seek advice or to arrange to be accompanied. Students have the same right to be accompanied at a PGR AMIP interview as they do for an academic appeal hearing: see the [Academic Appeals](#) procedure for details. A student may be accompanied by any member of the university and exceptions may be made for non-university accompaniment at the discretion of the Chair of the PGR AMIP. The student must notify the Chair in advance if they intend to bring a representative from outside the university. It is recommended that students contact GSA for advice and support, and who may accompany them to the hearing. Any interview must include at least two members of the panel, including the Chair, and the third member should be consulted before any decision is made.
 - e) Where it is the panel, rather than the student, which determines that an interview is required, all reasonable means should be taken to inform the student, and the student should be asked to acknowledge receipt of this information prior to the date of the interview. If the student does not respond, however, the procedure should not be halted. A panel may make this determination even after a written submission by a student. The procedures should continue regardless of whether a student responds.

Possible action following the submission of a student statement to, or interview with, the investigatory panel

4.9.

- a) If, on the balance of probabilities, misconduct is established, the PGR AMIP decides on a penalty using the tables outlined in section 5, compiles a report and submits this to RSA (via research-student-admin@york.ac.uk). The student will be informed of the outcome, with a copy of the full report, provided within 7 days of the PGR AMIP decision having been made. If it has been decided that the examination or progression panel can still proceed, the full report and decision will be communicated to the examiners or members of the progression panel.
- b) The PGR AMIP can request further information from the student and/or the department.
- c) The PGR AMIP can decide that, on the balance of probabilities, misconduct has not occurred, in which case the work is returned to the examiners for them to decide the outcome. The PGR AMIP may make a recommendation that the markers should take into consideration the standard of scholarship.
- d) Cases should be resolved as quickly as possible, but, where work has already been submitted to the external examiner, it should be a decision of the examiners whether an oral examination can proceed if the PGR AMIP's work is not yet complete. If the oral examination does proceed, the examination report should not be finalised until the PGR AMIP has concluded its work and reported.
- e) The panel should also report to the Graduate Chair in the student's department. The Dean of YGRS will determine whether or not any external funding body needs to be informed. A note should be made on the student record, if misconduct is established

5. PGR Academic Misconduct Penalties

- 5.1. If a student is found to have committed academic misconduct in a formal PGR assessment (i.e. submission for a formal review of progress or for an award), then the PGR AMIP will meet and come to a conclusion on the extent of the misconduct and the penalty to be applied. This will take place **prior** to consideration of the academic outcome by the examiners or progression panel. In very serious cases of misconduct, the assessment process will not be completed and the student's registration will be terminated. The following tables will be used by the PGR AMIP to determine the penalty.

5.2. Penalty table

Academic misconduct identified?	Penalty/Outcome PROGRESSION STAGE	Penalty/Outcome AWARD STAGE
<p>No</p> <p>E.g. no case to answer or limited poor practice such as missing cited items from bibliography or incorrect citation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Penalty • Issues of poor practice might be reported to the progression panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Penalty • Issues of poor practice might be reported to the examiners
<p>Yes - Level 1</p> <p>Significant but limited and remediable failure of academic integrity which does not undermine the integrity of the work as a whole (e.g. the student has made a genuine but flawed attempt to properly attribute written material or misrepresented genuine results in a manner which does not affect the validity of conclusions).</p>	<p>If first Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Warning issued to student and placed on file • Student will FAIL this attempt, but a revise and resubmit outcome will be allowed (only if first attempt at progression) • Progression panel will meet, in any case, to allow for feedback. <p>If second Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student registration terminated • Does not proceed to progression panel 	<p>If first Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Warning issued to student and placed on file • Student will be deemed not to have met the award criteria, but a revise and resubmit outcome will be allowed if the examiners judge that to be appropriate • Examination will proceed, but the outcome is limited to revise and resubmit, or award of a lower degree, with or without corrections (i.e. outcomes (i) and (ii) listed under 'examination outcomes' of the Policy on Research Degrees (see 12.39 of the PoRD) are ruled out) <p>If second Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student registration terminated • Does not proceed to examination
<p>Yes - Level 2</p> <p>Very significant failure of academic integrity which undermines the integrity of the work as a whole (e.g. inclusion of unattributed material is characteristic of the general approach, or some significant ideas or results central to the work uses unattributed material, or work presented is the result of fabrication or commissioning).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student registration terminated • Does not proceed to progression panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student registration terminated • Does not proceed to examination

5.3. ***Mitigation of penalties in light of compelling personal circumstances***

Once the PGR AMIP has decided that, on the balance of probabilities, academic misconduct has occurred, they will agree a penalty in accordance with the tables above. In deciding on a penalty, the PGR AMIP may take into consideration other factors which, whilst not providing a defence for the academic misconduct offence, might provide mitigation when considering the penalty/outcome. If the PGR AMIP agrees that there are mitigating circumstances that might be relevant to an academic misconduct offence, then they can consider, if appropriate, the award of a lesser penalty than the one indicated by the tables above. *NB. Whilst the PGR AMIP will take such factors into consideration, the existence of mitigating circumstances will not necessarily yield a lesser penalty. In coming to their decision, the PGR AMIP will consider all the circumstances, including the seriousness of the offence.*

Circumstances that may be considered

Exceptional circumstances, as defined by the [Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Policy](#), are not normally relevant to consideration of whether or not an offence has been committed. However, there are some limited circumstances in which they may be taken into account as a mitigation when considering the penalty. These are:

- i. The personal circumstances were of such severity that their impact on the student's judgement at the time that the academic misconduct offence occurred makes it appropriate, in the opinion of the Panel, to impose a less serious penalty by reason of those circumstances.
- ii. A specific disability, or other chronic condition, which clearly impacted the student's judgement, or their capacity to comply with academic standards. This may be taken into account where, through no fault of the student, such a disability has not been accounted for through a reasonable adjustment or where that adjustment was not made in time for the assessment. If the specific disability, or its impact, has not been declared to the University, and hence is not addressed in a university Student Support Plan (SSP), a compelling, and evidenced, explanation for this will need to be provided.

In i. and ii. above, compelling evidence will need to be provided. That evidence must show that the student's circumstances were sufficiently significant that it would be, in the opinion of the panel, inappropriate to impose the penalty which would otherwise be indicated by the tables in Section 5.2

The student will be encouraged to disclose any such mitigating circumstances, and their impact, as part of their statement at the point at which the PGR AMIP has decided that there is a case to answer.

5.4. ***Consideration of mitigation of penalties in light of compelling personal circumstances***

In order to consider special mitigation in cases of academic misconduct, a Penalty Mitigation Panel (PMP) will be convened (via email) to consider any changes to the penalty in such circumstances. This group is composed of the Chair of the PGR AMIP (usually the Dean of YGRS), the Chair of the SCA (or delegate) and a nominated member of the Special Cases Committee. This brings together the required expertise from SCA and Special Cases Committee as well as specific knowledge of the case from the PGR AMIP Chair. The Deputy Director of Student Services (Student Progress) and the Secretary of the SCA will be in attendance. The process will be:

- PGR AMIP makes a decision as normal on the penalty without consideration of any mitigating circumstances.
- If the PGR AMIP believes there are mitigating circumstances that might be sufficiently serious to pass the threshold, the RSA contact will pass the material on to the Penalty Mitigation Panel (PMP).
- The PMP will consider whether or not the penalty should be adjusted.
- RSA contact will inform the PGR AMIP and the student of the outcome.

6. Composition, responsibilities and procedures relating to PGR AMIPs

Departmental and unit responsibilities to provide staff to a PGR AMIP

- 6.1 Every department or other unit with a GSB should be prepared for the Graduate Chair or equivalent to serve on a PGR AMIP.

Minimum numbers needed for a PGR AMIP to be quorate

- 6.2 A PGR AMIP is quorate with 3 members for decision-making, including the Chair, normally the Dean of the YGRS. No individual should serve on a PGR AMIP if they are supervisor, TAP Member, Progression Panel member or internal examiner of the student being investigated or there is another conflict of interest. At least two members of the PGR AMIP, including the Chair, are to be present if a student is interviewed.

How a PGR AMIP considers cases

- 6.3 The Chair circulates material relevant to the case(s) to the other members of the investigatory panel for their initial decisions. This can be done electronically at the discretion of the investigatory panel members so long as this is in accordance with the University's Data Protection policies (<https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/>). Where there is electronic sharing of documentation and email discussion the RSA contact must be included.

RSA will supply the administration for any meetings that are called to consider cases that are judged, after the initial consideration, to be serious. Meetings must be minuted and these minutes must be circulated amongst the investigating panel, including the RSA contact. RSA is responsible for sending out letters to students and for concluding the procedures, using standard template letters and forms.

