

# York Graduate Research School

## Policy on Research Degrees 2021-22

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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 postgraduate research degree (PGR) programmes for postgraduate researchers (hereafter referred to as PGRs), supervisors of PGRs and members of Thesis Advisory Panels, Progression Panels, examiners of research degrees, and other University staff with responsibility for PGRs.
- 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 PGR awards ([Regulation 2](#)).
- 1.4 This Policy applies to the degrees of PhD, EngD, MPhil, 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 PGRs 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 PGRs and PGR programmes

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

#### ***Institutional responsibility***

- 1.7 YGRS and University Research Committee are responsible for maintaining an oversight of strategic policy relating to PGRs and PGR programmes.
- 1.8 YGRS is responsible, at institutional level, for the quality assurance and enhancement of the PGR experience and of PGR programmes, including the approval of new PGR programmes.
- 1.9 YGRS monitors PGRs and PGR 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 PGR Administration: PGRA)
    - submission and completion times and rates (from the Business Intelligence Unit and PGRA)
    - pass, referral, fail and withdrawal rates (from PGRA)
    - appeals and complaints (from Special Cases Committee)

- (ii) Annual Programme Review and periodic review processes, which include explicit consideration of PGRs and PGR programmes.

1.10 Operational *institutional* responsibility for PGRs and PGR programmes is as follows:

Area	Office
Admissions	Marketing, Recruitment, Admission and Outreach (MRAO)
Supporting the PGR journey from enrolment through progression to final examination and award	PGR Administration (PGRA)
PGR programme approval, monitoring and review	Academic Quality Team (AQT) (plus the Planning Office for consideration of new programme proposals and major modifications)
PGR induction and training	Research Excellence Training Team (RETT)
Training for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)	Academic Practice
Research policy framework	Research Strategy and Policy Office (RSPO)
Research ethics	University Research Committee (URC) and disciplinary Research Ethics Committees'
Training for PGRs and 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 PGRs and PGR 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 PGR'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 PGRs and PGR programmes.

### ***Approval of PGR programmes***

- 1.12 All new PGR programmes require the approval of the departmental Graduate School Board, Planning Committee for planning approval (may be delegated to the relevant Dean of Faculty) 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. Planning and YGRSB) for the associated PGR 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 new programme pro forma must be submitted with the required supporting documentation, which may include comments (on the relevant pro forma) from an

external assessor. The Chair of YGRSB may decide that comments from an external assessor on a new PGR 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 PGR 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 Planning Committee (delegated to the relevant Dean of Faculty).

***Approval and modification of taught awards and taught components of PGR programmes***

- 1.16 PGRs who embark on a PGR 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 PGRs are permitted or required to enrol on a taught programme (e.g. a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma) alongside their PGR programme for training purposes. PGRs who successfully complete the taught programme and the PGR programme receive *both* awards (PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGR degree on final examination. PGRs only receive an exit taught award if they do not receive a PGR 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 (PGTs) as well as to PGRs then standard procedures for new taught programme approval should be followed. Once a programme has been approved by Planning and the relevant FLTG, PPSC may approve the incorporation of the programme into a named PGR programme as an additional taught award or exit taught award.
- 1.22 Where additional taught awards or exit taught awards are **only** available to PGRs (i.e. not to PGTs), the approval process is as above, but PPSC takes the final decision on approval.
- 1.23 Modifications to additional taught awards or exit taught awards as they apply to PGRs should be approved by the relevant Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, and then the Dean of YGRS.
- 1.24 Any credit-bearing modules created specifically for a PGR 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 for approval (as above) four-year PhD programmes (and part-time equivalents), in addition to their existing three-year PhD programme(s). PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGRs 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 those 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. they are moving between disciplines or their 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 PGR 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 PGR, 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 PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGR:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses;
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of knowledge, applications or understanding of the discipline<sup>1</sup>.

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;

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

- 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.

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

#### Facilities and resources

- 3.6 Departments (working in conjunction with the relevant central services, e.g. Student and Academic Services, Humanities Research Centre and Research Centre for Social Sciences) are responsible for ensuring that PGRs 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 PGRs. Departments are also responsible for ensuring that PGRs 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 PGRs

- 4.1 The selection and admission of PGRs to PGR programmes will be undertaken in accordance with the [University's Admissions Policy](#), which is reviewed and updated annually by MRAO. 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 PGR 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 PGRs have received training and guidance to prepare them for this role (normally at least one individual should have attended the training provided by MRAO).
- 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 PGR.
- 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 PGRs. 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 PGR programmes to facilitate the participation of new PGRs in University, Graduate Student Association (GSA) and departmental induction and training events, and to ensure that PGRs feel part of a cohort.
- 4.6 The University, together with the GSA, provides induction events for PGRs, typically in October and January. PGRs are expected to attend the University induction relevant to their start date. See section 11 for training requirements that form part of the University's induction process.
- 4.7 Departments should provide a comprehensive induction programme for all new PGRs (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 PGR's programme.

- 4.8 Departments should provide new PGRs with an appropriate handbook 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 PGRs.

## 5. Supervision

- 5.1 Supervisors play a fundamental role in supporting PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR.
- 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 PGR's programme *and* they should not be planning to leave the University's employment before the PGR'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 PGR'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 PGR through to successful completion of the PGR programme in question (or a PGR programme 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 PGR. The individual appointed as a subsidiary supervisor should, therefore, be a member of University's ART staff with experience of successful PGR supervision. (*\*i.e. if a supervisor has overseen the successful completion of a PhD PGR, they may then serve as the sole supervisor for PhD, MPhil and MA/MSc (by research) PGRs but a supervisor*

*who has only overseen the successful completion of a MA/MSc (by research) PGR may only serve as the sole supervisor for MA/MSc (by research) PGRs.)*

- 5.7 Where a subsidiary supervisor is appointed, there should be clear agreement, preferably in writing, between the PGR 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 PGR through to successful completion of the PGR programme in question (or a PGR programme 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 PGRs 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 PGR programme, should be made clear to the PGR by the supervisor, at the departmental induction at the outset of the programme, and in the department's handbook for PGRs. PGRs 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 PGR, 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 PGR'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 PGRs (including visiting PGRs) 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 PGR 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 PGR, 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 PGRs 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 PGR, a replacement supervisor should be appointed, after consultation with the PGR, 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 PGRs. Chairs should as soon as practicable inform PGRs 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 PGR'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 PGR, then the department must seek to make alternative, comparable arrangements to supervise the PGR to complete their research degree. This may involve supporting the PGR's transfer to another institution (see section 7), or it may involve seeking comparable specialist supervision from outside the University so that the PGR can complete their PGR programme at York.
- 5.18 If a PGR 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 PGR feels unable to approach the aforementioned members of their department, the PGR should arrange to speak in confidence to the Dean of YGRS, who will advise the PGR 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 PGR they should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss this directly with their PGR, 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 PGR 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 PGR or a supervisor.
- 5.21 The academic judgement as to whether an alternative supervisory arrangement is adequate for the PGR's research project ultimately rests with the Graduate School Board.

## **6. Responsibilities of PGRs and supervisors**

- 6.1 The responsibilities of PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR include:

- (i) introducing the PGR to the department, its facilities and procedures, and to other PGRs 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 PGR's research programme, reporting on progress to the departmental Graduate School Board, and ensuring the PGR is aware of the need to submit the thesis by the specified deadline;
- (iv) encouraging the PGR 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 PGR) regular contact with the PGR, including during any periods in which the PGR is working on their research away from the University, and being accessible to the PGR to give advice;
- (vi) having input into the assessment of the PGR's development needs, and ensuring that instruction is provided in research methods and other academic skills relevant to the PGR's research;

- (vii) monitoring and supporting the PGR's professional development (see section 9);
- (viii) providing timely, constructive and effective feedback on the PGR's work and overall progress within the programme;
- (ix) ensuring that the PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGR) that appropriate ethical approval is obtained **before** research commences;
- (xii) ensuring that the PGR 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 PGR under the [University's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy Statement and Arrangements](#);
- (xiv) providing effective pastoral support and, where appropriate, referring the PGR to other sources of such support within the University;
- (xv) helping and encouraging the PGR to interact with others working in the field of research (for example, encouraging the PGR 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 PGR to submit conference papers and articles to refereed journals;
- (xvii) maintaining the necessary supervisory expertise;
- (xviii) exercising sensitivity to the diverse needs of individual PGRs, including international PGRs 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 PGRs' status and personal circumstances (including illness), working hours and holidays

### 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 All PGRs should plan their research (and should be actively encouraged to do so by their supervisors and departments) so that they will submit within the normal period of enrolment or, in the case of PGRs on funded programmes (and where this required by the funder e.g. UKRI research councils), within the funded period (where the funded period extends beyond the normal period of enrolment but ends before the maximum period of study). 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 PGRs is pro rata to the period of full-time study. Normally part-time PGRs are 0.5 full-time-equivalent.
- 7.4 A PGR 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 PGR will still be required to pay the full fees for the programme of study.

- 7.5 The maximum period between the PGR'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.

### **Continuation period**

- 7.6 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 in exceptional circumstances). Only the University Special Cases Committee (SCC) can grant an extension to the maximum period of study for a PGR and this will only be done in [exceptional circumstances](#).
- 7.7 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 PGRs should not normally be undertaking any laboratory, archival or fieldwork during their continuation period. Access to laboratory, archival or fieldwork facilities for PGRs 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.

### **PGRs who exceed the normal period of enrolment with permission**

- 7.8 PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR's award. Departments should provide written guidance on the facilities available to PGRs who have exceeded the normal period of enrolment.
- 7.9 PGRs 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's [Attendance and Engagement Management Policy](#). Departments should provide written guidance for PGRs on the level of supervisory support that can be expected if the normal period of enrolment is exceeded with permission. PGRs can expect to receive more limited support than is the expectation during the normal period of enrolment; nevertheless, PGRs 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.

