York Graduate Research School

Policy on Research Degrees 2026-27

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Policy on Research Degrees (PoRD) 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) 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, and Masters by Research (MbyR) , specifically the MA (by research) and MSc (by research). This policy refers to all PGRs unless otherwise stated in this policy or in one of the PGR programme frameworks referenced below.

1.5 The following documents are appendices to the Policy on Research Degrees:

- A1 Policy on Transparency of Authorship in PGR Programmes
- A2 PGR Academic Misconduct policy
- B1 Policy on PhD/EngD and MPhil PGR progression
- B2 Policy on PGR leave
- B3 Policy on PGR extensions
- B4 Policy on PGR extenuating circumstances
- B5 Policy on PGR reasonable adjustments
- C1 Policy on recording PGR examinations
- C2 Policy on the appointment of PGR examiners
- C3 Guidance for PGR examiners

PGR programme frameworks

- F1 Framework for journal-style theses
- F2 Framework for PGR programmes by practice
- F3 Framework for Distance Learning PGR Programmes
- F4 Framework for Collaborative Off-site and Collaborative Split-site PGR Programmes
- F5 Framework for Integrated PhD Programmes
- F6 Framework for PhD by Published Work (UoY staff only)

Institutional responsibility for PGR programmes

1.6 York Graduate Research School (YGRS) is responsible for postgraduate research (PGR) provision at the University of York. York Graduate Research School Board (YGRSB) - which reports via University Research Committee to Senate - is responsible for overseeing the work of YGRS. YGRSB has one sub-committee: PGR Experience Committee (to coordinate and oversee matters relating to the support and personal and professional development of PGRs and to promote a vibrant community of PGRs). YGRS also works closely with the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA).

1.7 YGRS has a Dean who can take decisions on behalf of YGRS as set out in this policy and as Chair of YGRSB. Where the Dean is unavailable, a PGR Faculty Lead or PVC Research can be

asked to deputise.

1.8 YGRS monitors PGRs and PGR programmes through:

(i) the consideration of a range of statistical data (where appropriate analysed by department and demographic factors) including:

- Postgraduate Research Student Experience (PRES) survey data (when available)
- formal supervision meeting and TAP meeting compliance rates
- rates of progression at the first and second attempt
- submission and completion times and rates
- pass, referral, fail and withdrawal rates
- appeals and complaints
- data provided by the students' union.

(ii) PGR Review and other University review processes, which include explicit consideration of PGRs and PGR programmes.

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

Area	Office
Recruitment and Admissions	Marketing, Recruitment, Admission and Outreach (MRAO)
Supporting the PGR journey from enrolment through progression to final examination and award	Student Education and Experience (SEE)
PGR programme approval, monitoring and review	Student Education and Experience (SEE)
Central PGR induction and training	Research Culture & Researcher Development team
Training for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)	Academic Practice
Research policy framework	Policy, Integrity and Performance team (PIP)
Research ethics	University Research Committee (URC) and disciplinary Research Ethics Committees
Central training for PGR supervisors	Research Culture & Researcher Development Team

School/departmental responsibility for PGR programmes

1.10 Within a school, department or centre (as applicable), the research committee has oversight of all research in the department, while responsibility for PGRs and PGR programmes rests with the Departmental Education Committee(DEC)/Board of Studies(BoS), although in many schools/departments/centres responsibility is delegated from the DEC/BoS to a Graduate School Board (or equivalent) led by a Graduate Chair. In the rest of the document, 'department' is used to signify a PGR's home school/department/centre, and Graduate School Board/Graduate Chair is used to represent whichever school/departmental/centre committee or individual has formal responsibility (either directly or under delegated powers) for PGRs

and PGR programmes.

1.11 Where a department is required to approve key decisions impacting PGRs (e.g. for awards, PGR special cases) this should be undertaken within 5 working days to ensure that decisions can be communicated to PGRs in good time.