Concluding the procedures

- 6.4 All decisions made by PGR AMIPs must be recorded by way of a written report. Minutes of meetings of the investigatory panels should be forwarded to research-student-admin@york.ac.uk for retention against the student record. Investigatory panels can ask to see minutes of previous meetings as an aid to their decision-making and to support consistency in their judgements.

Where the investigatory panel makes a decision regarding academic misconduct, a copy of the decision is also forwarded to the Graduate Chair and the PGR Administrator in the student's department/centre.

7. Appeals and hearings

- 7.1 When a student is informed of the outcome of the PGR AMIP's consideration of their case they must be advised that they have a right to appeal using the forms and guidance at: <https://www.york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals/>

Students may **only** appeal against decisions of a PGR AMIP on the grounds that:

- i. The Academic Misconduct procedures were not followed properly;
- ii. The PGR AMIP reached a decision that was not reasonable in all the circumstances;
- iii. New evidence is available which could not reasonably have been brought to the attention of the PGR AMIP at the time of its investigation;
- iv. There was bias or reasonable perception of bias during the academic misconduct process;
- v. The penalty imposed by the PGR AMIP was disproportionate or not permitted under the Academic Misconduct procedures.

Students may **not** appeal against matters of academic judgement in relation to academic misconduct - see section 3.6 for further information.

8. Where academic misconduct is alleged but not proven

- 8.1 If an internal examiner, external examiner or progression panel member initiates the academic misconduct procedures, and the student is subsequently found not to have committed academic misconduct by the investigatory panel, the examiner, supervisor or progression panel member should, where practicable, be replaced, unless both the student and the staff member agree otherwise.

9. Academic misconduct alleged after the examination has taken place

- 9.1 If academic misconduct is alleged or suspected after the examination has taken place, but before the qualification has been awarded or conferred, the award or conferment process shall be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation conducted in accordance with this procedure. If the investigatory panel decides that the academic misconduct warrants it, it may decide that a re-examination of the student is necessary. A re-examination under these circumstances shall be subject to the approval of SCC.

If academic misconduct is alleged or suspected after the degree has been conferred, the Senate shall determine the procedures to be followed.

Appendix 4: Paid Parental Leave Policy

Introduction

- 1.1 The following policy covers instances of maternity, paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave for *York-registered research students* (see below) who are in receipt of a *York-funded* stipend (see below), where the date of birth or adoption falls on or after the date this policy came into effect (1 August 2019).
- 1.2 Students who are self- or directly externally-funded (e.g. by overseas government) are deemed to be subject to separate terms and conditions.

Standing of policy

- 1.3 Paid parental leave for research students in receipt of a stipend is not a legal right. Students' entitlement to paid parental leave is instead determined by the terms and conditions of their individual award, which are in turn determined by their funder.
- 1.4 The following policy outlines the terms for paid parental leave for a specific group of students, as defined below, in order to bring their entitlement into line with external funders, such as UK Research and Innovation (UKRI, via the Research Councils). The policy may therefore be reviewed and amended at the discretion of the University, at any time. Any amendments must be approved by the York Graduate Research School (YGRS) Policies and Programmes Sub-Committee.

Definitions and eligibility

York-registered research students

- 1.5 This policy applies to students who are fully-registered at the University of York on degree-awarding research programmes (Masters by Research, MPhil, PhD, and EngD routes), and visiting PGR students (those on RVISVIS routes). It *does not* include students with a shadow record at the University (i.e. students receiving funds from a grant held at York, such as a CDT, but who are registered to study elsewhere).
- 1.6 Students registered on a Hull York Medical School (HYMS) programme and who are registered at the University of York *are* covered by this policy. Those registered at the University of Hull *are not*.

York-funded

- 1.7 This policy applies to research students in receipt of a stipend directly from (i.e. central- or departmental-funded scholarships) or via (i.e. from the University as part of a grant, award or contract funded by an external organisation) the University. If in doubt, students should consult their departments about their source of funding.
- 1.8 Students will be eligible only where the date of birth or adoption falls within their funded period, as defined by the terms and conditions of their individual award. Where the end of the funded element of parental leave extends beyond the original end of the student's funded period, the funded period will be extended to the end of the funded element of the parental leave.

Stipend

- 1.9 For the purposes of this policy, a stipend refers to the maintenance element of a scholarship or studentship awarded to a student in order to undertake their research, i.e. the element of the award which is intended to support the student's living costs. Therefore, students in receipt of a fees-only award are not eligible for paid parental leave under this policy. Funding in support of research and training costs is also not applicable under this policy.

Qualifying period

- 1.10 There is no qualifying period for maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave.

Tier 4 students

- 1.11 Eligible Tier 4 students must still comply with their visa regulations, as long as they continue to be sponsored by the University for a Tier 4 visa.

Students who are also employees of the University

- 1.12 A student employed under a current contract of employment with the University, open or fixed term (but not as a casual worker - see below)*, who is also in receipt of a stipend as a student *may* be eligible for paid parental leave, both as an employee and as a student, as follows:
- a) If the student's stipend *is* York-funded (see 1.7) *and* they are within their funded period (see 1.8), they *are* eligible for paid parental leave under this policy.
 - b) If the student's stipend *is not* York-funded (see 1.7) and/or they are no longer within their funded period (see 1.8), they *are not* eligible for paid parental leave under this policy.
 - c) In either case, paid parental leave as an employee falls under Human Resources' (HR) policies, and advice should be sought from HR accordingly.

**Note: This might include students undertaking full- or part-time work on a non-casual basis, for example as an Associate Lecturer or administrator.*

- 1.13 Students who are employed under a current contract of employment with the University, open or fixed term (but not as a casual worker - see below), and *are not* in receipt of a stipend as a student (e.g. MSCA Fellows, research assistants and other employees undertaking the degree in their own time), *are not* within the scope of this policy.
- 1.14 A student employed as a casual worker** will not normally be entitled to paid parental leave as an employee (although students are advised to seek current advice from HR on this point). If they are also in receipt of a stipend as a student, they *may* be entitled to paid parental leave under this policy, as follows:
- a) If the student's stipend *is* York-funded (see 1.7) *and* they are within their funded period (see 1.8), they *are* eligible for paid parental leave under this policy.
 - b) If the student's stipend *is not* York-funded (see 1.7) and / or they are no longer within their funded period (see 1.8), they *are not* eligible for paid parental leave under this policy.

***Note: This may include Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). Should Departments employ GTAs on different contracts, those employees may be entitled to paid parental leave as employees, and are advised to seek advice from HR.*

Payment terms

- 1.15 Unless otherwise stated, there is no variation in terms on the basis of the type of paid parental leave taken. Further, in all instances the terms described below apply to an eligible student, as defined above; it does not extend to their partner (where relevant), unless they too are eligible under this policy.

Rate of pay

- 1.16 The rate of pay will mirror that laid out in UK Research and Innovation's [Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants](#) at the commencement of the period of leave, reduced or increased on a *pro rata* basis in line with the stipend rate paid by or via York.
- 1.17 Should the UKRI policy change, the University will review this policy and may or may not align it with the change (see above).

Maternity leave

- 1.18 Overall, and notwithstanding any periods of unpaid leave, students are entitled to 39 weeks of paid maternity leave. Rates of pay will be modelled as follows:
- The first 26 weeks will be paid at full stipend rate (as stated in the terms and conditions of the student's award).
 - The following 13 weeks will be paid at a level commensurate with statutory maternity pay (£148.68 per week at the time of publication).
- 1.19 The duration of funding will be dictated by the period of leave the student chooses to take, up to the maximum stated in 1.18.

Paternity leave

- 1.20 Students are entitled to up to 10 days paid paternity leave on full stipend.

Adoption Leave

- 1.21 Students are entitled to paid parental leave where they adopt. In such cases, the student must be identified as either the 'lead' adopter (and thus entitled to paid parental leave equivalent to that outlined above under 'maternity leave') or the 'support' adopter (and thus entitled to paid parental leave equivalent to that outlined above under 'paternity leave'). In either case, the student's partner (where relevant), regardless of their student or employment status, must not be claiming the same rights as the student (i.e. a student and their partner cannot both be claiming the equivalent of the paid parental leave outlined above under 'maternity leave' simultaneously); students may be required to provide evidence that this is not the case.

Shared Parental Leave

- 1.22 Shared Parental Leave applies only where both the student and their partner qualify for paid parental leave under this policy, or where the partner is a research student eligible for shared parental leave under the terms of their funder (e.g. those funded by UKRI).

- 1.23 Students may be entitled to up to 50 weeks of Shared Parental Leave depending on the individual circumstances.

Extension of parental leave

- 1.24 Students who do not choose to take their full entitlement of paid parental leave when they first apply may later extend their period of paid leave up to the maximum (see above). In order to extend a period of paid leave, students must reapply, as per the process outlined below.