### **Illness and leave of absence**

- 7.10 PGRs can [self-certify](#) for short-periods of ill-health, but longer periods require medical evidence. International PGRs subject to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) restrictions who will be absent from their programme due to medical or personal reasons for more than seven days should seek advice from the Immigration Advice Service and must follow either the procedure for [authorised absence](#)

(for periods up to 60 days) or the procedure for Leave of Absence. Other PGRs who will be absent from their programme for more than seven days due to medical or personal reasons must contact their department for permission or, for an absence of one month or longer, follow the procedure for Leave of Absence.

- 7.11 A [leave of absence](#) allows a PGR to take an authorised break in their studies for a documented medical or personal reason. 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 PGR 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 PGR's first month of enrolment.
- 7.12 Any PGR 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 PGR's visa may impose additional restrictions upon their ability to take leave of absence, which are beyond the control of the University.
- 7.13 During a leave of absence, PGRs 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**

- 7.14 An extension of submission deadline is required for a PGR 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 PGR'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.
- 7.15 An extension request will not be considered until the PGR 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**

- 7.16 A PGR may request a transfer to a different PGR programme where 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.
- 7.17 Where a PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGRs initially enrolled on an MPhil and wishing to transfer to a PhD/EngD) to ensure that there is the same rigorous assessment of the PGR's ability to complete the MPhil/PhD/EngD degree within the required timeframe as for PGRs initially enrolled for those degrees.

- 7.18 Where a PGR 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 PGR 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.

- 7.19 A PGR 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 PGR will complete any additional requirements of the four-year programme. A PGR 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**

- 7.20 PGRs 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 PGRA. Recommendations will be considered by PGRA and approved under delegated authority or referred to SCC for consideration where necessary ([www.york.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/issues/academic/research/](http://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**

- 7.21 Full-time PGR 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 (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 PGRs and supervisors should ensure that working hours are not excessive.
- 7.22 Subject to any conditions imposed by the PGR's research council (or other sponsor/funding body), any UKVI restrictions, and the approval of their supervisor, PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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.
- 7.23 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 PGRs) on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board or supervisor respectively. Such exceptions may not be possible if PGRs are subject to UKVI

restrictions.

## Holidays

- 7.24 PGRs 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 PGRs is 27 days (plus public holidays and University closure days) in any year. PGRs are responsible for requesting and recording their annual leave in line with departmental policy. PGRs who receive a stipend from or via the University of York should be aware that failure to utilise their full annual leave entitlement does not, in any circumstances, result in the University owing backdated 'holiday pay' (as a stipend is not a salary and therefore untaken annual leave cannot be considered paid leave not received).
- 7.25 Departments should have a system in place for the approval and tracking of PGRs' 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

- 7.26 In exceptional cases, a PGR may wish to transfer into or out of the University of York. This is most likely to be the case when the PGR's main supervisor is transferring from one institution to another and the PGR wishes to move with them.
- 7.27 If a PGR wishes to transfer from York to another university, this will be dependent on the decision of the other institution to accept the PGR. Permission may also have to be gained from the research council (or other sponsor/funding body). A copy of the data produced by the PGR must be deposited with the University before departure (see the University's Research Data Management Policy).
- 7.28 If a PGR 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 PGRA 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 PGR 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.).
- 7.29 If a PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR progress are picked up in good time. Departments may make a case for an extension to the progression deadline in accordance with stated policy.

## Entry with advanced standing

- 7.30 Exceptionally, permission may be granted, on the recommendation of the relevant Graduate Chair, for a shortened minimum PhD enrolment period for an individual (two years full-time; four years part-time) on the basis of their prior experiential learning in research (for example, for an

experienced industrial researcher). This decision may be made: (i) pre-enrolment with approval by the Dean of YGRS or (ii) post-enrolment, but before the first formal review of progress, with approval by the SCC. A department's recommendation for a shortened minimum PhD enrolment period must explain how an individual's prior experiential learning in research provides them with the skills (academic as well as practical) to complete a PhD in a shorter duration. A department's procedure for assessing prior experiential learning in research must be approved by PPSC and should be a robust, fully-documented process, which may be linked, where appropriate, to professional status (e.g. chartership). If a PGR is granted approval for a shortened minimum PhD enrolment period under this scheme, they must meet the criteria for a second formal review of progress no later than 12 months (or part-time equivalent) after commencing their programme. If they do not meet the criteria for the second formal review of progress at the first attempt, they may then be assessed against the criteria for the first formal review of progress and, if successful (at the first or second attempt), continue on their PhD programme but revert to the standard minimum PhD enrolment period. PGRs with approval for a shortened minimum enrolment period are still required to pay the full fees for the programme of study.

### International PGRs

- 7.31 For sponsored international PGRs (i.e. those subject to UKVI regulations), all time limits and changes to status etc. are subject to current [Home Office visa regulations](#). Sponsored international PGRs must be monitored by departments in accordance with the University's [Attendance and Engagement Management Policy](#); this includes the monitoring of formal supervisory meetings and Thesis Advisory Panel meetings (and the additional points of contact required for PGRs who exceed the normal period of enrolment).

## 8. Progress and review arrangements

- 8.1 Regular review of a PGR's progress is essential to maximise the likelihood of the PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR will have a Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP). The principal purposes of the panel are to review the progress of the PGR's research programme and Professional Development Plan (PDP), and to supplement, where appropriate, the advice and guidance given to the PGR 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 PGRs. The panel will be appointed within the first three months of the PGR's enrolment period, and

the PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR feels unable to approach the aforementioned members of their department, the PGR should arrange to speak in confidence to the Dean of YGRS, who will advise the PGR 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 PGRs, the TAP will meet with the PGR at least once within every six-month period (i.e. in months 1-6, 7-12, etc., for a full-time PGR). For part-time PGRs, the TAP will meet with the PGR at least once a year. Any member of the panel, or the PGR, 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 PGR's normal enrolment period. The purpose and target dates of the TAP meetings to be held during the PGR programme should be made clear to the PGR by the supervisor at the outset of the programme.
- 8.8 The main supervisor and PGR are responsible for ensuring that TAP meetings take place on schedule. Departments should record the dates of each TAP meeting on SkillsForge. PGRAs 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 PGRs.
- 8.9 In preparation for a TAP meeting, a PGR 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 PGR'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 PGR (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 PGR should contact the Graduate Chair or Chair of the Board of Studies or Head of Department. If the issue remains unresolved, a PGR should contact the Dean of YGRS for advice.

### ***Review of supervision***

- 8.12 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR.

- 8.13 Departments should clarify to PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGR, offering the PGR an opportunity to provide feedback on their supervisory relationship in a safe environment. If any concerns about the supervisory arrangements are raised by the PGR in this way, it is the role of the independent TAP member(s) to discuss possible solutions with the PGR 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, PGRs 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. PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGRs

*NOTE: PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGRs (towards the end of a PGR's academic year) and on a biennial basis for part-time PhD and MPhil PGRs. 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 PGR is assessed against the relevant University progression criteria by a progression panel. PGRs are permitted a maximum of two opportunities to meet the relevant University progression criteria at each formal review of progress. If a PGR 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 PGR should comprise at least two individuals and be independent of the PGR'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 PGR supervision in the broad disciplinary area within which the PGR is based.
- 8.22 Progression panels are not expected to make detailed judgements about a PGR's research project, nor to direct the PGR's future work; rather, they are required to determine, on the basis of the evidence from the PGR and the supervisor's report, if the PGR 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. PGRs 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):

<b>Which progression point?</b>	<b>FT PGR First Attempt Timing</b>	<b>FT PGR Second Attempt Timing</b>	<b>PT PGR First Attempt Timing</b>	<b>PT PGR Second Attempt Timing</b>
<b>PhD/EngD &amp; MPhil</b> First Formal Review of Progress	9-12 Months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	17-24 Months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
<b>PhD/EngD</b> Second Formal Review of Progress	21-24 Months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	41-48 Months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
<b>4 Year PhD/EngD</b> Third Formal Review of Progress	33-36 Months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	65-72 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 PGRs should provide to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria (see Appendix 2). Evidence from the PGR is considered alongside the

supervisor's report on the PGR'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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR has met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria, and make a recommendation regarding PGR progression.
- 8.28 If a department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR and/or the supervisor's report and/or the agreed TAP reports (if applicable), to recommend that an individual PGR be progressed, then a meeting at which the PGR 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 PGR every opportunity to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria.**

### ***Second attempt at meeting the criteria***

- 8.30 If, at a PGR's first attempt, a progression panel decides that a PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, it should recommend that the PGR be progressed. If, however, the progression panel decides that the PGR 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 PGR will be deemed to have failed the progression point and the progression panel must recommend that the PGR be transferred to an MPhil programme (for PGRs enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or* that the PGR be transferred to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or* that the PGR's enrolment with the University be terminated. The progression panel should provide reasons for its recommendation.

- 8.34 If a PGR 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 PGR will be bound by the regulations and requirements of their new programme.
- 8.36 A PGR 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 PGR 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](#), PGRs 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 All new PGRs are required to complete the online 'Research Integrity Tutorial' (see section 11). PGRs are expected to complete the 'Being an Effective Researcher' (BERT) and 'Information Security Awareness' online tutorials within six months of the start of their programme. PGRs can access the tutorials on the VLE ([vle.york.ac.uk](http://vle.york.ac.uk)). Departments are responsible for ensuring that their PGRs have completed the tutorials. PGRs are required to undertake Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) training prior to teaching or demonstrating (see below). PGRs may also be required by their departmental Graduate School Board to undertake subject-specific training (see below).
- 9.3 Much of the training that PGRs 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 [vitae.ac.uk](http://vitae.ac.uk)).
- 9.4 PGRs 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 PGRs 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. PGRs are responsible for ensuring that these requirements are met.