1.12 To ensure that decisions are not dependent on the availability of a single person and to manage any situations where there is a conflict of interest (e.g. where a PGR is supervised by the Graduate Chair), the Graduate Chair (or other individual with departmental responsibility for PGRs) must have at least one formally designated alternate (e.g., where the role exists, a deputy chair). If the Graduate Chair and their designated alternate will be absent for more than 7 working days then the Head of Department must nominate an individual to take on the role on a temporary basis. If the Graduate Chair or their formally designated alternate(s) are not available and the need is urgent, a decision may be taken by someone within the department who holds a suitable role (e.g. Head of Department, Chair of the DEC or Director of Research).

Record keeping

1.13 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.

Approval of PGR programmes

1.14 All new PGR programmes must be approved by the relevant Graduate School Board. They also require planning and academic approval at University level. Academic approval is undertaken by YGRSB.

1.15 All PhD programmes must have an MPhil *and* an MA (by research) and/or MSc (by research) available as transfer and exit awards. All MPhil programmes must have an MA (by research) and/or MSc (by research) available as transfer and exit awards.

1.16 Most PGR programmes have a start date aligned with the start of the first semester. Additional start dates (typically 1st February to align with the start of the second semester) may be approved by YGRS and should be on the first of the month).

1.17 Where a department is planning to bid for a Doctoral Training Entity (DTE e.g. a Doctoral Landscape Award, Doctoral Focal Award, Centre for Doctoral Training, Doctoral Training Partnership or similar)) similar (as lead or member institution), the University approval stage (i.e. planning and academic) for any 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.

1.18 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 Dean of YGRS may decide that comments from an external assessor 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.

1.19 Modifications to PGR programmes require departmental approval and, in the case of major modifications (including significant changes to progression processes and departmental training requirements), University academic (and sometimes planning) approval.

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

1.20 PGRs who embark on a PGR programme at the University may be eligible to receive a taught award in two circumstances – as an integrated taught award, or as an exit taught award.

1.21 An 'integrated taught award' means that a PGR is required to enrol on a taught programme (eg a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma) alongside their PGR programme for training purposes. A PGR who successfully completes the taught programme and the PGR programme receives an integrated award. A PGR who successfully completes just the taught programme will receive the taught award as an exit award. PGRs who fail to complete the taught programme may be able to transfer to another (non-integrated) PGR programme.

1.22 An 'exit taught award' is conferred when PGRs who have successfully completed sufficient credit-bearing modules, taken for training purposes, to be eligible for a taught award (eg a Postgraduate Certificate) 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.

1.23 Integrated/exit taught awards for PGRs must align with the institutional frameworks for programme design and be presented on the standard new programme documentation for taught awards. Modules contributing to integrated/exit taught awards should be on the module catalogue. The standard taught programme design and assessment rules apply to integrated /exit taught awards and such programmes must be overseen by an external examiner in line with standard procedures for taught programmes.

1.24 Integrated/exit taught awards should follow the standard approval procedure for new taught programmes. Once a programme has received planning and FLTG approval, YGRS should approve the incorporation of the programme into a named PGR programme as an integrated/exit taught award. Modifications to integrated/exit taught awards for PGRs must be approved by the relevant Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, and then the Dean of YGRS.

Four-year and 3.5 year PhD programmes

1.25 Departments can propose four-year and 3.5 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 or 3.5 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) Integrated PhD programmes.

1.26 Four-year and 3.5 year PhD programmes are normally developed in response to the requirements of research councils and other funding bodies. The longer 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 and 3.5 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).

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 framework (see F5 Framework for Integrated PhD Programmes).

2. The criteria for the award of PGR degrees

2.1. The degrees of PhD, EngD, and MPhil are obtained by research and are assessed through the submission of a thesis (or equivalent) and an oral examination. The degrees of MA (by research)/MSc (by research) are obtained by research and are assessed through the submission of a thesis (or equivalent) and, where required, 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 Irelan*d (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 (by research)/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.

2.5. The University of York has programme learning outcomes for the degrees of PhD/EngD, MPhil and MA (by research)/MSc (by research).