Repayment of funds

- 1.25 Unless exceptional circumstances apply, students will normally be required to repay any funds paid under this policy if they do not complete the final examination process (up to and including final deposit of the thesis, where applicable). This would not apply to students who have undergone examination and failed to gain the intended award or were recommended a lower award post examination.
- 1.26 Students will normally be required to repay any funds paid under this policy where they return from a period of paid parental leave earlier than initially stated. In such cases, the repayments will be limited to the balance of any funds paid to the student in advance, calculated from the date of return.

Applying for paid parental leave

- 1.27 Unless otherwise stated, there is no variation in terms on the basis of the type of paid parental leave taken.

How to apply

- 1.28 Students must follow the process outlined on the York Graduate Research School web pages: <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic/change/loa/ppl>

- 1.29 Students should:
- a) Advise their department as soon as possible of their intention to take parental leave;
 - b) Complete a leave of absence application (see 1.28);
 - c) Complete a funding request form (see 1.28).

- 1.30 Students are responsible for notifying Research Student Administration of any change to their intentions or circumstances, so that advice may be provided about the impact (if any) on their funding.

Department responsibilities

- 1.31 Departments should:
- a) Check student's source of funding and advise RSA when the associated leave of absence paperwork is submitted for consideration;
 - b) Manage funds and payment schedule as per instructions from RSA.
- 1.32 Departments are responsible for notifying Research Student Administration of any change to the intentions or circumstances of a student in receipt of parental leave payments under this policy.

Appendix 5: Policy Framework for Distance Learning Research Degree Programmes

Introduction

- 1 This is the University's policy framework for distance learning research degree programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the University's Policy on Research Degrees (PoRD) and Regulations for Research Degree Awards (Regulation 2). If there is any inconsistency between the PoRD and this framework, this framework should apply. A [wiki site](#) provides examples of good practice in distance learning research degree provision.

The nature and purpose of distance learning research degree programmes

- 2 A distance learning research degree programme – which could alternatively be called an independent off-site research degree programme - is for students who are enrolled solely at York and undertake their research away from campus, whether in the UK or internationally, and without requiring a collaborative partner (if a collaborative partner is involved please refer to the *Framework for Collaborative Off-site and Collaborative Split-site PhD Programmes*). Supervision, training and support take place primarily via video-conferencing.

Advantages and challenges of distance learning research degree programmes

- 3 Distance learning opens up research degree programmes to those unable to attend a university campus on a regular basis. For many students, the great attraction of distance learning is that it affords great freedom and flexibility, enabling academic commitments to be combined with life responsibilities (e.g. caring and/or employment). For other students, distance learning is a consequence of the nature of their research project (e.g. fieldwork or archive access). Whilst distance learning has improved access to research degree programmes, the spatial, and often temporal, separation between students and their supervisors, peers and faculty presents a number of challenges, which may lead to a high rate of attrition if not dealt with effectively.

Approval process

- 4 All distance learning research degree programmes should be approved for planning purposes, prior to approval of the academic case being sought from Policies and Programmes Sub-Committee (PPSC). Standard home/international PGR fees apply unless a department gains formal agreement for an exception.
- 5 PPSC will want to be convinced that the department has planned how it will provide appropriate training, pastoral support and an active research community for students at a distance. PPSC will also need to consider and approve any departmental attendance requirements (see below).
- 6 The University expects that most distance learning research degree programmes will be PhDs but distance learning MPhil and Master of Arts (by research) and Master of Science (by research) programmes are also permitted where a department can provide a convincing rationale.

Programme details

Duration

- 7 The period of enrolment for a student on a distance learning research degree programme will be the same as that for students on the equivalent campus-based research degree programme.

Naming convention and final award

- 8 A distance learning research degree programme should normally be advertised as PhD (or the appropriate award) in XXXX by distance learning.
- 9 A student who successfully completes a distance learning research degree shall be awarded a PhD (or the appropriate award) in XXXX (their subject) from York and their degree certificate shall not refer to the fact that they were primarily studying away from York.

Admission requirements and process

- 10 The admissions requirements (academic and English language) are the same as those for the equivalent campus-based research degree programme.
- 11 The admissions procedures for a distance learning research degree should replicate those of the equivalent campus-based research degree, with the exception that applicants should be taken through the distance learning research degree admissions checklist as part of the interview process (see below). The aim of the checklist is to ensure that: (i) there are no barriers to the applicant studying by distance learning, (ii) that the applicant and their prospective supervisor(s) understand the challenges and limitations of distance learning. The decision to admit a student to a distance-learning research degree programme should always include the department's Programme Director for Distance Learning Research Degrees (or their nominee) and/or the Graduate Chair (or their nominee) in addition to the supervisor(s).
- 12 Publicity about a distance learning research degree programme should be transparent about the academic and practical challenges associated with distance learning. Student costs (e.g. for visas, travel and accommodation to meet attendance and in-person supervision requirements) associated with participation in a distance learning research degree programme must be clearly stated.

Information

- 13 Distance learning research degree students should be provided, by their department, with clear written information about studying at a distance in the form of an online handbook.

Requirements for attendance at York

- 14 Distance learning research degree students will spend the vast majority of their time working away from York, with supervision primarily by video-conferencing. Academic visits to York during a student's enrolment should be short (each less than eight weeks duration) and, for most, will be infrequent.
- 15 The University's attendance requirements (see also the in-person supervision requirements) for distance learning research degree students are as follows:
 - a. a visit to York for an induction period of at least five working days;
 - b. a visit to York for the final examination.
- 16 The University's attendance requirements are a minimum, and departments are strongly encouraged to put in place some limited but additional attendance requirements (subject to PPSC approval) to support distance learning students' research and professional development and their integration into the department's research community. For example, a department might require a longer induction period or an annual block of attendance (no more than eight weeks duration) for key training or attendance at their annual research student conference (perhaps on a biennial basis for part-time students), perhaps with the latter being timed to coincide with a TAP or progression meeting. The timing, nature and purpose of departmental attendance requirements should be clearly set out and communicated to students from the application stage onwards to allow them to plan and prepare appropriately.

- 17 Students must meet the University and departmental attendance requirements. Students who are unable to meet University or departmental attendance requirements, due to exceptional circumstances, are required to seek permission from Special Cases Committee (SCC) via application to their Graduate School Board. Students who fail to meet University and departmental attendance requirements without SCC approval will be given a formal warning that their enrolment is at risk and may have their enrolment terminated (after a second missed visit).

Attendance at York: practical considerations

- 18 International students subject to UKVI restrictions on a distance learning research degree programme will be required to apply for short-term study visas to meet attendance requirements. The timing of attendance requirements will need to be designed with visa restrictions in mind. It is the student's responsibility to apply for visas and meet visa requirements.
- 19 The University will not organise or provide funding for travel, accommodation and visas (where applicable) for visits to York to meet attendance requirements: the organisation and costs are the responsibility of the student or their funder.

Induction

- 20 Distance learning research degree students are required to visit York for an induction period of at least five working days (longer if this is required by their department e.g. for the provision of introductory training) at the start of their programme, normally within two months of their first enrolment on the programme.
- 21 The induction visit should be fully-timetabled and carefully structured to provide maximum value to the students. The induction must include: a formal supervision meeting with feedback on a student's work (e.g. the research proposal), a general PGR departmental induction and a bespoke departmental induction that focuses on their needs as distance learners.
- 22 Unless there is a good reason to do otherwise, the timing of the induction should be scheduled to coincide with one of the two main University PGR annual start points so that students can attend a YGRS central induction session, GSA welcome activities and standard PGR departmental induction programme.

Supervision

- 23 Supervision should be conducted in accordance with the rules of the PoRD, and any additional departmental requirements, with the exception that both formal and informal supervision meetings will normally take place via video-conferencing.
- 24 Of the (minimum) eight formal supervision meetings/calendar year at least one must be in-person (i.e. where the student and the York-based supervisor are co-located either in York, at the partner, or at another convenient location e.g. an international conference). The department should monitor this requirement to ensure that it is being adhered to. The University will not organise or provide funding for travel, accommodation and visas (where applicable) for visits by students to York or other locations to meet the in-person supervision requirements: the organisation and costs are the responsibility of the student or their funder.
- 25 The purpose and likely frequency of informal supervision meetings and contact should be made clear for the student by their supervisor, at induction and within the relevant handbook (or equivalent). Departments are strongly encouraged to ensure that some form of contact between the student and supervisor occurs at least monthly, if not more frequently (see wiki site for good practice).