### Professional development planning

- 9.5 PGRs are entitled and expected to spend a minimum of 10 days (pro rata for part-time PGRs) 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 PGRs 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 PGR's research programme and its purpose is to prompt reflection on, and discussion about, the PGR's personal, professional and career development. The process for ensuring that a PGR maintains a PDP is as follows:
- (i) *initial analysis* (by six months for full-time PhD/EngD/MPhil PGRs, by three months for full-time MA/MSc by PGRs). PGRs 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*. PGRs 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 PGR'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 PGR has made in addressing their PDP (PGRs 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 PGRs only).
- 9.7 PGRs are encouraged to take advantage of the careers [advice and guidance](#) available to them. PGRs can use their York email address to access the [extensive Vitae Careers Resources](#).

### Departmental training requirements, including taught modules

- 9.8 The Graduate School Board is responsible for deciding whether PGRs on a particular PGR 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 PGRs' PGR programmes), (ii) reasonable (achievable within the time-frame available without negative impact on a PGR'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 PGRs 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 PGR work.

- 9.11 Departmental training requirements must be explained to the PGRs at departmental induction and specified in the department's handbook for PGRs. PGRs 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 PGR has already completed a relevant MRes programme they might be eligible to gain an exemption from certain compulsory methodology courses/modules). Where PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGRs.
- 9.13 All modules taken for credit by PGRs must be overseen by a taught external examiner in line with University's standard procedures. Where PGRs 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 PGRs registered on that module. Where PGRs 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 PGR does not meet the relevant University progression criteria). Failure to meet departmental training requirements should not, on its own, be grounds for a PGR to be discontinued from their programme or to fail a formal progression point unless this option is explicitly approved for a particular PGR programme by YGRSB.

#### **Role of PGRs in teaching and demonstrating**

- 9.15 Departments are encouraged to offer PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGR programmes

- 10.1 Departments must have in place appropriate mechanisms for: (i) PGRs 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, PGR administrators, alumni, employers and collaborating organisations.
- 10.2 At the end of each Thesis Advisory Panel meeting PGRs are asked to comment confidentially on the quality of the supervision received and on the PGR/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 PGR representatives. Each department must ensure that there is at least one PGR 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 PGRs and their programmes are fully covered and, where relevant, issues are flagged for consideration by YGRSB.
- 10.6 YGRSB will ensure that the institution's Annual Programme Review and Periodic Review processes pay due attention to PGRs and their programmes. The GSA represents PGRs on relevant University committees.

## 11. Research integrity and ethics

- 11.1 In line with the UUK Concordat to support research integrity, PGRs 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 PGR's research (including any issues relating to the University's duty of care to the PGR) must be identified at the earliest opportunity (ideally before admission) by the supervisor and the PGR, 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 PGR 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 PGRs with guidance on good research practice, with reference to the University's policy framework, and the avoidance of academic misconduct.

- 11.4 PGRs 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) PGRs when the thesis is submitted for examination, and by MPhil, PhD and EngD PGRs at the first formal review of progress (or, for pre-August 2016 entry MPhil and PhD PGRs at thesis submission/confirmation of enrolment respectively). PGRs who have not completed the task will not be examined/considered for progression.
- 11.5 PGRs 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 PGRs and regards any form of academic misconduct as an extremely serious matter. PGRs 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. PGRs are expected to familiarise themselves and conform to the [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#) in all their work. PGRs are bound by the SCA's [Guidance on proofreading and editing](#).
- 11.7 Allegations of misconduct by PGRs 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 PGR'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 PGR'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 PGR's enrolment at the University. Where a member of staff is also a PGR 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 PGR's progression or the outcome of the examination may be made until the misconduct has been investigated.

## **12. Assessment**

- 12.1 Assessment rules for PGR programmes are overseen by the SCA and exceptions to these rules must be approved by the SCA. Exceptions to these rules (e.g. in relation to the number of internal and/or external examiners, the timing of the examination, and/or the addition of a public defense) are often required for double and joint PhDs with international partners (see section 15).

### **Nature of the thesis**

- 12.2 Assessment for a PGR award will normally be on the basis of a thesis, but with the approval of

YGRSB the assessment for a specified PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRs. Graduate School Boards must specify the length of the thesis (or the exact nature and extent of other materials) for an MPhil and for an MA (by research) and/or MSc (by research) even if these are only available as transfer or exit awards. The thesis (main body of the text) must be written in English. If there are exceptional grounds for a thesis to be submitted in a language other than English this must be approved by SCA on the request of the departmental Graduate School Board.
- 12.4 Where a PGR programme 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGR 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 relevant Graduate Chair. PGRA 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 PGR 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 independent 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 candidate 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 their PGR 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 candidate 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 candidate's thesis. An internal examiner should not have served as an official or unofficial supervisor to the PGR concerned and should not have advised on the final drafting of the PGR's thesis.
- 12.15 A member of the TAP (other than the supervisor(s)) or a member of a PGR'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 [PGRA](#) for consideration (decision taken by the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support) or their designated alternate).
- 12.16 If an internal examiner is appointed who has not had previous experience of being a PGR 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 candidate'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 PGRA and if necessary will be referred onwards to SCA. The same external examiner may be appointed to examine no more than two PGR candidates in the same department in any 12-month period, and no more than four PGR 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 PGR in the proposed external examiner's department. An external examiner for a taught degree programme may be nominated for appointment as an external examiner for a PGR.

### **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 PGRA as soon as possible, and no later than four weeks after receipt. PGRA will contact the candidate 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 degree of MA/MSc (by research) may be required, as a condition of their 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) 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, there should be procedures in place (for example, a presentation by the candidate with the internal examiner present) for the department to ensure that the work submitted for examination is the candidate's own.
- (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 independent chair, independent observer or the supervisor).
- 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 PGRs 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 independent 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 PGRA (acting under powers delegated from the SCA) with candidate and examiners copied in. 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 (and/or independent chair) must all be present at the oral examination. The oral examination should be an in-person meeting at the University of York unless alternative arrangements are approved (see below).
- 12.30 PGRA (acting under powers delegated from the SCA) may grant permission for the oral examination to be held away from the University of York as long as the premises are suitable for conducting an oral examination. For permission to be granted, a proposal must be sent to PGRA with the candidate and examiners copied in, with the candidate and the external examiner(s) given a chance to object.
- 12.31 PGRA (acting under powers delegated from the SCA) may grant permission for one or more of the parties to participate in the oral examination by video-conferencing. For permission to be granted, a proposal must be sent to PGRA with the candidate and examiners copied in, with the candidate given a chance to object. See Appendix 1 for further guidance.
- 12.32 Each examiner should prepare a preliminary report on the thesis (on the correct form in the candidate'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.
- 12.33 Before the oral examination, the supervisor should ensure that the examiners are made aware of any disabilities or other circumstances (e.g. exceptional stress) that may affect the candidate's performance and if the candidate needs specific arrangements to be put in place because of disability, exceptional stress and/or cultural differences. 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.

- 12.34 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 independent chair (see above), the independent chair shall submit a brief report on the conduct of the oral examination to the SCA. 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 relevant Graduate Chair may be present at the oral examination as a silent spectator.
- 12.35 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.
- 12.36 Candidates should have access to a copy of their thesis in 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 research should be presented 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 complete the Examination Outcome form and Examiners Joint Report form (in the candidate'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 candidate has satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned.

12.41 The Examiners Joint 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' Joint 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 PGRA of any corrections to be made to their thesis. Examiners should submit their list of corrections in the Examiners Joint Report form and submit any other corrections material (e.g. an annotated thesis) to PGRA within two weeks of the examination. PGRA will process and send the corrections to the candidate 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 PGRA (via the University Drop-Off system) within three months of the PhD/EngD/MPhil candidate 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. PGRA will send the corrected thesis to the internal examiner, who should consider the corrections and send a completed corrections approval form to PGRA 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 PGRA, who will forward it to the candidate and the supervisor. PGRA 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](#) and their research data in accordance with the [Research Data Management Policy](#). 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 PGRA, will mean that the candidate will not have met the requirements of the degree, and will be deemed to have failed.
- 12.48 The ratification of the award following examination will usually be communicated to the candidate within two weeks of the final deposit being made to the White Rose E-thesis Online repository.

## 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 Chair (acting on behalf of Graduate School Board) is unable to resolve the disagreement, the examiners should submit individual reports to PGRA to be put 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. PGRA will send an official letter of notification to the candidate once the examiners' report has been received in PGRA 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 PGRA 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 provide advice on the Corrections/Revisions form (in the candidate's Google examination folder) concerning the points which should be borne in mind by the candidate when revising the thesis. This should be submitted to PGRA alongside the Examiners Joint Report Form within two weeks of the examination.
- 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 candidate requires any clarification regarding the required revisions after receipt of the examination report, the candidate should contact their supervisor who can then judge if it is necessary to request further clarification from the internal examiner. Neither candidate 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 candidate and the extent of the revisions needed. The University accepts that there may be cases in which the candidate/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 PGRs 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. PGRs 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. PGRs 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 PGR programme, and career progression information.
- 13.2 PGRs 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. PGRs should also be encouraged to submit work for publication during the course of their studies,