Programme learning outcomes and award descriptors for the award of the degrees of PhD and EngD

2.6. By the end of their PhD programme, a PGR will be an established early career researcher, who is in a position to make a substantial original contribution to knowledge and understanding, and who is able to:

a. Work independently to design (and where appropriate to conceptualise), deliver, and adapt a research project aimed at the creation of new knowledge.
b. Create and interpret new knowledge which extends the frontier of the discipline, satisfies peer review and merits publication.
c. Display a high level of proficiency in the skills and methods of research of their chosen field.
d. Critically analyse, evaluate, and synthesise their research, presenting it in a format that meets the academic expectations of the relevant discipline(s).
e. Establish how their research fits into the wider research context through the acquisition and understanding of a comprehensive body of knowledge which is at the forefront of their discipline(s).
f. Demonstrate mastery of the details and complexities of their research through justification and explanation of their research to, and debate of their research

in real time with, experts in their field.

g. Conduct research in accordance with the highest standards of integrity.

2.7. 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.

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

Programme learning outcomes and award descriptors for the award of the degrees of MPhil and MA (by research)/MSc (by research)

2.9. By the end of their MPhil programme, a PGR will be in a position to make a recognisable original contribution to knowledge or understanding, and will be able to:

a. Work independently to design, deliver and adapt a research project aimed at the creation or application of new knowledge.
b. Demonstrate originality in the application or development of new knowledge, which is likely to satisfy peer review and merit publication.
c. Display proficiency in the skills and methods of research of their chosen field.
d. Critically analyse and evaluate their research, presenting it in a format that meets the academic expectations of the relevant discipline(s).
e. Establish how their research fits into their field of study through the acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge, most of which is at the forefront of their discipline(s).

f. Demonstrate a good command of the details and complexities of their research through justification and explanation of their research to, and debate of their research in real time with, experts in their field.
g. Conduct research in accordance with the highest standards of integrity.

2.10. By the end of their Master of Arts by research or Master of Science by research programme, a PGR will be able to:

1. Work, largely independently, to design, deliver and adapt a research project aimed at the creation or application of new knowledge.
2. Demonstrate some originality in the application development of knowledge, which may satisfy peer review and merit publication.
3. Display competency in the skills and methods of research relevant to their project.
4. Critically analyse their research, presenting it in a format that meets the academic expectations of the relevant discipline(s).
5. Establish how their research fits into their field of study, through the acquisition of a body of knowledge, most of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their discipline(s).
6. Present their research to experts in their field.
7. Conduct research in accordance with the highest standards of integrity.

2.11. The degrees of MPhil and MA (by research)/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. [This is a York-specific addition to the FHEQ's descriptor for Master's level programmes.]

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

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

and will have:

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

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

2.13. Note, that the reference to 'merits publication' is given as an indication of the quality of the research required. It is not expected that a thesis will be ready for immediate publication as it stands, nor that all of a thesis will merit publication.

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) YGRS's consideration of PGR Review reports and URC's consideration of Annual Departmental Research Review reports from departments, and, (ii) monitoring, by YGRS, of the PGR experience. The University will take action to address any identified weaknesses.

3.5 A department, through its Graduate School Board, must 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.

Equality and diversity in appointments

3.6 Where possible (recognising the challenges associated with the small number of individuals involved, particularly with respect to supervision and the examination process), departments should consider issues of equality, diversity and inclusion when considering the composition of admissions panels, supervisory teams, thesis advisory panels, progression panels and the appointment of examiners.

Facilities and resources

3.7 Departments (working in conjunction with the relevant central services, e.g. Student Administration and Academic Affairs, 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 PGR handbook. 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.

3.8 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 must be undertaken in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy and the Code of Practice on the Recruitment, Selection and Admission of PGRs which are reviewed and updated annually by MRAO in consultation with YGRS. The Admissions Policy and Code of Practice are 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 a suitable research environment (see above) can be provided, are admitted to PGR programmes.

Induction and handbook

4.2 The main PGR entry point is aligned with the start of the first semester. Other start times (on the first of the month) may be approved by YGRS.

4.3 Departments are strongly encouraged to limit the number of entry points to PGR programmes to facilitate the participation of new PGRs in University, student union and departmental induction and training events, and to ensure that PGRs feel part of a cohort.

4.4 The University, together with the students' union, provides induction events for PGRs, at the start of the first and second semester. 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 Departments should provide new PGRs with an appropriate handbook for reference. This handbook should be created using the 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.