Monitoring and progression

- 26 The policy and procedures for monitoring and progression for a student undertaking a distance learning research degree are the same as for a campus-based research degree at York but Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) and progress review meetings should take place by video-conferencing unless they coincide with a student's visit to York. Unless attendance in York for a TAP or progression meeting forms part of a department's attendance requirements, permission does not need to be obtained from the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support) for a meeting to be held by video-conferencing.

Research community

- 27 The University is committed to ensuring that all research students, including those on distance learning programmes, benefit from a supportive academic community. Departments will, therefore, need to consider how this can be achieved, for example by facilitating active remote participation in research seminars and other research-related events and establishing learning communities that integrate their distance learning and campus-based research degree students (see wiki site for good practice).

Training and development

- 28 Students on a distance learning research degree programme must complete any training that is mandatory at York, for example the Research Integrity Tutorial, and are expected to complete any recommended training, for example Becoming an Effective Researcher.
- 29 Students on distance learning research degree programmes have only limited access to the University and department's campus-based training provision. Training needs should be discussed at the admissions stage to ensure that any essential requirements can be met.
- 30 Departments should take proactive steps to make their departmental training accessible to, and appropriate for, students on distance learning research degrees. This might involve, for instance, facilitating remote participation in training sessions, modifying and recording training sessions for asynchronous consumption, or developing interactive online resources (see wiki site for good practice).

Access to facilities and resources

- 31 Students on a distance learning research degree programme primarily rely on online or local facilities and resources, as they will only have limited access to the University and department's on-site facilities and resources. Departments should ensure that students have access to the necessary facilities and resources at admission and monitor this throughout a student's enrolment.
- 32 Students on a distance learning research degree programmes should have the same access to departmental funding opportunities (e.g. conference funds) as students on the equivalent campus-based research degree programme.

Examination

- 33 The examination process for a student undertaking a distance learning research degree is the same as for a campus-based research degree. Distance learning research degree students must attend York for the oral examination and any exception to this rule, due to exceptional circumstances, must be approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment.

Transfers

- 34 Where academically appropriate, subject to any UKVI restrictions (if applicable), and with the permission of the department and SCC, a distance learning research degree student may transfer to the equivalent campus-based programme. Transfers from a campus-based research degree to the equivalent distance learning programme are likewise possible, subject to the permission of the

department (which should evaluate the individual against the distance learning checklist as per a new applicant) and SCC.

Teaching opportunities

- 35 Access to paid teaching opportunities at York for students on distance learning research degree programmes will be limited, and such opportunities will not be available to those who do not have the right to work in the UK. The Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants would apply as normal (e.g. students must meet the training requirements).
- 36 Departments are, however, encouraged to consider if it is feasible to support this aspect of students' development in other ways, for instance finding opportunities for tutoring on online programmes (where available) and/or allowing students to observe teaching sessions during visits.

Student representation and engagement

- 37 Students on distance learning research degree programmes should be included in departmental and University mechanisms for student representation and engagement, as per other research degree students.

Quality assurance

- 38 Departments should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, distance learning research degree students. The effectiveness of distance learning research degree programmes should be specifically considered as part of the Annual Programme Review and Periodic Review processes. The University may also wish, on occasion, to conduct a more in-depth review of distance learning research degree provision.

Management of distance learning research degree programmes

- 39 Each department should appoint a programme leader for distance learning research degree programmes to oversee the provision. This post can be (but does not have to be) filled by the department's Graduate Chair or equivalent.

Checklist for distance learning research degree interviews

- 40 The following issues should be discussed at the interview between the applicant and their supervisor(s). It is recommended that the department's Programme Director for Distance Learning Research Degrees (or their nominee) and/or the Graduate Chair (or their nominee) is also present at the interview.

Fit with distance learning

- a) That there are good reasons (professional and/or personal) for applying to a distance learning research degree as opposed to a campus-based research degree and that the applicant has sufficient time to undertake the research degree on a full-time or part-time basis (as applicable) taking account of their professional and/or personal circumstances;
- b) That access to campus-based facilities and resources will be limited and therefore that the applicant's research project can be conducted using facilities and resources which are available to the applicant online or locally (e.g. a work-based or field-based project). If the research degree cannot be conducted without the support of a local partner then the *Framework on Collaborative Off-site and Split-site Research Degrees* should apply;
- c) That the applicant has a good understanding of the psychological challenges of distance learning and can evidence their suitability (e.g. in terms of self-motivation, independence etc.) for this mode of study;

- d) That the applicant has considered the implications of distance learning for their professional aspirations, notably the lack of teaching opportunities if they wish to pursue an academic career;

Academic considerations

- e) That the applicant and their proposed supervisor are willing to be supervised/undertake supervision remotely via video-conferencing and that any practical issues (e.g. time-differences between the applicant and the supervisor or national restrictions on access to particular technologies) can be managed;
- f) That the applicant will be able to engage actively with the department's research community (e.g. taking into account infrastructure, logistics, time-differences);
- g) That access to campus-based training will be limited and therefore that the applicant has (e.g. due to a prior qualification/experience) any skills that are essential to their research project or that such skills can be developed in good time via remote training, during visits to York or by other means (and how any additional costs e.g. for non-York training will be met). That the applicant's other individual training and development needs can be met (e.g. considering infrastructure, logistics, time-differences);

Practical considerations

- h) That the applicant understands and will be able to meet the University and departmental attendance requirements and University in-person supervision requirements - i.e. that there are no personal/professional barriers to meeting these requirements, and that the applicant will be able to organise and fund the necessary trips (including obtaining and paying for visas if applicable);
- i) That the applicant's remote working environment is suitable e.g. that the applicant has appropriate study space available to them and appropriate internet connectivity, software and hardware to support research and video-conferencing, or that such will be provided by the department.

Distance learning research degree offer letters

41 The following elements will be included in the offer letter to distance learning students:

- (a) That the programme is offering on a distance learning basis, with infrequent academic visits to York of less than eight-weeks duration and supervision primarily be video-conferencing;
- (b) That the applicant must meet the University and departmental attendance requirements (including attendance at York for induction and the final examination), and the in-person supervision requirements, or risk their enrolment being terminated;
- (c) That the applicant is responsible for the organisation and the costs associated with meeting the University and departmental attendance requirements and the in-person supervision requirements (including obtaining and paying for visas if applicable);
- (d) That there will be limited access to York-based University and departmental resources and training.

Appendix 6: Policy Framework for Collaborative Off-site and Collaborative Split-site PhD Programmes

Introduction

1. This is the University's policy framework for collaborative off-site and collaborative split-site PhD programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the University's [Policy on Research Degrees](#) (PoRD) and [Regulations for Research Degree Awards](#) (Regulation 2). If there is any inconsistency between the PoRD and this framework, this framework should apply.

The nature and purpose of collaborative off-site and split-site PhD programmes

2. Collaborative off-site and collaborative split-site PhDs are for students who are enrolled solely at the University of York and are eligible for a single University of York award (not a joint or double PhD) whilst spending a significant period of their programme away from the University at an approved research organisation (the partner).
3. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs differ in the proportion of time spent at York and the partner as set out in the table below:

	Standard (campus-based) PhD	Collaborative split-site PhD	Collaborative off-site PhD*
	Students are based at the York campus.	Students split their time between the partner and York.	Students spend the vast majority of their time at the partner, with only short and infrequent visits to York.
Maximum attendance at York	The full period of enrolment.	Half the normal period of enrolment.	Short study visits only (no visits lasting for more than eight weeks) and typically limited to two-four weeks of visit per year.
Minimum attendance at York	Half the normal period of enrolment. Mobility for fieldwork and visits to other academic institutions is permitted but subject to restrictions and time limits (see sections 15 of the PoRD): normally no more than 12 months <i>away</i> from York.	Normally eight months across the programme (although may be lower if academically justifiable) including an induction period (of at least one week) and the final examination. At least one visit in the normal period of enrolment must last for more than eight weeks.	An induction period (of at least one week) and the final examination.

*Distance learning PhDs: similar to a collaborative off-site PhD but without the involvement of a partner (see Appendix 5 of the PoRD).

4. Partners may include HEIs which choose not to make use of their own degree-awarding-powers (e.g. HEIs in low- or middle-income countries who are capacity building), research facilities/institutes and related institutions (e.g. national museums and archives) without degree-awarding-powers, and businesses with the necessary facilities for advanced research. Partners may be based in the UK or

internationally and should be in good academic standing.