where appropriate. PGRs 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 set out in the [Policy on the Publication of Research](#), all theses deposited by PGRs after examination will be available to the general public, in full, for consultation and for reproduction (as permitted in copyright law), unless approval is obtained for embargo or redaction as set out below).
- 13.4 A thesis may be embargoed (i.e. withheld from the general public and, with the exception of an abstract, none of the material reproduced) 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 (copyright guidance is provided by the Library), or; (vi) exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In considering whether to embargo or redact a thesis, a PGR and their supervisor(s) must ensure that they take into account all appropriate considerations, including intellectual property issues and the Research Data Management expectations.
- 13.5 A thesis may be embargoed, subject to a valid reason as set out in 13.4, for a maximum period as set out in the terms and conditions of the party responsible for funding the PGR's research, if agreed by all parties at the outset. The PGR and their supervisor(s) are jointly responsible for adhering to the funder's terms and conditions. If there are no funder terms and conditions, then a thesis may be embargoed, subject to a valid reason as set out in 13.4, for: (i) up to 12 months from the date of Award with the approval of the PGR and their supervisor(s), (ii) between 13 and 36 months (36 months being the maximum) from the date of Award with the approval of the PGR, their supervisor(s) and the Graduate Chair. An extension which takes the total period of embargo to a maximum of 12 months can be approved by the PGR and their supervisor(s); an extension which takes the total period of embargo to 13-16 months must be approved by the Graduate Chair in addition to the PGR and their supervisor(s). Lifting an embargo in advance of the set date requires the consent of the PGR and their supervisor(s). If a dispute about the embargo of a thesis arises between the PGR and their supervisor(s), the decision of the supervisor(s) is final; if a dispute arises between supervisors, the decision of the Graduate Chair is final.
- 13.6 A thesis may be permanently embargoed in the following circumstances: (i) contractual agreement with an external sponsor; (ii) issues of national or personal security, or (iii) when requested by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research for a breach of the [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#). All requests for permanent embargo must be approved by the SCA..
- 13.7 With the approval of their supervisor(s), subject to a valid reason as set out in 13.4, a PGR may deposit a redacted version of the thesis, with the examined (unredacted) copy held by the University. Redaction for third-party copyright infringement will be indefinite unless notification of clearance is received.
- 13.8 Except by formal agreement between the PGR and an external organisation, copyright in the original material in a thesis is owned by the PGR. 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 PGR 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 PGR according to the University's Intellectual Property Regulation ([Regulation 12](#)).
- 13.9 Where the PGR studentship is sponsored by a commercial or other external organisation, such as

UKRI, to which the University owes contractual responsibilities, the supervisor will ensure that the PGR receives and, where appropriate, signs a copy of the contract covering the research.

## 14. PGR complaints and appeals

- 14.1 The University has a [complaints procedure](#) for dealing with complaints of an academic and non-academic nature from PGRs and others. There is a separate [procedure](#) for dealing with complaints relating to harassment or bullying of any kind.
- 14.2 PGRs 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 PGRs on distance learning PGR programmes)

- 15.1 Non distance learning PGRs 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 PGRs subject to UKVI restrictions to undertake research away from York may be limited by UKVI rules and the University cannot override these restrictions.
- 15.2 Where a PGR is undertaking research away from York, the main supervisor retains primary responsibility for maintaining an oversight of the PGR 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 PGR is away from York.
- 15.3 Where a PGR 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 [PGRA](#) for the use of video-conferencing (decision taken by the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support) or their designated alternate).
- 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 PGR may spend undertaking research away from York will normally be up to twelve months for a full-time PhD PGR, nine months for a full-time MPhil PGR or six months for a full-time MA/MSc (by research) PGR (or equivalent periods for part-time PGRs).
- 15.5 PGRs 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 PGRA when PGRs are undertaking research away from York.

- 15.6 PGRs who enter into a continuation period may be based away from York for some or all of their continuation period. PGRs subject to UKVI restrictions who remain in the UK must continue to meet the obligations under the University's [Attendance and Engagement Management 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 PGR 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.

### **PGR programmes delivered in collaboration with others**

- 15.8 The University recognises that there are circumstances in which the value of a PGR 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 PGR enrolled on a PGR 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 PGRs**

- 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 PGR is based wholly or partly in industry, the PGR, the department and the company will be bound by an individual PGR agreement which should be sent to [PGRA](#) (for approval by the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support) or their designated alternate).

### **Arrangements involving academic institutions for individual York PGRs**

#### ***External supervision and limited external academic input***

- 15.11 An **individual** PGR enrolled on a PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRs***

- 15.12 An individual PGR enrolled for a PGR programme at York may undertake a period of research at another academic institution (including enrolment as a visiting PGR) as part of their York programme. Such PGRs 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 PGR, nine months for a full-time MPhil PGR or six months for a full-time MA/MSc (by research) PGR (or equivalent periods for part-time PGRs). 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 leading to a University of York award only*

- 15.13 A departmental Graduate School Board may seek approval from YGRSB for a PGR 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 PGR, nine months for a full-time MPhil PGR or six months for a full-time MA/MSc (by research) PGR, or equivalent periods for part-time PGRs) which may involve enrolment at the partner institution as a visiting PGR 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 PGRs and the result will be recorded on the PGRs' 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 PGR experience will not be compromised. Senate approval must be sought for joint or double PhD programmes.

## 16. Arrangements for non-York PGRs

### Supervision of individual non-York PGRs by York academics

- 16.1 An academic at York may serve as a subsidiary supervisor (co-supervisor) for an individual PGR enrolled on a PGR 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 PGR concerned any rights or benefits associated with enrolment at York, nor any entitlement to an award from York.

### Incoming visiting PGRs

- 16.2 An individual PGR enrolled at another awarding academic institution may enrol as a visiting PGR 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 PGRs pay tuition fees at York pro rata to their period of study. Visiting PGRs are not eligible for the award of any qualification from York. Visiting PGRs should receive the same supervisory input as registered PGRs. Visiting PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGR records for these individuals.

*This Policy applies to all PGRs who commenced a PGR programme after October 2013. The Policy also applies to PGRs who commenced a PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 independent 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 PGRs

- 1.4 Graduate School Boards are asked to ensure that their PGRs are aware that second progress review meetings/oral examinations will be recorded and understand the reasons for this. PGRs should be notified that the recordings will be held and treated in confidence.

### Equipment including the use of back-up recording devices/methods

- 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). Departments should ensure that there is a back up means of recording the second progress review meeting/oral examination (this might include recording using a mobile phone) in case the chosen

method fails. If the back-up recording method is used, everyone present should be asked to give their consent when the recording starts and the recording should be treated in accordance with the policy.

### **Connection problems when video-conferencing**

- 1.6 Where participation by video-conferencing has been approved, participation in a second progress review meeting/oral examination should always start as an audio-video conference call. Should connection problems arise at a point where the examiners can not reasonably conclude the second progress review meeting/oral examination, the review meeting/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 review meeting/oral examination can be continued in an appropriate format. If consent to continue as audio-only is not given and /or recording cannot be continued in an appropriate format, PGRA must be informed and the remainder of the second progress review meeting/oral examination must be rescheduled as soon as possible (within 48 hours unless permission is requested from SCA for a longer delay).

### **Failure of recording**

- 1.7 If the recording fails completely during a second progress review meeting/oral examination (i.e. there is a failure of the original and all backup means of recording), at a point where the examiners can not reasonably conclude the review meeting/oral examination, PGRA must be informed and the remainder of the review meeting/oral examination must be rescheduled as soon as possible (within 48 hours unless permission is requested from SCA for a longer delay). Any notes taken by the examiners during the second progress review meeting/oral examination should be copied by the department and sent to PGRA where they will be kept for 12 months, or until the investigation of any appeal or complaint arising from the second progress review meeting/examination is complete, whichever is later.

### **Recording the examination**

- 1.8 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 PGR's name and student number and the date of the second progress review meeting/oral examination is appropriately linked to the recording.
- 1.9 The chair of the progression panel/internal examiner (or, in cases where there are two external examiners and no internal examiner, the independent 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 PGR 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 PGR and the progression panel/examiners, should be recorded.
- 1.10 After the second progress review meeting/oral examination, the recording should be sent to PGRA for secure storage. No copy of the recording should be made, nor should it be listened to in the department.

## **Storage of recordings**

- 1.11 The recording will be stored securely by the PGRA. 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**

- 1.12 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 PGR'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 PGR. The recording cannot be released to a third party under the Freedom of Information Act because it holds the PGR'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**

- 1.13 Grounds for appeal:
- a) PGRs may not appeal against the academic judgement of progression panel/examiners;
  - b) PGRs 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 PGR'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 PGR 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**

- 1.14 The circumstances in which permission may be sought to employ an independent observer in place of a recording are if recording would present a PGR 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).

- 1.15 The independent observer should be an academic member of University staff in the PGR's discipline or a related area, but need not be an expert on the subject of the thesis. The PGR'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.
- 1.16 It is essential that these arrangements are made well in advance of the second progress review meeting/oral examination and conveyed to the PGR and progression panel/examiners.

## Appendix 2: Policy on PhD/EngD and MPhil PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRs on PhD, EngD and MPhil programmes are making satisfactory progress. A formal review of progress should give a PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGRs (towards the end of a PGR's academic year) and on a biennial basis for part-time PhD and MPhil PGRs.
- 1.5 Formal reviews of progress are not required for entry into a continuation period, where this is permitted. This means that a PGR on a three-year PhD programme (and part-time equivalent) will have two formal reviews of progress, a PGR on a four-year PhD or EngD programme (and part-time equivalent) will have three formal reviews of progress, and a PGR 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 PGR is assessed against the relevant University progression criteria by a progression panel. The progression panel is independent of the PGR's supervisor(s) to gain an external perspective on the progress that a PGR is making, and to ensure that the supervisor's relationship with the PGR is developmental, rather than judgemental.
- 1.7 PGRs are permitted a maximum of two opportunities to meet the relevant University progression criteria at each formal review of progress. If a PGR 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 PGRs should provide to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria. Evidence from the PGR is considered alongside the supervisor's report on the PGR's progress and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports.
- 1.11 The progression panel will consider the evidence from the PGR 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 PGR has met, exceeded<sup>2</sup> or not met the relevant University progression criteria and also make a recommendation regarding PGR progression.
- 1.12 If the progression panel decides that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, it should recommend:
- (i) that the PGR be progressed;
- if, however, the progression panel decides that the PGR has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria, it may recommend:
- (ii) that the PGR be given a second opportunity to meet the relevant University progression criteria); *or*
- (iii) that the PGR be invited to transfer to an MPhil programme (for PGRs enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or*
- (iv) that the PGR be invited to transfer to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or*
- (v) that the PGR 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 PGRA (which manages this process in SkillsForge) but PGRA will refer any difficult cases to SCA.
- 1.15 PGRs are reminded that the decision of a progression panel does not serve as a prediction for the outcome of the final examination.