5.2 Supervisors are bound by the **Statement on Research Performance Expectations** and the **Personal Relationships Policy.**

Appointment of supervisors

5.3 Supervisors are appointed by the Head of Department (or their delegate), in consultation with the Graduate Chair.

5.4 The academic judgement as to whether any supervisory arrangement (e.g. number of supervisors, the fit between a supervisor's area of research and that of their supervisee etc.) is adequate for the PGR's research project ultimately rests with the Graduate School Board.

5.5 Each PGR must have a designated main supervisor who is their first point of contact (this applies even if supervisors consider themselves to be joint supervisors).

5.6 Departments are encouraged, where practicable, to appoint a supervisory team i.e. to appoint one or more co-supervisors in addition to the main supervisor. A co-supervisor:

a. **must be appointed when the main supervisor is inexperienced (see below)**;
b. should normally be appointed, from a different disciplinary perspective, when research is highly interdisciplinary;
c. should normally be appointed, from the partner department, when research is being conducted across departments;
d. will often be appointed, from an external partner, when research is being conducted across institutions, or is based in industry (or other non-academic partner) or professional practice;
e. may be appointed to bring particular knowledge, skill or experience to a supervisory team and/or to serve a particular role e.g. to provide pastoral support.

5.7 The main supervisor and/or supervisory team must have an appropriate level of expertise to supervise the research being undertaken by their supervisee. This does not necessarily require the supervisor(s) to be experts in their supervisee's *specific* topic of research.

5.8 The ability of supervisors to meet their supervisory responsibilities should not be put at risk as a result of an excessive volume or range of other responsibilities.

5.9 Departments should, if possible, avoid appointing a main and co-supervisor who are in a close personal relationship. Staff who are registered for a standard PhD (not a PhD by Published Work) should not supervise other PGRs as this presents a conflict of interest between being a supervisor and a PGR peer.

5.10 Where there is a change of supervisor (see below) or change of supervisory role (e.g. from main to co-supervisor, see below) all parties need to agree and record in SkillsForge how the change will work in practice (e.g. clear expectations around participation in supervisory meetings).

Eligibility to serve as a main supervisor

5.11 The main supervisor must be a member of the University's Academic or Research staff (i.e. on a Teaching and Research, or Research, contract) (including probationary staff) at a minimum of grade 7 (lecturer/research fellow) and on a permanent contract *or* a fixed-term contract that extends beyond the expected completion date of the PGR's programme (and who has not committed to leave the University's employment before the PGR's expected completion date). Where appropriate, the Head of Department may appoint as a main supervisor a member of Teaching staff (i.e. on a Teaching and Scholarship contract - note that any papers co-authored between a PGR and a member of Teaching staff may not be REF-able, seek up to date advice from PIP) or a member of Academic, Research or Teaching staff at grade 6 (associate lecturer equivalent).

5.12 The expectation is that most staff who meet the criteria to serve as a main supervisor will have a PhD. There are, however, instances, particularly in disciplines where academics are frequently drawn from practice, where a member of staff meets the criteria to serve as a main supervisor but does not have a PhD. In such instances, it is for the department (as above) to decide if the appointment is suitable, in consultation with the PGR Faculty Lead if required. In such cases, a cosupervisor who has a PhD should normally be appointed.

5.13 If a main supervisor retires, they may continue as a co-supervisor for any current supervisees if: (i) a new main supervisor is appointed, and (ii) the retiree holds an emeritus/honorary appointment and their expertise remains valid. If a main supervisor moves to another institution, they may continue as a co-supervisor for any current supervisees if a new main supervisor is appointed.

Co-supervision

5.14 The following are eligible to serve as co-supervisors but not as main supervisors: research fellows (who do not meet the requirements to serve as a main supervisor), emeritus and honorary academic staff at the University of York; academic staff based in other academic institutions; researchers based in industry (or other non-academic partners) or professional practice.

5.15 Co-supervision may involve two or more supervisors having near-equal responsibility for a PGR (often called joint co-supervision) or an unequal split of responsibilities (e.g. where the subsidiary co-supervisor oversees a PGR's professional development, or a particular aspect of

their project).