5. The choice between a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD will need to be made on a case by case basis and will depend on a number of factors both academic - including the intellectual needs of the student, the nature of the research project, and what the partner can provide in terms of a research community and training for the student - and practical - including funding arrangements, any restrictions on a student's mobility for professional and/or personal reasons, and UKVI rules where applicable. For example, where a student is based in a highly regarded international research facility, which provides exemplary access to a research community and training provision, and the facility's equipment is fundamental to the student's research project an off-site PhD programme may be the most appropriate option. An off-site PhD programme may also be the most appropriate option where a student is employed as an academic at the international partner and cannot come to York for longer mobility periods for professional and/or personal reasons.
6. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs both fall under the University's collaborative provision rules and York is ultimately responsible for the standards and academic quality of the provision. This means that there must be a process of due diligence undertaken on the partner, including its reputation and ability to provide an appropriate research environment for the student. There must also be a formal agreement in place to cover students on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD.
7. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs can be offered on an individual student basis but also, and indeed preferably (for economies of scale and quality enhancement), for cohorts of students as part of a broader link between York and the partner e.g. an HEI trying to increase the number of its faculty with UK PhDs, or a national museum/archive with close research links to a York department.

Advantages of collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs

8. For a department, collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs can provide a means to develop or extend research collaborations with a range of organisations and, in the case of international partners, to recruit high quality international students. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs may also appeal to funding bodies who want to develop capacity in a partner but want the reassurance of working with an established UK university.
9. For the University, collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs provide transparency when a student is undertaking research at a partner. Due diligence checks will have been undertaken on the partner (the scale depending on the risk) and there will be clarity about the respective roles and responsibilities of York and the partner. This, in turn, helps the University meet its duty of care to the student (e.g. in terms of the quality of research facilities, health and safety, and provision of appropriate support), fulfil any responsibilities with regard to visas (if applicable), and safeguard the integrity of research being undertaken in its name.
10. For the partner, collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs provides a formal link (which can be publicised) with York thus strengthening the relationship between the two. They also provide clarity around the support the partner is expected to provide for a student and how this is recognised by York (e.g. financially and/or agreement with respect to how the partner/co-supervisor will be acknowledged in any publications or other outcomes arising from the PhD research project).
11. For students, collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs enable them to be based in the location of their research and/or where they need to be for professional and/or personal reasons but still enrolled on a York PhD programme. Doing a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD means that a student will benefit from a supervisor and support from York (when in attendance or by distance learning), plus local support from the partner, which in addition to research facilities may include co-supervision (or other personal support, see below) and access to a research community and training opportunities.

Key considerations in choosing a partner

12. The quality of the partner is key to ensuring a successful collaborative off-site or split-site PhD. Partners must be in good standing, academically and more generally (e.g. financially and in terms of governance), and must be able to provide a suitable working environment for PhD students. Where a collaborative split-site or off-site PhD is part of an initiative to build research capacity at the partner, particular attention must be paid to how the training and support needs of the student(s) will be met during their PhD.

Approval process

13. For the approval of a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD with a new partner, a department will need to:
- Submit the completed [PGR collaborative provision pro forma for initial consideration](#) to the Dean of YGRS for consideration and follow the requirements of the Policy on Collaborative Provision; this may include more detailed due diligence proceedings and may require a departmental visit to the partner;
 - Gain FLTG approval (this may be by Chair's action depending on the case) for planning purposes. Standard home/international PhD fees apply unless a department gains formal agreement for an exception. Any transfer of money to a partner must also be formally agreed;
 - Gain Policies and Programmes Sub-Committee (PPSC) approval (this may be by Chair's action depending on the case) for academic purposes. PPSC will want to see a draft student agreement which covers the points listed below.
14. For the approval of a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD with an existing collaborative off-site or split-site partner, a department will need to:
- If applicable, confirm fee arrangements with the Planning Office;
 - Submit a draft student agreement to the Chair of PPSC for approval.
15. Minor exceptions to this framework may be agreed on a case by case basis by PPSC where there is a clear justification and the changes are academically appropriate.

Programme details

Duration

16. The period of enrolment for a student on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD will be the same as that for students on the equivalent campus-based PhD programme.

Naming convention and final award

17. A student who successfully completes a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD shall be awarded a PhD in XXXX (their subject) from York and their degree certificate shall not refer to the partner or the fact that they were primarily studying away from York.
18. The partner may wish to provide a certificate of attendance, transcript or similar that recognises that the student has been based there and includes any courses or other training undertaken at the partner. Any certificate of attendance, transcript or similar to be issued by the partner must first be approved by York and must not imply that the partner has granted an award.

Student agreements

19. A student agreement should be signed by York, the partner and the student before a student enrolls on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD. At York, the signatories shall include the Dean of YGRS, the Head of Department (or other nominated member of the Departmental Management Team) and the main supervisor; at the partner the signatories shall include a senior institutional representative with the

capacity to sign on behalf of the institution, the head of unit/department (or equivalent) where the student will be based, and the co-supervisor (if applicable).

20. Individual student agreements should follow a University template, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of York and the partner with respect to that individual student and:
- a. Provision of research facilities
 - b. Health and safety
 - c. Attendance at York
 - d. Supervision (including identification of alternative supervisors)
 - e. Pastoral support
 - f. Training
 - g. Research community
 - h. Monitoring and review
 - i. Examination
 - j. Generation of intellectual property (IP)
 - k. Privacy and data-sharing
 - l. Termination of the agreement (including protection for the student, in terms of their ability to complete the PhD, if the partner is, in exceptional circumstances, no longer able to honour its commitments)
 - m. The funding arrangements (fees and costs).

Cohort-based collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs

21. Where a department and a partner are planning to host a number of collaborative off-site or split-site PhD students, an academic from the department at York should be nominated to coordinate the provision and oversee the relationship with the partner. An overarching cohort agreement may be developed to cover common practices across a cohort so that the content of individual student agreements can be minimised (e.g. with the individual student agreements being brief appendices to the overarching cohort agreement). Where the partner is international, it is recommended that, as a first step, the department works with Global Engagement to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the partner.

Suitability of the partner's research environment

22. The department is responsible for checking that the partner is able to provide the required research facilities (e.g. laboratories, libraries, computing facilities, specialist equipment, desk space) and that these are of a suitable standard and, where applicable, broadly comparable to what would be available at York.
23. The department will also be required to undertake a risk assessment and check that the partner has suitable policies in place e.g. with respect to: (i) health and safety (including insurance), (ii) equality and diversity, (iii) research integrity, and (iv) secure data management. To facilitate this process a University checklist shall be provided.

Data sharing and initial intellectual property (IP) agreement

24. A data sharing agreement will need to be in place between York and the partner prior to the application of any students. It is also recommended that an indicative intellectual property agreement is negotiated at this stage to avoid later delay.

Student status and enrolment

25. A student on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD is enrolled on an existing full-time or part-time PhD programme at York (which may be three or four years in duration or part-time equivalent) but their collaborative off-site or split-site status will be recorded and clearly flagged on SkillsForge and SITS. It is accepted that a student may also need to register at the partner but this process should not bestow any rights to an award from the partner.

Admission requirements and process

26. The admission requirements (academic and English language) for a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD are the same as those for the equivalent campus-based PhD programme.
27. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs may or may not be directly advertised. The partner may be involved in the admissions process (e.g. a proposed co-supervisor from the partner may be involved in shortlisting and interviewing) but the final decision on offering a place shall rest with York.
28. As part of the admissions process, a department must consider carefully and discuss with the partner and applicant the suitability of the project(s) and the individual student(s) for this mode of study.
29. Student costs (e.g. for visas, travel and accommodation to meet attendance and in-person supervision requirements) associated with participation in a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD must be clearly stated.

Information

30. Students on collaborative off-site or split-site PhDs should be provided, by their department, with clear written information about studying on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD in the form of an online handbook.

Requirements for attendance at York

31. The University's attendance requirements (see also the in-person supervision requirements) are as follows:

Collaborative split-site PhD	Collaborative off-site PhD
The student will split their time between the partner and York during their enrolment.	The student will spend the vast majority of their time at the partner, with only short and infrequent study visits to York during their enrolment.
Minimum attendance at York: normally eight months across the programme (although may be lower if academically justifiable) including for an induction period (of at least one week) and for the final examination. At least one study visit in the normal period of enrolment must last for more than eight weeks.	Minimum attendance at York: for an induction period (of at least one week) and for the final examination.
Maximum attendance at York: half the normal period of enrolment.	Maximum attendance at York: normally no more than two weeks/year, with no study visits which last for more than eight weeks.

32. Attendance at York will be negotiated on an individual (or cohort) basis, within the attendance constraints specified above, and set out in the individual (or an overarching cohort) student agreement for approval by the relevant department and Dean of YGRS. Attendance at York may be specified in terms of duration (number of weeks at York) and/or presence at particular contact points (e.g. TAP meetings, progression meetings, departmental conferences or other key departmental milestones).
33. Attendance at York should be designed to maximise its value, in terms of advancing the research project and/or supporting the intellectual development of the student (e.g. providing access to specific resources at York, enabling the student to undertake an experiment under the direct supervision of the York supervisor, providing opportunities for the student to participate in training and integrate with the research community).