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

## 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR should comprise at least two individuals and be independent of the PGR'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 PGR supervision in the broad disciplinary area within which the PGR 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 PGR's research project, nor to direct the PGR's future work, rather they are required to determine, on the basis of the evidence from the PGR and the supervisor's report, if the PGR meets the relevant University criteria for progression (which are threshold requirements).
- 1.22 The PGR 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 PGR on an individual basis. In this case, the non-supervisory member(s) of the PGR'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 PGR'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 PGR is under consideration), to deal with all the progress review meetings for a cohort of PGRs. 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

Which progression point?	FT PGR First Attempt Timing	FT PGR Second Attempt Timing	PT PGR First Attempt Timing	PT PGR Second Attempt Timing

<b>PhD/EngD and MPhil</b> First Formal Review of Progress	9-12 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	17-24 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
<b>PhD/EngD</b> Second Formal Review of Progress	21-24 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	41-48 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
<b>4 Year PhD/EngD</b> Third Formal Review of Progress	33-36 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	65-72 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 PGRs making a second attempt.

1.27 Where a PGR commences a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme outside a cohort entry point or when a PGR'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 PGRs

1.28 Every department should provide its PhD/EngD and MPhil PGRs 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 PGR

1.29 Departments are responsible for specifying, for each formal review of progress, how PhD, EngD and MPhil PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGRs must provide should be clearly communicated to PGRs in the department's PGR 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 PGR'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 PGRs.

1.31 A department's requirements in terms of the evidence that its PGRs 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 PGR and their progression panel at the progress review meeting
  - a presentation from the PGR followed by a question and answer session.

#### ***Notes on evidence from PGRs***

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 PGR 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 PGR has met the relevant University progression criteria and because it provides the PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGR's supervisor will be asked to give their opinion (on a standard University pro forma) as to whether the PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR meets the relevant University progression criteria. This will be shared with the PGR, 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 PGR's written evidence prior to writing the report, and the supervisor may also have to be present at their PGR'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 PGR (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 PGR has met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria, and also make a recommendation regarding PGR progression.
- 1.40 Progress review meetings are held in person to facilitate full discussion of a PGR'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 PGR.

#### ***PGR attendance at progress review meetings***

- 1.41 If a department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a PGR will, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting. This ensures that a PGR 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 PGR, any issues arising from their supervisor's report and/or agreed TAP reports (where required by the department). Where a PGR's presence in a progress review meeting is required, the PGR may be present throughout the meeting, or the panel may have private deliberations before and/or after their discussion with the PGR. If, for good reason, a PGR needs to participate remotely in a progress review meeting, permission must be sought in advance from [PGRA](#) (decision taken by the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support) or their designated alternate).
- 1.42 If a department's evidence requirements (see above) do *not* include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a PGR 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 PGR and/or the supervisor's report and/or the agreed TAP reports (if applicable), to recommend that an individual PGR be progressed, then a progress review meeting at which the PGR 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 PGR in this instance is to give the PGR (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 PGR needs to participate remotely in such a meeting, permission must be sought in advance from [PGRA](#) (decision taken by the Assistant Registrar

(Research and Financial Support) or their designated alternate).

### Full or partial integration of TAP and progression meetings

- 1.43 Where a department requires its PGRs 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 PGRs) may be fully integrated within the review meeting (i.e. in addition to making a formal decision about the PGR's progress, the progress review panel (in the absence of the supervisor) works with the PGR 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 PGR's first attempt a progression panel decides that a PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR concerned. If the PGR's performance at the first attempt is such that the progression panel thinks it is unlikely that the PGR will meet the progression criteria at the second attempt, or the panel believes that preparing for a second attempt would seriously compromise a PGR'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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR does not respond within this timeframe it will be treated as an assumed withdrawal).
- 1.49 If the PGR accepts a recommendation for withdrawal this will be undertaken with immediate effect. If the PGR accepts a recommendation for transfer to an alternative programme, the PGR's enrolment will be transferred immediately, subject to the following considerations:

Where the PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR.
- 1.53 The PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR - plus the new supervisor's report if required - is sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the PGR 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 PGR - plus the new supervisor's report if required - is not sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the PGR 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 PGR, normally face-to-face. If, for good reason, a PGR needs to participate remotely, permission must be sought in advance from [PGRA](#) (decision taken by the Assistant Registrar (Research and Financial Support) or their designated alternate). 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 PGR in a second progress review meeting (if applicable) – the progression panel decides that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, it should recommend:

(i) that the PGR be progressed;

if, however, the progression panel decides that the PGR 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 PGR will be deemed to have failed the progression point and the progression panel must recommend:

(ii) that the PGR be transferred to an MPhil programme (for PGRs enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or*

(iii) that the PGR be transferred to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or*

(iv) that the PGR's enrolment with the University be terminated.

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

1.57 If a PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR concerned. To recommend transfer, the progression panel should agree that there is a realistic possibility of the PGR 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 PGR's enrolment will be terminated immediately. If the SCA approves a recommendation for transfer, the PGR's enrolment will be transferred immediately, subject to the following considerations:

Where the PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRs entering into a continuation period, where this is permitted, because the expectation is that these PGRs should be near to submitting their theses.
- 1.62 Departments are, however, asked to ensure that PGRs 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 PGR entering the continuation period. Where the TAP has concerns about the evidence presented, the PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR's progress review panel will deem the PGR not to have met the relevant progression criteria and should normally recommend that the PGR be withdrawn (first attempt at progression) or their enrolment terminated (second attempt at progression).
- 1.65 A department may grant an extension to a PGR 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 PGR (namely where a PGR'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 PGR to submit their thesis on time). The magnitude of the research task, or failure on the part of the PGR 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 PGRs concerned.
- 1.68 A request for an extension to a University deadline for a formal review of progress will not be considered until the PGR 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 PGRA. Requests will be

considered by PGRA in the first instance and approved under delegated authority (up to two weeks) or referred to SCC for consideration where necessary (more than two weeks).

- 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 PGR 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 PGRs can arise in various ways, and are dealt with by different policies.
- This policy applies where academic misconduct by PGRs 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 PGR'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 PGRs, 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 PGR 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 PGRs.
  - **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 PGR. 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 PGRs to prove their judgement was affected if they wish this to be taken into account in consideration of the appropriate penalty.

### ***Responsibility of the PGR***

- 3.3.** The PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGR enrolled on the programme rather than measuring the extent of the PGR'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 PGR'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](#). PGRs 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 Graduate School Board, 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 PGR'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 PGR's sentences or sections of work
- rearranging passages of text, sequences of code or sections of other material for the PGR
- reformatting the material for the PGR
- 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 PGRs, 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 judgement that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential”<sup>3</sup>. 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 PGR 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***

- 3.14.** Where academic misconduct is alleged or suspected, a PGR 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 PGR's condition at the time of the offence was

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

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 PGR. 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 PGR'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 PGR 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 PGR's department and one other Graduate Chair from the same faculty. All members of the panel should be independent of the PGR; 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 PGRs 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 PGRA. The information provided must include the PGR's name, number, and programme of study, and the PGR's previous record in relation to academic misconduct. 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. PGRA 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 PGRA. The information provided must include the PGR's name, number, and programme of study, and the PGR's previous record in relation to academic misconduct. PGRA 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 PGR'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 PGRA. 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 PGR for a comparison. The panel has further powers to request a compulsory interview with the PGR 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***

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 PGR 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 PGR.
- **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***

- 4.4. 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 PGR involved.
- 4.5. 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 PGRA to advise them on any process issues. This PGRA contact must be copied into all relevant electronic correspondence between members of the investigatory panel and provided with minutes of all meetings.
- 4.6. 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 PGRA as soon as possible to allow a replacement to be assigned.
- 4.7. 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 PGR should be advised to improve this aspect of their work. The PGR 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 PGR's record.
  - b) If it is believed that the case warrants a full investigation, then the panel Chair informs the PGR 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 PGR can then respond to the panel within 7 days. The panel will not use any material to make its judgement unless the PGR has had sight of it in advance and the opportunity to respond. The PGR should be provided with any new evidence which the panel considers. The PGR(s) should also be encouraged to seek advice

- from supervisors and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA). The PGR can, in response, submit a written statement or request an interview with the PGR AMIP (PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR is afforded sufficient time (normally 7 days) before the interview to seek advice or to arrange to be accompanied. PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR must notify the Chair in advance if they intend to bring a representative from outside the university. It is recommended that PGRs 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 PGR, which determines that an interview is required, all reasonable means should be taken to inform the PGR, and the PGR should be asked to acknowledge receipt of this information prior to the date of the interview. If the PGR does not respond, however, the procedure should not be halted. A panel may make this determination even after a written submission by a PGR. The procedures should continue regardless of whether a PGR responds.