5.16 The respective roles and responsibilities of members of a supervisory team (e.g. attendance at supervisory meetings, information-sharing, giving feedback on the PGR's work) and the PGR should be discussed and agreed at the outset. Decisions should be reviewed, and if necessary revised, over time. All decisions should be recorded in SkillsForge. Departments may find it helpful to have a document to guide the discussion and agreement process.

Assistant supervisors

5.17 Assistant supervisors may be appointed in accordance with the University's York Assistant Research Supervisor Scheme (YARSS).

Professional development for supervisors

5.18 The University has a duty of care to its PGRs, to ensure that they are provided with supervision that meets their needs, and to its supervisors, to ensure that they are prepared for this challenging role. The University discharges this duty of care through its expectation for supervisors to undertake professional development, in the form of supported experiential learning and a mandatory online tutorial. Those with less supervisory experience have more extensive professional development requirements and also serve an informal 'supervisory probation' period until they have supported - as a main supervisor - a York PhD PGR through to successful completion.

5.19 Departments should ensure that staff who are new to an academic career are given opportunities to gain experience of the supervisory process through serving on Thesis Advisory Panels and as co-supervisors. Postdocs are encouraged to train as a PGR mentor on the University PGR Mentoring Scheme.

5.20 For the purpose of the professional development section of this policy ONLY (i.e. separate rules apply to the requirement around the mentoring of inexperienced supervisors), a supervisor may be defined as a 'new supervisor' if they have not - as a main supervisor - overseen a PhD PGR through to successful completion at any institution within the UK/Ireland; a 'supervisor new to York' if they have not - as a main supervisor - overseen a PhD PGR through to successful completion at the University of York but have done so at another institution within the UK/Ireland; or an 'experienced supervisor' if they have - as a main supervisor - overseen at least one PhD PGR through to successful completion at the University of York.

5.21 New supervisors (whether serving in a main or co-supervisor role) are required to undertake professional development as follows:

- Mandatory completion of the Becoming an Effective Research Supervisor (BERST) online tutorial before starting to supervise, with a refresher every three years; *AND*
- Expected participation in at least one PGR supervisor workshop offered by Research Culture & Researcher Development or suitable alternative (supervisors may wish to seek advice from their Graduate Chair about the appropriateness of any session) before starting to supervise, and every year thereafter until they have supervised a PhD PGR through to successful completion as a main supervisor; *AND*
- Strongly recommended participation in a PGR supervisory community of practice (CoP) and/or a departmental PGR supervisor mentoring scheme (as a mentee) until they have supervised a PhD PGR through to successful completion as a main

supervisor.

5.22 Supervisors new to York (whether serving in a main or co-supervisor role) are required to undertake professional development as follows:

- Mandatory completion of the BERST online tutorial before starting to supervise at the University of York, with a refresher every three years; *AND*
- Expected participation in at least one of the following, at least once every three years: i. a PGR supervisor workshop offered by Research Culture & Researcher Development or suitable alternative (supervisors may wish to seek advice from their Graduate Chair about the appropriateness of any session); ii. a PGR supervisory Community of Practice shared practice meeting; iii. a departmental PGR supervisor mentoring scheme (as a mentee or mentor).

5.23 Experienced supervisors (whether serving in a main or co-supervisor role) are required to undertake professional development as follows:

- Mandatory completion of the BERST online tutorial, with a refresher every three years; *AND*
- Expected participation in *at least* one of the following, *at least* once every three years: i. a PGR supervisor workshop offered by Research Culture & Researcher Development (or suitable alternative); ii. a PGR supervisory Community of Practice shared practice meeting; iii. a departmental PGR supervisor mentoring scheme (as a mentor).

5.24 Departments should monitor the completion of mandatory and expected professional development activities by supervisors. If a supervisor does not complete a **mandatory** professional development activity, the Graduate Chair should intervene and if necessary refer the matter to the Head of Department for action with reference to the Statement of Research Performance Expectations. If a supervisor does not complete an **expected** professional development activity this should be addressed through the performance review process.

5.25 Supervisors external to the University of York based in industry or similar are encouraged to complete the BERST online tutorial, with a refresher every three years. Supervisors external to the University of York based in other academic institutions are encouraged - or, depending on the nature of the arrangement , may be required - to complete the BERST online tutorial, with a refresher every three years. Completion - where required - should be overseen by the York supervisor, with any issues being referred to the Graduate Chair.