34. Students must meet the University and departmental attendance requirements. Students who will miss an agreed attendance point as set out in their individual (or overarching cohort) student agreement, due to exceptional circumstances, are required to seek permission from Special Cases Committee (SCC) via application to their Graduate School Board. Students who miss an expected attendance point without SCC approval will be given a formal warning that their enrolment is at risk and may have their enrolment terminated (after a second missed visit).

Attendance at York: practical considerations

35. International students subject to UKVI restrictions will be required to apply for short-term study visas or a Confirmation of Acceptance (CAS) (as applicable) to meet attendance requirements. The timing of attendance requirements will need to be designed with visa restrictions in mind. It is the student's responsibility to apply for visas and meet visa requirements.
36. The University will not organise or provide funding for travel, accommodation and visas (where applicable) for visits to York to meet attendance requirements: the organisation and costs are the responsibility of the student or their funder.

Induction

37. Students on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD are required to visit York for an induction period of at least one week (longer if this is required by their department e.g. for the provision of introductory training) at the start of their programme, at the start of their programme, normally within two months of their first enrolment on the programme.
38. The induction visit should be fully-timetabled and carefully structured to provide maximum value to the students. The induction must include: a formal supervision meeting with feedback on a student's work (e.g. the research proposal), a general PGR departmental induction and a bespoke departmental induction that focuses on their particular needs.
39. Unless there is a good reason to do otherwise, the timing of the induction should be scheduled to coincide with one of the two main University PGR annual start points so that students can attend the YGRS central induction session, GSA welcome activities and standard PGR departmental induction programme.

Appointment of supervisors, co-supervisors and pastoral advisers/mentors

40. The main supervisor for a student undertaking a collaborative off-site and split-site PhD must, in accordance with the PoRD, always be from York.
41. The details of the role of the partner in co-supervising and/or supporting a student should be agreed in advance of the student starting the programme and set out in the individual (or overarching cohort) student agreement.
42. Where suitably qualified staff are available, the partner may provide one or more co-supervisors (subject to the approval of the department at York, as set out in the PoRD). Any co-supervisors from the partner should undertake training to familiarise themselves with York's approach to PGR supervision and relevant policies and procedures.
43. Additionally or alternatively (particularly if the partner cannot provide a co-supervisor for a student), the partner may provide a member(s) of a student's Thesis Advisory Panel. Additionally or alternatively, the partner may provide a pastoral adviser or mentor but in this case it should be clear to the student that this person's role is complementary to, rather than replacing, the pastoral support offered by their supervisor(s).

Supervision

44. Supervision should be conducted in accordance with the rules of the PoRD, and any additional departmental requirements, with the exception that when the student is located at the partner both formal and informal supervision meetings with the York-based supervisor will normally take place via video-conferencing.
45. Of the (minimum) eight formal supervision meetings/calendar year between the York-based supervisor and the student, at least one must be in-person (i.e. where the student and the York-based supervisor are co-located either in York, at the partner, or at another convenient location e.g. an international conference). The department should monitor this requirement to ensure that it is being adhered to. It is considered good practice for a York-based supervisor to visit their student at the partner at least once during the course of the student's PhD.
46. The individual (or overarching cohort) student agreement should include details as to how the requirement for in-person supervision meetings is likely to be met e.g. through attendance at York and/or planned visits to the partner by the student's York supervisor. The University will not organise or provide funding for travel, accommodation and visas (where applicable) for visits by the student to York or other locations to meet the in-person supervision requirements: the organisation and costs are the responsibility of the student or their funder.
47. The purpose and likely frequency of informal supervision meetings and contact should be made clear for the research student by their supervisor, at induction and within the relevant handbook (or equivalent). Departments are strongly encouraged to ensure that some form of contact between the student and their York-based supervisor occurs at least monthly, if not more frequently.

Monitoring and progression

48. The policy and procedures for monitoring and progression for a student undertaking a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD are the same as for a campus-based PhD but, unless otherwise set out in the individual (or overarching cohort) student agreement, TAP and progress review meetings should take place by video-conferencing (with the student and any local co-supervisor or TAP member (as applicable) at the partner). Unless attendance in York for a TAP or progression meeting forms part of a department's attendance requirements, permission does *not* need to be obtained from the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support) for a meeting to be held by video-conferencing.

Research community

49. One of the benefits of undertaking a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD (in comparison to a distance learning PhD), is that the partner will normally be able to provide the student with a local research community. The department at York should, nevertheless, take steps to ensure that students on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD feel part of the research community at York (see the Policy Framework for Distance Learning Research Degree Programmes). The individual (or overarching cohort) student agreement should specify any particular community-building actions for York or the partner, particularly if the research community at the partner is limited.

Training and development

50. Students on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD must complete any training that is mandatory at York, for example the Research Integrity Tutorial, and are expected to complete any recommended training, for example Becoming an Effective Researcher.
51. Research and transferable skills training and support for the professional development may be provided by the partner, by York (either when the student is present in York or by distance learning), or most likely by a combination of the two. Discussion about training needs (particularly where a department mandates particular courses/taught modules) should take place at an early stage, so that details of how

these needs will be met (including the respective responsibilities of York and the partner) can be recorded in the individual (or overarching cohort) student agreement.

52. Departments should take proactive steps to make their departmental training accessible to, and appropriate for, students on collaborative off-site or split-site PhD degrees. This might involve, for instance, facilitating remote participation in training sessions, modifying and recording training sessions for asynchronous consumption, or developing interactive online resources.

Access to facilities and resources

53. Students will have access to the facilities and resources of the partner as set out in the individual (or overarching cohort) agreement, and to the facilities and resources of York when in attendance or as a distance-learner.
54. Students on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD should have the same access to departmental funding opportunities (e.g. conference funds) as students on the equivalent campus-based research degree programme.

Examination

55. The examination process for a student undertaking a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD is the same as for a campus-based PhD. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhD students must attend York for the oral examination and any exception to this rule, due to exceptional circumstances, must be approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment.
56. Where a student on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD has a co-supervisor at the partner, the co-supervisor cannot serve as that student's internal examiner, nor can an external examiner be appointed from the partner.

Transfers

57. Where academically appropriate, subject to any UKVI restrictions (if applicable) and the resolution of any funding issues, and with the permission of the department, partner (where required) and SCC, a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD student may transfer to the equivalent campus-based programme.

Teaching opportunities

58. Access to paid teaching opportunities at York for students on collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs will be limited, and such opportunities will not be available to those who do not have the right to work in the UK. The Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants would apply as normal (e.g. students must meet the training requirements).
59. Students may undertake paid teaching work at the partner, if available, but this should be with the agreement of their supervisor(s) and funder, if applicable. The hours undertaken should be no more than would be permitted for a student on a campus-based PhD to ensure that their research project and work/life balance is not jeopardised.

Student representation and engagement

60. Students on collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs should be included in departmental and University mechanisms for student representation and engagement, as per other PhD students, acknowledging that reasonable adjustments may need to be made to facilitate their participation when located at the partner.

Complaints and appeals

61. Complaints relating to the partner should be raised, initially, directly with the partner but the student shall have the right to escalate any complaint to York if they cannot get satisfactory resolution. Appeals should always be directed to York.

Quality assurance

62. Departments should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, collaborative off-site and split-site PhD students. The effectiveness of collaborative off-site and split-site PhD programmes (with a particular focus on the research environment being provided by the partner) should be specifically considered as part of the Annual Programme Review and Periodic Review processes. The University may also wish, on occasion, to conduct a more in-depth review of collaborative off-site and split-site PhD provision.

63. Memoranda of Understanding and any over-arching cohort agreements should be subject to regular review (normally on a five-year cycle) to ensure that the relationship is working well and that the partner continues to be in good standing and to offer an appropriate research environment.

Appendix 7: Policy Framework for Integrated PhD Programmes

Introduction

1. This is the University's policy framework for Integrated PhD programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the University's [Policy on Research Degrees](#) (PoRD) and with the University's [Regulations for Research Degree Awards](#) (Regulation 2). If there is any inconsistency between the PoRD and this framework, this framework should apply.