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

**4.8.**

- 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 PGRA. The PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR'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 PGR 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 PGR'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><b>No</b> 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"> <li>● No Penalty</li> <li>● Issues of poor practice might be reported to the progression panel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No Penalty</li> <li>● Issues of poor practice might be reported to the examiners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yes - Level 1</b> Significant but limited and remediable failure of academic integrity which does not undermine the integrity of the work as a whole (e.g. the PGR 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><b>Note that Level 1 penalties accumulate across stages of study. Therefore, a Level 1 offence at the Award Stage, following a Level 1 offence at the Progression Stage, will lead to termination of the PGR's registration.</b></p>	<p>If first Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formal Warning issued to PGR and placed on file</li> <li>● PGR will FAIL this attempt, but a <b>revise and resubmit outcome will be allowed</b> (only if first attempt at progression)</li> <li>● Progression panel will meet, in any case, to allow for feedback</li> </ul> <p>If second Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>PGR registration terminated</b></li> <li>● Does not proceed to progression panel</li> </ul>	<p>If first Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formal Warning issued to PGR and placed on file</li> <li>● PGR will be deemed <b>not</b> to have met the award criteria, but a <b>revise and resubmit outcome will be allowed</b> if the examiners judge that to be appropriate</li> <li>● Examination will proceed, but the outcome is <b>limited to revise and resubmit, or award of a lower degree, with or without corrections</b> (i.e. outcomes (i) and (ii) listed under 'examination outcomes' of the Policy on Research Degrees (see 12.39 of the PoRD) <b>are ruled out</b>)</li> </ul> <p>If second Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>PGR registration terminated</b></li> <li>● Does not proceed to examination</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yes - Level 2</b> 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"> <li>● <b>PGR registration terminated</b></li> <li>● Does not proceed to progression panel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>PGR registration terminated</b></li> <li>● Does not proceed to examination</li> </ul>

### **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 PGR'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 PGR's judgement, or their capacity to comply with academic standards. This may be taken into account where, through no fault of the PGR, 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 PGR'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 PGR 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 Head of 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 PGRA contact will pass the material on to the Penalty Mitigation Panel (PMP).
- The PMP will consider whether or not the penalty should be adjusted.
- PGRA contact will inform the PGR AMIP and the PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRA contact must be included. PGRA 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 PGRA contact. PGRA is responsible for sending out letters to PGRs 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 PGRA for retention against the PGR's 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 PGR's department/centre.

## 7. Appeals and hearings

- 7.1. When a PGR 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/>

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

- The Academic Misconduct procedures were not followed properly;
- The PGR AMIP reached a decision that was not reasonable in all the circumstances;
- New evidence is available which could not reasonably have been brought to the attention of the PGR AMIP at the time of its investigation;
- 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.

PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR is necessary. A re-examination under these circumstances shall be subject to the approval of SCC.

- 9.2 If academic misconduct is alleged or suspected after the degree has been conferred, an initial investigation will be conducted by an Investigating Committee appointed by Senate under [Ordinance 7](#). The Investigating Committee will normally be chaired by the Dean of York Graduate Research School, and include one or both of the original examiners, the current Head of Department or Dean of Faculty, and a senior academic from another Department in the same Faculty. The Investigating Committee will, as far as possible, and with reference to [Ordinance 7](#), follow the process for a PGR AMIP, with all deviations explained to the individual against which the allegation has been made, and the Committee's justification, together with its findings and recommendations, included in its report to Senate. A Senate Panel will then be formed and follow the Procedure to support University Ordinance 7: the Senate Panel for a PGR case (see below).

### **9.3 Procedure to support University Ordinance 7: the Senate Panel for a PGR case**

- i. Following an investigation under University Ordinance 7 by an Investigating Committee<sup>4</sup> in a case of alleged academic misconduct by a PGR, the Committee's final report and recommendation will be submitted to a panel of Senate (the Panel) for consideration and a final decision.
- ii. The Panel will comprise the following members:
- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) [Chair]
  - The Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment (ex officio)
  - The Dean of the Faculty in which the case arose (ex officio)
  - Two academic members of the Senate (one Head of Department and one elected member, nominated by the Chair; neither to be from the Department in which the case arose)

In attendance:

- The Academic Registrar
- The University Secretary (as Secretary to Senate)

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<sup>4</sup> In accordance with Ordinance 7, the Investigating Committee shall determine its own procedure in the light of the particular circumstances of the case and taking advice as necessary. The procedure adopted shall accord with the principles of natural justice. The procedure proposed in this report constitutes the next step in the process as regards the establishment of a panel of Senate.

[Secretariat: Student and Academic Services]

- iii. The individual alleged to have committed academic misconduct will be provided with a copy of the Investigating Committee's final report and asked to provide comment in writing to the Panel. The individual will also be given the opportunity to appear before the Panel in person or via teleconference, accompanied by another person of their choice if they wish; the accompanying person may speak on the individual's behalf with the permission of the Chair.
- iv. The Panel will meet as soon as possible after it has been formally constituted to consider the Investigating Committee's report and to agree a recommendation to Senate for further action. The Panel can also invite relevant specialist University officers to the meeting to provide additional information or advice as necessary.
- v. Following its consideration of the Investigating Committee's report, the possible further actions available to the Senate Panel for onwards recommendation to Senate are as follows:

Academic misconduct identified?	Penalty/Outcome
<p><b>No</b> 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"> <li>● No Penalty</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yes - Level 1</b> Significant but limited and remediable failure of academic integrity which does not undermine the integrity of the work as a whole (e.g. the individual 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<sup>5</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual will be deemed not to have met the award criteria and so the award will be withdrawn.</li> <li>● The individual will be permitted to submit a corrected version of the thesis<sup>6</sup> for re-examination within twelve months (EngD/PhD/MPhil) or three months (MA/MSc (by research)) of the date communicated in the formal notification of Senate's decision.</li> <li>● At re-examination, possible outcomes will be limited as per 12.54 of the Policy on Research Degrees.</li> <li>● A Formal Warning will be issued to individual and placed on file</li> </ul> <p>If second Level 1 offence<sup>7</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Degree revoked as per Ordinance 7</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yes - Level 2</b> Very significant failure of academic integrity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Degree revoked as per Ordinance 7</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> No formal warning (as per Appendix 3 section 5.2 of the Policy on Research Degrees) has been issued to the individual in relation to the degree in question. Note that formal warnings applying to any stage of study towards the degree in question are relevant.

<sup>6</sup> In such cases, the Senate decision communicated to the individual will include a list of required changes; the changes to the thesis must not exceed those outlined.

<sup>7</sup> A formal warning (as per Appendix 3 section 5.2 of the Policy on Research Degrees) has been issued to the individual previously in relation to the degree in question. Note that formal warnings applying to any stage of study towards the degree in question are relevant.

<p>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>	
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- vi. The Panel's report and final recommendation will be submitted to the Senate for consideration at its next meeting, but only if this meeting falls within two weeks of the Panel's meeting. If the next scheduled Senate meeting is more than two weeks after the Panel's meeting, its recommendation will instead be submitted to the Senate via written resolution. Following the Senate's determination of the outcome the individual concerned will normally be informed within seven days.
- vii. In accordance with Ordinance 7, there is no right of appeal against the determination of the Senate which is based on academic judgement and will be final. However, the individual concerned may pursue a complaint about process through the University's two-stage internal formal complaints procedure and, if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of that complaint, may be able to submit a complaint externally to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
- viii. Following agreement by the Senate of the action to be taken, the relevant offices of Student and Academic Services will be informed in order that they may undertake the necessary completion of procedures correspondence with the individual concerned and also any corrections or amendments that might be required to the official student record. As regards reporting the outcome of the case to external third parties (e.g. a person who submitted an allegation of academic misconduct or the current employer of the individual concerned), the University will seek formal legal advice on this matter in the context of relevant data protection and other legislation.

## 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 PGRs* (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 PGRs who are self- or directly externally-funded (e.g. by an overseas government) are deemed to be subject to separate terms and conditions.

### Standing of policy

- 1.3 Paid parental leave for PGRs in receipt of a stipend is not a legal right. PGRs' 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 PGRs, 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 PGRs***

- 1.5 This policy applies to PGRs who are fully-registered at the University of York on degree-awarding research programmes (MA/MSc (by research), MPhil, PhD, and EngD routes), and visiting PGRs (those on RVISVIS routes). It *does not* include PGRs with a shadow record at the University (i.e. PGRs receiving funds from a grant held at York, such as a CDT, but who are registered to study elsewhere).
- 1.6 PGRs 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 PGRs 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, PGRs should consult their departments about their source of funding.
- 1.8 PGRs 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 PGR'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 PGR in order to undertake their research, i.e. the element of the award which is intended to support the PGR's living costs. Therefore, PGRs 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.

**Students subject to UKVI restrictions**

- 1.11 International PGRs subject to UKVI regulations must still comply with their visa regulations, as long as they continue to be sponsored by the University for visa purposes.

**PGRs who are also employees of the University**

- 1.12 A PGR 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 PGR *may* be eligible for paid parental leave, both as an employee and as a PGR, as follows:
- a) If the PGR'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 PGR'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 PGRs undertaking full- or part-time work on a non-casual basis, for example as an Associate Lecturer or administrator.*

- 1.13 PGRs 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 PGR (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 PGR employed as a casual worker\*\* will not normally be entitled to paid parental leave as an employee (although PGRs are advised to seek current advice from HR on this point). If they are also in receipt of a stipend as a PGR, they *may* be entitled to paid parental leave under this policy, as follows:
- a) If the PGR'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 PGR'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 PGR, 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, PGRs 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 PGR'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 PGR chooses to take, up to the maximum stated in 1.18.

### ***Paternity leave***

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

### ***Adoption Leave***

- 1.21 PGRs are entitled to paid parental leave where they adopt. In such cases, the PGR 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 PGR's partner (where relevant), regardless of their student or employment status, must not be claiming the same rights as the PGR (i.e. a PGR and their partner cannot both be claiming the equivalent of the paid parental leave outlined above under 'maternity leave' simultaneously); PGRs 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 PGR and their partner qualify for paid parental leave under this policy, or where the partner is a PGR eligible for shared parental leave under the terms of their funder (e.g. those funded by UKRI).
- 1.23 PGRs may be entitled to up to 50 weeks of Shared Parental Leave depending on the individual circumstances.

***Extension of parental leave***

- 1.24 PGRs 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, PGRs must reapply, as per the process outlined below.

***Repayment of funds***

- 1.25 Unless exceptional circumstances apply, PGRs 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 PGRs who have undergone examination and failed to gain the intended award or were recommended a lower award post examination.
- 1.26 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGRs are responsible for notifying PGR 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 PGR's source of funding and advise PGRA when the associated leave of absence paperwork is submitted for consideration;
  - b) Manage funds and payment schedule as per instructions from PGRA.
- 1.32 Departments are responsible for notifying PGR Administration of any change to the intentions or circumstances of a PGR in receipt of parental leave payments under this policy.

## Appendix 5: Policy Framework for Distance Learning PGR Programmes

### Introduction

- 1 This is the University's policy framework for distance learning PGR 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 PGR provision.

### ***The nature and purpose of distance learning PGR programmes***

- 2 A distance learning PGR programme – which could alternatively be called an independent off-site PGR programme - is for PGRs 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 PGR programmes***

- 3 Distance learning opens up PGR programmes to those unable to attend a university campus on a regular basis. For many PGRs, 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 PGRs, 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 PGR programmes, the spatial, and often temporal, separation between PGRs 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 PGR programmes should be approved for planning purposes (may not be required for distance learning variants of existing PGR programmes), 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 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR on a distance learning PGR programme will be the same as that for PGRs on the equivalent campus-based PGR programme.

#### ***Naming convention and final award***

- 8 A distance learning PGR programme should normally be advertised as PhD (or the appropriate award) in XXXX by distance learning.

- 9 A PGR who successfully completes a distance learning PGR programme 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 PGR programme.
- 11 The admissions procedures for a distance learning PGR programme should replicate those of the equivalent campus-based PGR programme, with the exception that applicants should be taken through the distance learning 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 PGR to a distance-learning PGR programme should always include the department's Programme Director for Distance Learning PGR Programme (or their nominee) and/or the Graduate Chair (or their nominee) in addition to the supervisor(s).
- 12 Publicity about a distance learning PGR programme should be transparent about the academic and practical challenges associated with distance learning. PGR costs (e.g. for visas, travel and accommodation to meet attendance and in-person supervision requirements) associated with participation in a distance learning PGR programme must be clearly stated.

### **Information**

- 13 Distance learning PGRs 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 PGRs will spend the vast majority of their time working away from York, with supervision primarily by video-conferencing. Academic visits to York during a PGR's enrolment should be short (each less than eight weeks duration) and, for most, will be infrequent.
- 15 The University's attendance requirements for distance learning PGRs are a visit to York for induction (see below, including the consequences of non-attendance) and for the final examination (see below, including the consequences for non-attendance).
- 16 Departments are strongly encouraged to put in place departmental attendance requirements to support their distance learning PGRs' research and professional development and integration into the research community. For example, a department might require an annual one/two week block of attendance for core training, or yearly (perhaps biennial for part-time PGRs) attendance at its PGR conference, with the latter being timed to coincide with a TAP or progression meeting. The timing, nature and purpose of departmental attendance requirements must be approved by PPSC and clearly communicated to PGRs from the application stage onwards to allow them to plan appropriately. PGRs who are unable to meet departmental attendance requirements are required to seek permission from their GSB. PGRs who fail to meet departmental attendance requirements without the required GSB approval will be given a formal warning that their enrolment is at risk and may have their enrolment terminated if the situation remains unresolved.

### **Attendance at York: practical considerations**

- 17 International PGRs subject to UKVI restrictions on a distance learning PGR programme will be required to apply for an appropriate student visa to meet attendance requirements. Departmental attendance requirements should be designed with visa restrictions in mind. It is the PGR's responsibility to apply for visas and meet visa requirements.

- 18 It is a PGR's responsibility to organise and fund (e.g. travel, accommodation and visas) any trips that they need to undertake to meet attendance requirements or for in-person supervision meetings (see below).

### **Induction**

- 19 Distance learning PGRs are required to visit York for induction. The University's expectations for an induction visit to York are a minimum of five working days within two months of the start of the programme but the exact duration and timing of the induction is set by the relevant department. Any programme-level exception to the University's induction requirements must be approved by PPSC.
- 20 Any exception for an individual PGR to the induction requirements set by the department for their programme must be approved by SCC on the request of the relevant GSB. PGRs who fail to meet their programme's induction requirements without SCC approval will have their enrolment terminated.
- 21 The induction visit should be fully-timetabled and carefully structured to provide maximum value to the PGRs. The induction must include: a formal supervision meeting with feedback on a PGR'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 PGRs 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 it is strongly recommended that at least one should be in-person (i.e. where the PGR and their supervisor(s) are co-located in York or another location (e.g. a conference).
- 25 The purpose and likely frequency of informal supervision meetings and contact should be made clear for the PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR undertaking a distance learning PGR programme are the same as for a campus-based PGR programme at York but Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) and progress review meetings should take place by video-conferencing unless they coincide with a PGR's visit to York. Permission does not need to be obtained from PGRA for a TAP/progression meeting to be held by video-conferencing.

### **Research community**

- 27 The University is committed to ensuring that all PGRs, 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 PGRs (see wiki site for good practice).

**Training and development**

- 28 PGRs on a distance learning PGR 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 Departments should take proactive steps to make their departmental training accessible to, and appropriate for, PGRs on distance learning PGR programmes. This might involve, for instance, facilitating remote participation in training sessions, modifying and recording training sessions for asynchronous consumption, and/or developing interactive online resources (see wiki site for good practice). Training needs should be discussed at the admissions stage to ensure that any essential requirements can be met.

**Access to facilities and resources**

- 30 PGRs on a distance learning PGR 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 PGRs have access to the necessary facilities and resources at admission and monitor this throughout a PGR's enrolment.
- 31 PGRs on a distance learning PGR programme should have the same access to departmental funding opportunities (e.g. conference funds) as PGRs on the equivalent campus-based PGR programme.

**Examination**

- 32 The examination process for a PGR undertaking a distance learning PGR programme is the same as for a campus-based PGR programme. Distance learning PGRs may request an online oral examination but if this is not approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment they must attend York for this purpose.

**Transfers**

- 33 Where academically appropriate, subject to any UKVI restrictions (if applicable), and with the permission of the department and SCC, a distance learning PGR programme may transfer to the equivalent campus-based programme. Transfers from a campus-based PGR programme to the equivalent distance learning PGR 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**

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

**PGR representation and engagement**

- 36 PGRs on distance learning PGR programmes should be included in departmental and University mechanisms for PGR representation and engagement, as per other PGRs. Departments should ensure that the distance learning PGR community is appropriately represented on relevant departmental fora.

**Quality assurance**

- 37 Departments should regularly review (with their DL PGR community) the accessibility of their PGR offer (i.e. including training, networking, support) to ensure that DL PGRs are able to access key activities and/or are provided with suitable high quality alternatives.
- 38 Departments should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, distance learning PGRs. The effectiveness of distance learning PGR 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 PGR provision.

**Management of distance learning PGR programmes**

- 39 Each department should appoint a programme leader for distance learning PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR Programmes (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 PGR programme as opposed to a campus-based PGR programme and that the applicant has sufficient time to undertake the PGR programme 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 PGR programme cannot be conducted without the support of a local partner then the *Framework on Collaborative Off-site and Split-site PGR Programmes* 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 University and departmental attendance 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 PGR offer letters***

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

- (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 University and departmental attendance requirements (including attendance at York for induction and for the final examination) 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 PGR Programmes

### Introduction

1. This is the University's policy framework for collaborative off-site and collaborative split-site PGR 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.
2. 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.
3. The details with respect to CITY College off-site PhD provision are contained in the York-CITY Collaborative PhD Handbook which is subject to PPSC approval. PGRs on off-site PhD programmes with CITY do not sign individual PGR agreements.

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

4. Collaborative off-site and collaborative split-site PhDs are for PGRs 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).
5. 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:

	<b>Standard (campus-based) PhD</b>	<b>Collaborative split-site PhD</b>	<b>Collaborative off-site PhD*</b>
Where PGRs are based	PGRs are based at the York campus.	PGRs split their time between the partner and York.	PGRs 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 section 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 five working days) 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 five working days) 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).

6. 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.
7. 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 PGR, the nature of the research project, and what the partner can provide in terms of a research community and training for the PGR - and practical - including funding arrangements, any restrictions on a PGR's mobility for professional and/or personal reasons, and UKVI rules where applicable. For example, where a PGR 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 PGR'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 PGR is employed as an academic at the international partner and cannot come to York for longer mobility periods for professional and/or personal reasons.
8. 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 PGR. There must also be a formal agreement in place to cover PGRs on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD.
9. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs can be offered on an individual PGR basis but also, and indeed preferably (for economies of scale and quality enhancement), for cohorts of PGRs 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

10. 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 PGRs. 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.
11. For the University, collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs provide transparency when a PGR 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 PGR (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.
12. 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 PGR 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).

13. For PGRs, 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 PGR 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

14. 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 PGRs. 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 PGR(s) will be met during their PhD.

### Approval process and fees

15. Where the partner is international, it is recommended that, as a first step, the department works with Global Partnerships to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the partner.
16. For the approval of a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD proposal with a new partner, a department will need to follow the [current off-site/split-site PhD approval process](#), which includes due diligence, to receive Planning approval (if required) and PPSC approval (always required but normally undertaken by Chair's action). Depending on the partner, the approval process may include a requirement for further due diligence and/or a departmental visit. Once approval has been granted, the individual PGR agreement(s) can be produced and signed (see below).
17. For the approval of additional collaborative off-site or split-site PhDs with an existing collaborative off-site or split-site partner, a department will flag any amendments to the existing proposal for planning approval (if required) and PPSC approval (by Chair's action). Once full approval has been granted, the individual PGR agreement(s) can be produced and signed (see below).
18. Standard home or 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 by Planning.