The nature and purpose of the Integrated PhD

2. An Integrated PhD programme at York combines taught modules at Master's level, enabling students to broaden and/or deepen their knowledge in a specific area, with a substantive PhD research project. It differs from a standard three-year or four-year PhD programme at York with respect to the volume and timing of the taught element and the award of a Postgraduate Diploma alongside the PhD to successful students.
3. The approval of an Integrated PhD may be of particular value:
 - for interdisciplinary areas of research, where applicants typically do not have the necessary breadth and/or depth of knowledge to start a research project with immediate effect
 - for departments which frequently receive applications from individuals who have funding for a research degree of four years in duration and a Master's degree in the subject area (and so for whom a 1+3 route is not an option) but where the Master's degree has not provided the depth and/or breadth of knowledge that would be required for an individual to start their research project with immediate effect
 - for departments which frequently receive applications from individuals who have a Master's degree in a cognate discipline (and so for whom a 1+3 route is unattractive) but who do not have the depth and/or breadth of knowledge, in the discipline in question, to start a research project with immediate effect (e.g. to facilitate a move from modern languages to linguistics).

Approval process

4. All Integrated PhD programmes should be approved for planning purposes, prior to approval of the academic case being sought from Policies and Programmes Sub-Committee (PPSC). Standard home/international PhD fees apply.
5. Departments will need to ensure that full details of the integrated studies year of the Integrated PhD are supplied, as specified below. The taught element of the integrated studies year must be approved by UTC and/or PPSC as set out in section 1 of the PoRD.
6. Minor exceptions to this framework may be agreed by the PPSC where there is a clear justification (e.g. to meet reasonable requirements from a funding body).

Programme details

Structure and duration

7. An Integrated PhD programme comprises:
 - a. an integrated studies component of one-year duration (or part-time equivalent), which includes a taught component leading to a named Postgraduate Diploma;

- b. a PhD research project of three years duration (or part-time equivalent).
8. An Integrated PhD programme has a normal period of enrolment of four years full-time (eight years part-time), with a minimum enrolment period of three years and nine months full-time (seven years and six months part-time) and a maximum period of enrolment of five years full-time (nine years part-time). Students on an Integrated PhD programme (iPhD students) should plan their research so that they will submit within the normal period of enrolment. If iPhD students exceed their normal period of enrolment they will enter into a continuation period (of up to one year) and be subject to the continuation period policies and procedures as set out in the PoRD (including payment of the continuation fee).

Leave of absence

9. Requests for leave of absence for iPhD students will be dealt with according to the rules and processes for postgraduate research students. If, however, an iPhD student needs to take a leave of absence during the taught element of the integrated studies component, then (depending on the duration and timing of the leave of absence) they may need to take a leave of absence for a full academic year in order to ensure that they receive all the required teaching and undertake all the required assessment for the taught element.

Naming convention and final award

10. An Integrated PhD programme should normally be advertised as PhD (Integrated) in XXXX (where XXXX is the title of the standard PhD programme that the Integrated PhD programme maps onto).
11. Students who successfully complete an Integrated PhD programme will be awarded a PhD in XXXX (e.g. PhD in Linguistics, PhD in Biology), together with the named Postgraduate Diploma (and will also receive a transcript of module marks). The award of the named Postgraduate Diploma will take place at the same time as the award of the PhD.
12. The named Postgraduate Diploma can also be awarded to iPhD students who: (i) at the final examination, fail their PhD or are awarded an alternative qualification, or (ii) withdraw from the Integrated PhD programme, or have their enrolment terminated, having progressed to year two (or part-time equivalent).

Admission requirements and process

13. The academic admission requirements for an Integrated PhD programme are the same as for other PhD programmes, as set out in the University's [Admissions Policy](#) and should align with the department's standard academic admission requirements for a PhD i.e. including the requirement for a Master's degree at a suitable level of attainment if applicable.
14. The English language requirements for entry to an Integrated PhD programme are the same as for admission to a department's non-integrated PhD programmes.
15. Where applicable, prospective students should be asked to submit an outline research proposal during the application process as, although a detailed research proposal can be developed during the integrated studies year, it is important to ensure, from the outset, that there is expertise (and capacity) to supervise the prospective iPhD student in their area of interest. Submission of an outline research proposal can also enable the most appropriate research degree supervisor to be allocated from the start of the Integrated PhD programme (if that is the approach that the department wishes to take).

Entry points and timing of arrival in York

16. Most Integrated PhD programmes will have a single-entry point in October of each academic year (i.e. that corresponds with the start of the standard PGT provision) in order to make use of existing Master's

level taught modules.

17. iPhD students are expected to be present in York for all the teaching associated with the taught element. If an individual accepted onto an Integrated PhD programme is not able (e.g. due to visa issues) to arrive in York before the teaching associated with the taught element starts, then their place on the programme must be deferred until the following academic year.

Recognition of prior learning

18. Given that the key purpose of an Integrated PhD programme is to ensure that students receive a comprehensive package of training, iPhD students are not eligible for any recognition of prior learning towards the taught element. If a department wishes to have flexibility to accommodate the differing academic backgrounds of incoming iPhD students, they may achieve this by setting up a bespoke integrated PhD Diploma with appropriate option modules.

Information

19. All new iPhD students should receive an iPhD handbook in hardcopy or online from their department.

Student status

20. An iPhD student is treated as a postgraduate research student and subject to the rules of the PoRD from the outset of their programme, other than where specified in this framework. In their first year, they should, for example, attend induction events for new postgraduate research students, complete BERT and the Research Integrity Tutorial, have access to postgraduate research student and GTA training opportunities (although it is strongly recommended that they do not undertake any GTA work during the taught element of the integrated studies year to avoid overload), and make use of postgraduate research student facilities and resources.

Design of the academic programme

Integrated studies year

21. The integrated studies component is one year in duration (or part-time equivalent) and should be completed (including any reassessment/resubmission opportunities) within the first year of enrolment (or part-time equivalent). Care must be taken to ensure that there is a reasonable spread of workload across the integrated studies year.
22. The integrated studies year should comprise: (i) a taught element, and (ii) a research element.

Taught element

23. The taught element is 120 credits of assessed taught modules, at least 90 credits of which should be at Master's level or above, with no credits below Honours level (NB modules at Honours level are taken on a pass/fail basis). The 120 credits of taught modules should be presented as a named Postgraduate Diploma, which is aligned with the York pedagogy and documented as a standard new postgraduate taught programme. A named Postgraduate Certificate lower exit award should be specified. All taught modules should be listed in the module catalogue.
24. The taught element may be an existing Postgraduate Diploma (i.e. available for existing PGT students as an entry, transfer or lower exit award) or a bespoke Postgraduate Diploma i.e. approved solely for delivery as part of an Integrated PhD programme.
25. The taught element may focus on research skills and methods training, or on specialist subject knowledge, or a mixture of both. The taught element may: (i) include tutorial modules i.e. which enable a student to study a particular subject in depth supported by tutorials with a named academic; (ii) include laboratory rotations if these are set up as taught modules, including an appropriate assessment

regime (alternatively laboratory rotations may form part of the research element of the integrated studies year); and (iii) enable students to choose, in consultation with their supervisor from defined sets of option modules (which may be from more than one department) to achieve a coherent collection of modules that are most appropriate to their individual circumstances.

26. A Postgraduate Diploma that is approved solely for delivery as part of an integrated PhD programme, may (in accordance with University's [Taught Postgraduate Modular Scheme: Framework for Programme Design](#)) include up to 30 credits at Doctoral level (and exceptionally up to 60 credits at Doctoral level). PPSC will expect a convincing academic rationale for the inclusion of Doctoral level credits. An associated Postgraduate Certificate lower exit award may include no more than 20 credits at Doctoral level.
27. The procedures for the assessment of the taught element are as set out for Postgraduate Diplomas in the Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback (unless otherwise specified in this framework). This includes the identification of an appropriate external examiner for the modules and Postgraduate Diploma if this is not already in place.
28. For full-time iPhD students, it is expected that the taught element will be scheduled towards the start of the integrated studies year, so that an iPhD student can focus on the research element in the latter part of that year. Assuming an October start date, the taught element would normally be completed (including any re-sit opportunities) by the end of the Summer Term at the latest. For part-time iPhD students it is expected that the taught element would be scheduled in the first year.
29. When undertaking the taught element, iPhD students are entitled to access the same learning support as taught postgraduate students.

Research element

30. The research element should be the equivalent 600 hours of notional learning and should comprise: (i) the development of a detailed research proposal for the student's PhD research OR a literature review, AND (ii) a small-scale research project (which may include one or more laboratory rotations) assessed by a written submission. The decision whether to require a research proposal or literature review will be taken by the relevant department (subject to PPSC approval when the iPhD is approved) depending on the nature of the discipline.
31. The details of the assessment of the research element (i.e. including the relative weighting allocated to the research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project, and formats, word lengths, submission dates, re-submission dates and pass/fail assessment criteria for each task) must be specified for each iPhD by the relevant department (subject to PPSC approval when the iPhD is approved). In determining the pass/fail assessment criteria for the research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project, the key issue is whether a student is able to demonstrate readiness for their PhD research project.
32. Departments should specify what tailored support they will provide for iPhD students to help them with the research element. This should be provision separate to/in addition to that provided to MA/MSc students for their dissertation – given the different aims of the research element of the integrated studies year.
33. As the research element does not form part of the Postgraduate Diploma, an iPhD student may incorporate work undertaken as part of the research element into their PhD thesis. The research element is not credit-rated and is not the equivalent of a Master's dissertation (as it is focused on preparation for the PhD research project) meaning that iPhD students who exit having completed the first year (or part-time equivalent) will not be eligible for a Master's degree.