### Programme details

#### Duration

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

#### Naming convention and final award

20. A PGR 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.
21. The partner may wish to provide a certificate of attendance, transcript or similar that recognises that the PGR 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.

#### PGR agreements.

22. A PGR agreement should be signed (normally by York, the partner and the PGR) before a PGR enrolls on

a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD. At York, this process will normally be managed by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Contracts Team. Individual PGR agreements will normally follow a University template, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of York and the partner with respect to that individual PGR.

#### Multiple off-site or split-site PhDs with the same partner

23. Where a department and a partner are planning to host a number of collaborative off-site or split-site PhD PGRs (either a cohort or spread over a number of years), an academic from the department at York should be nominated to coordinate the provision and oversee the relationship with the partner.
24. For a cohort of off-site or split-site PhD PGRs, an overarching cohort agreement may be developed to cover common practices across the cohort so that the content of the individual PGR agreements can be minimised (e.g. with the individual PGR agreements being brief appendices to the overarching cohort agreement). Where several off-site or split-site PhD PGRs will start over a number of years with the same partner, a partner-specific template individual PGR agreement may be more appropriate to allow for changes as the relationship develops.

#### Suitability of the partner's research environment

25. 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.
26. 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.

#### Data sharing and initial intellectual property (IP) agreement

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

#### PGR status and enrolment

28. A PGR 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 PGR 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

29. 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.
30. 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.
31. 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 PGR(s) for this mode of study.
32. PGR 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

33. PGRs 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

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

<b>Collaborative split-site PhD</b>	<b>Collaborative off-site PhD</b>
The PGR will split their time between the partner and York during their enrolment.	The PGR 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 five working days) 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 five working days) 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.

35. 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) PGR agreement. 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).
36. 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 PGR (e.g. providing access to specific resources at York, enabling the PGR to undertake an experiment under the direct supervision of the York supervisor, providing opportunities for the PGR to participate in training and integrate with the research community).
37. Any exception to the University's induction or in-programme attendance requirements (as set out above) for an individual PGR must be approved by PPSC (Chair's action) during the approval stage, or by SCC on the request of the relevant GSB if the PGR has already started. PGRs who are unable to meet departmental attendance requirements are required to seek permission from their GSB. PGRs who fail to meet University and/or departmental attendance requirements without the required approval will be given a formal warning that their enrolment is at risk and may have their enrolment terminated if the situation remains unresolved.

### ***Attendance at York: practical considerations***

38. International PGRs subject to UKVI restrictions will be required to apply for an appropriate student visa to meet attendance requirements. The timing of attendance requirements will need to be designed with visa restrictions in mind. It is the PGR's responsibility to apply for visas and meet visa requirements.

39. It is the responsibility of the PGR or their funder to organise and fund (e.g. travel, accommodation and visas) any trips that they need to undertake to meet attendance requirements or for in-person supervision meetings (see below).

### **Induction**

40. PGRs on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD 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.
41. The induction visit should be fully-timetabled and carefully structured to provide maximum value to the PGRs. The induction must include: a formal supervision meeting with feedback on a PGR's work (e.g. the research proposal), a general PGR departmental induction and a bespoke departmental induction that focuses on their particular needs.
42. 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 PGRs 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**

43. The main supervisor for a PGR undertaking a collaborative off-site and split-site PhD must, in accordance with the PoRD, always be from York.
44. The details of the role of the partner in co-supervising and/or supporting a PGR should be agreed in advance of the PGR starting the programme and set out in the individual (or overarching cohort) PGR agreement.
45. 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.
46. Additionally or alternatively (particularly if the partner cannot provide a co-supervisor for a PGR), the partner may provide a member(s) of a PGR'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 PGR that this person's role is complementary to, rather than replacing, the pastoral support offered by their supervisor(s).

### **Supervision**

47. Supervision should be conducted in accordance with the rules of the PoRD, and any additional departmental requirements, with the exception that when the PGR is located at the partner both formal and informal supervision meetings with the York-based supervisor will normally take place via video-conferencing.
48. Of the (minimum) eight formal supervision meetings/calendar year between the York-based supervisor and the PGR, it is strongly recommended that at least one should be in-person (i.e. where the PGR and the York-based supervisor are co-located either in York, at the partner, or at another location e.g. a conference). It is considered good practice for a York-based supervisor to visit their PGR at the partner at least once during the course of the PGR's PhD.
49. The purpose and likely frequency of informal supervision meetings and contact should be made clear for the PGR 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 PGR and their York-based supervisor occurs at least monthly, if not more frequently.

### Monitoring and progression

50. The policy and procedures for monitoring and progression for a PGR 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) PGR agreement, TAP and progress review meetings should take place by video-conferencing (with the PGR and any local co-supervisor or TAP member (as applicable) at the partner) unless they coincide with a PGR's visit to York. Permission does *not* need to be obtained from PGRA for a TAP/progression meeting to be held by video-conferencing.

### Research community

51. 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 PGR with a local research community. The department at York should, nevertheless, take steps to ensure that PGRs on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD feel part of the research community at York (see the Policy Framework for Distance Learning PGR Programmes). The individual (or overarching cohort) PGR 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

52. PGRs 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.
53. Research and transferable skills training and support for the professional development may be provided by the partner, by York (either when the PGR 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) PGR agreement.
54. Departments should take proactive steps to make their departmental training accessible to, and appropriate for, PGRs 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

55. PGRs 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.
56. PGRs on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD should have the same access to departmental funding opportunities (e.g. conference funds) as PGRs on the equivalent campus-based PGR programme.

### Examination

57. The examination process for a PGR 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 PGRs may request an online oral examination but if this is not approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment they must attend York for this purpose.

58. Where a PGR on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD has a co-supervisor at the partner, the co-supervisor cannot serve as that PGR's internal examiner, nor can an external examiner be appointed from the partner.

### Transfers

59. 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 PGR may transfer to the equivalent campus-based programme.

### Teaching opportunities

60. Access to paid teaching opportunities at York for PGRs 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. PGRs must meet the training requirements).
61. PGRs 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 PGR on a campus-based PhD to ensure that their research project and work/life balance is not jeopardised.

### PGR representation and engagement

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

### Complaints and appeals

63. Complaints relating to the partner should be raised, initially, directly with the partner but the PGR 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

64. Departments should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, collaborative off-site and split-site PhD PGRs. 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.
65. Ongoing relationships (and any associated memoranda of Understanding, overarching cohort agreements/partner-specific template individual PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGRs.
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 PGR programme 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 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). PGRs on an Integrated PhD programme (iPhD PGRs) should plan their research so that they will submit within the normal period of enrolment. If iPhD PGRs 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 PGRs will be dealt with according to the rules and processes for PGRs. If, however, an iPhD PGR 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. PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGR in their area of interest. Submission of an outline research proposal can also enable the most appropriate PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGRs receive a comprehensive package of training, iPhD PGRs 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 PGRs, they may achieve this by setting up a bespoke integrated PhD Diploma with appropriate option modules.

### ***Information***

19. All new iPhD PGRs should receive an iPhD handbook from their department.

### ***PGR status***

20. An iPhD PGR is treated as a PGR 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 PGRs, complete BERT and the Research Integrity Tutorial, have access to PGR 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 PGR 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 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 PGRs, it is expected that the taught element will be scheduled towards the start of the integrated studies year, so that an iPhD PGR 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 PGRs it is expected that the taught element would be scheduled in the first year.
29. When undertaking the taught element, iPhD PGRs 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 PGR'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 PGR is able to demonstrate readiness for their PhD research project (see #48 onwards for full details).
32. Departments should specify what tailored support they will provide for iPhD PGRs to help them with the research element. This should be provision separate to/in addition to that provided to postgraduate taught 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 PGR 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 PGRs 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 PGR will have a PGR supervisor from the start of their Integrated PhD programme. There are two options:
- a. the PGR supervisor(s) is appointed at the start of the Integrated PhD programme;
  - b. a provisional PGR supervisor (who might be the nominated programme leader) is appointed at the start of the Integrated PhD programme, with the appointment of the confirmed PGR supervisor(s) by the end of the integrated studies year at the latest.
38. During the integrated studies year, iPhD PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGRs 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 PGR 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 PGR's PGR supervisor (or prospective PGR supervisor, if their appointment has not yet been confirmed) and the Graduate Chair or their nominee (who should not be a member of the PGR's supervisory team or Thesis Advisory Panel) against the approved pass/fail assessment criteria (see #48 onwards) and a consensus reached. PGRs 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 PGRs who meet #40 (a) and (b) above will progress to the second year of the Integrated PhD programme. iPhD PGRs 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 PGR 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.

### **PGR representation and engagement**

45. IPHD PGRs should be included in departmental and University mechanisms for PGR representation and engagement, as per other PGRs.

### **Quality assurance**

46. Departments should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, iPhD PGRs. 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 PGRs.

### **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 PGR needs to achieve a pass in the research element:

- a research proposal OR a literature review

**AND**

- a small-scale research project.

49. Departments should specify:

- o whether iPhD PGRs should complete a research proposal OR a literature review (or whether this can be agreed on a case by case basis between the PGR 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.

50. Departments should also:

- clarify what support iPhD PGRs 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 taught postgraduate students for their dissertation – given the different aims of the research element of the integrated studies year;

- provide their iPhD PGRs 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 PGRs 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).

51. 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 PGR (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).

52. 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 PGR-led, the PGR 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 PGR'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 PGR 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 PGR's introductory chapter within their PhD thesis.

To pass, a PGR'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 PGR 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 PGRs have direct experience of some aspect of primary research relevant to their PhD project, and that the department can ascertain the PGR'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 PGR 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 PGR'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.
-