PhD research project

34. The duration of the PhD research project is three years (or part-time equivalent).
35. The format and word length of the PhD thesis should be the same as the equivalent non-Integrated PhD programme in the department.
36. The final examination for an Integrated PhD programme follows the rules set out for PhD programmes in the PoRD.

Supervision

37. Each iPhD student will have a research degree supervisor from the start of their Integrated PhD programme. There are two options:
 - a. the research degree supervisor(s) is appointed at the start of the Integrated PhD programme;
 - b. a provisional research degree supervisor (who might be the nominated programme leader) is appointed at the start of the Integrated PhD programme, with the appointment of the confirmed research degree supervisor(s) by the end of the integrated studies year at the latest.
38. During the integrated studies year, iPhD students should meet regularly with their supervisor (confirmed or provisional) including formal supervision meetings at least every 6-7 weeks as set out in the PoRD (although when they are undertaking the taught element they will not be expected to submit and receive feedback on written work at their formal supervision meetings).

Monitoring and progression

39. A Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) should be appointed by the end of the integrated studies year at the latest and should meet as required by the PoRD from this point onwards (earlier, on an informal basis, if the department wishes).

Progression from the integrated studies year

40. Progression from year one to year two (or part-time equivalent) of an Integrated PhD programme is dependent on:
 - a. obtaining 120 credits from the taught element in accordance with the standard postgraduate taught programme rules of assessment (including the rules on compensation, reassessment and eligibility for merit or distinction). A department may make a case to PPSC for setting the threshold for progression above a pass e.g. that students must obtain a merit or above but if so there must be a clear academic rationale (e.g. that this is the standard expected of students progressing to a PhD from the department's own Master's programmes). If setting the progression threshold above a pass, any permitted exceptions to this rule (e.g. if a student produces an exceptional research proposal/literature review and project) must be clearly outlined from the outset (subject to PPSC approval when the iPhD is approved);
 - b. passing the research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project. The research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project should be assessed by the student's research degree supervisor (or prospective research degree supervisor, if their appointment has not yet been confirmed) and the Graduate Chair or their nominee (who should not be a member of the student's supervisory team or Thesis Advisory Panel) against the approved pass/fail assessment criteria and a consensus reached. Students have one opportunity to resubmit their research proposal/literature review and/or small-scale research project if they do not meet the criteria at the first attempt.

41. iPhD students who meet #40 (a) and (b) above will progress to the second year of the Integrated PhD programme. iPhD students who do not meet #40 (a) and (b) above will have their enrolment on the Integrated PhD programme terminated, but those who have meet #40 (a) will receive the named Postgraduate Diploma as a lower exit award. If a student does not meet #40 (a) or (b), they may still be eligible to receive the named Postgraduate Certificate as a lower exit award.
42. Progression from year one to year two of an Integrated PhD programme, including any resits of taught modules and/or resubmission of the research proposal/literature review and/or small-scale research project, must be completed by the end of the twelfth month following first enrolment (or part-time equivalent).

Progression post integrated studies year

43. Progression from year two to year three (or part-time equivalent) of an Integrated PhD programme follows the rules for the first formal review of progress for a standard three-year PhD programme as per Appendix 2 of the PoRD.
44. Progression from year three to year four (or part-time equivalent) of an Integrated PhD programme follows the rules for the second formal review of progress for a standard three-year PhD programme as per Appendix 2 of the PoRD.

Student representation and engagement

45. iPhD students should be included in departmental and University mechanisms for student representation and engagement, as per other research degree students.

Quality assurance

46. Departments should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, iPhD students. The effectiveness of Integrated PhD programmes should be specifically considered as part of the Annual Programme Review and Periodic Review processes. The University may also wish, on occasion, to conduct a more in-depth review of Integrated PhD provision.

Management of Integrated PhD programmes

47. Each Integrated PhD programme (or suite of related programmes) should have a nominated programme leader who is responsible for overseeing the provision, particularly the integrated studies year. It may be appropriate for the programme leader to serve as a provisional supervisor for students.

Research element assessment details, including model pass/fail criteria

48. To progress from the integrated studies year, in addition to passing (or receiving the required mark in) the taught element, an iPhD student needs to achieve a pass in the research element:

- a research proposal OR a literature review

AND

- a small-scale research project.

Departments should specify:

- o whether iPhD students should complete a research proposal OR a literature review (or whether this can be agreed on a case by case basis between the student and the supervisor);

- o what percentage of the notional 600 hours of the research element they are to devote to the research proposal/literature review vis-a-vis the small-scale research project, which, in turn, will help determine the format and word/page count for the research proposal/literature review vis-a-vis the project submission;
- o the pass/fail criteria for the research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project, utilising or drawing on the model criteria set out below.

Departments should also:

- clarify what support iPhD students should receive from their supervisor (or others) to help them with the different parts of the research element. This should be provision separate to/in addition to that provided to MA/MSc students for their dissertation – given the different aims of the research element of the integrated studies year;
- provide their iPhD students with opportunities to receive formative feedback on one or more partial or full drafts of the research proposal/literature review and the project submission;
- ensure that there is a resubmission opportunity (before the end of the integrated studies year) for both the research/proposal/literature review and project submission to allow students a second opportunity to meet the progression criteria set out below. The resubmission of the research proposal/literature review and/or project, must be completed by the end of the twelfth month following first enrolment (or part-time equivalent).

The pass/fail criteria for the research element of the iPhD should be based on the principle that they should enable a department to determine if an iPhD student (who has already been judged as suitable for admittance to a PhD programme) has demonstrated that they have the required research skills to progress to the PhD research project element of the iPhD (i.e. the equivalent of the start of year one of a standard three or four-year PhD).

The following are model criteria that can either be used as they are or adapted by departments (subject to PPSC approval alongside the approval of the iPhD).

Research proposal

The aim of the research proposal is to ensure that, where a PhD project is largely student-led, the student has developed a comprehensive, workable plan for initiating their PhD research, which should enable them to successfully complete within the normal period of enrolment.

To pass, a student's research proposal should demonstrate the following criteria:

- The research question and derived objectives are clear and appropriate in the context of the initiation of the PhD research
- Expected research outcomes are clearly articulated and should be achievable within the PhD timeframe and resource availability
- In approaching the research question, there is some evidence of the potential for original thought or creativity
- Key risks associated with the research have been identified and, ideally, some suggestions made as to how these might be mitigated
- A range of appropriate literature/sources are correctly cited
- Awareness of applicable research ethics.

Literature review

The aim of the literature review is to enable a student to demonstrate their understanding of key literature/sources relevant to their PhD project. The literature review should normally serve as the starting point for a student's introductory chapter within their PhD thesis.

To pass, a student's literature review should demonstrate the following criteria:

- Provides a comprehensive, critical analysis of relevant literature/sources
- Demonstrates an ability to successfully synthesise disparate literature/sources
- Draws on a wide range of appropriate literature/sources, many which have been identified by the student without input from the supervisor
- Features correctly cited literature/sources and considers the quality of the literature/sources.

Small scale research project

The aim of the small-scale research project is to ensure that students have direct experience of some aspect of primary research relevant to their PhD project, and that the department can ascertain the student's aptitude in this area.

The choice of small-scale research project will vary considerably depending on the discipline (for example, it might be a trial of one or more laboratory techniques, the first analysis of an existing data set, an investigation into a limited number of items from a historical archive, a detailed textual analysis of a small number of primary sources) and its nature may be determined by the supervisor or by the student with guidance from the supervisor. The degree of supervisor guidance must be considered when assessing the project submission. In science subjects, the small-scale research project may include a number of laboratory rotations.

To pass, a student's project submission should meet the following criteria:

- Critical analysis of the context for the project
 - Clear justification for the choice of research method(s)/approach to research and awareness of the limitations of the method(s)/approach (where applicable)
 - Competent application of their chosen research method(s)/approach to research and/or a critical analysis of why problems have arisen and how they might be addressed in future
 - Clearly presented results/outcomes
 - Discussion of the results/outcomes that demonstrates a good level of critical analysis, including an ability to put the results/outcomes in the context of existing knowledge, and some evidence of the potential for original thought or creativity
 - Practical and convincing recommendations for how the work might be taken forward
 - A range of appropriate literature/sources, correctly cited
 - Awareness of applicable research ethics.
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