Mentoring of inexperienced supervisors

5.26 A main supervisor who has not yet overseen - as a main or joint co-supervisor - a PGR through to successful completion of a PGR programme at the same or higher level* must be supported by an experienced co-supervisor. (*Eg an individual who has - as a main or joint co-supervisor - overseen the successful completion of an MSc (by research) PGR would still require an experienced co-supervisor when supervising a PhD PGR but not when supervising additional MSc (by research) PGRs.)

5.27 The purpose of the experienced co-supervisor is to serve as an advisor/mentor to the inexperienced supervisor and provide additional supervisory support to the PGR. The experienced co-supervisor should be a member of University staff (as set out above) and have a track record of successful PhD supervision.

5.28 The co-supervision model should be agreed, on a case by case basis, between the main

supervisor, the experienced co-supervisor and the Graduate Chair, taking into account the development needs of the inexperienced supervisor and the supervisory needs of the PGR. The co-supervision model should be constant for an individual PGR to avoid disrupting their experience but may vary between individual PGRs as, over time, the inexperienced supervisor develops their supervisory practice and confidence. The experienced co-supervisor must attend TAP meetings and contribute to the supervisor's report for formal reviews of progress.

Supervisory meetings

5.29 A supervisory meeting is any meeting between a PGR and a supervisor where the supervisor undertakes their supervisory responsibilities: providing advice and support to help the PGR complete their research project on time and to an appropriate standard, and develop their professional and personal skills.

5.30 Regular supervisory meetings are essential to establish and maintain an effective supervisor-PGR relationship. PGRs and supervisors are jointly responsible for ensuring that regular supervisory meetings take place and that the University's requirements for formal supervisory meetings (see below) are met.

Formal supervisory meetings

5.31 For a supervisory meeting to count as a formal supervisory meeting, it must be of sufficient duration to allow for substantive discussion of, and feedback on, research progress and plans and/or, where relevant, training and development needs. Formal supervisory meetings must also be recorded appropriately (see below) and individual to a PGR (not a group supervision).

5.32 A full-time PGR in their normal period of enrolment must have a formal supervisory meeting at least every 6-7 weeks throughout the entire academic year: this equates to a minimum of eight formal supervision meetings per enrolment year.

5.33 Formal supervisory meetings for part-time PGRs are on a pro-rata basis (i.e. a PGR who is 0.5 fte must have a formal supervisory meeting at least every 12-14 weeks and a minimum of four formal supervisory meetings per enrolment year)[1]. Part-time PGRS and their supervisors are advised to schedule an informal catch up between each formal supervisor meeting.

5.34 The requirement for formal supervisory meetings may be temporarily waived by the relevant Graduate Chair only if a PGR is absent on academic grounds and unable (e.g. due to fieldwork location) to participate in a supervisory meeting by alternative means, normally video-conferencing.

5.35 Formal supervisory meetings should be held in-person on-campus. Exceptions apply for PGRs on distance learning programmes, for PGRs on collaborative programmes that require residence away from York, for PGRs undertaking approved academic business away from York (for example, for data collection, placement or mobility period) and for supervisors undertaking academic business away from York. Where an exception applies, supervision should be via video-conferencing. Additional restrictions apply to PGRs on Student Visas (see section 7).

5.36 The PGR should make a record (date, summary of discussion, agreed actions points) of each

[1] For PGRs entering from the start of Semester 1 2026.

formal supervisory meeting on SkillsForge for approval by the supervisor(s).

5.37 YGRS monitors formal supervisory meetings to ensure that they are happening on time and are correctly recorded. YGRS may require departments with a low rate of compliance to take action.

Other supervisory meetings

5.38 The nature and frequency of other (non-formal) supervisory meetings will vary by discipline and department: departmental expectations should be set out in PGR handbooks and at induction. For example, some laboratory-based PGRs may see their supervisor on a weekly basis but for short periods and sometimes as part of a group of PGRs, whereas in some arts and humanities departments, the expectation may be that supervisory contact between formal supervisory meetings is limited. The nature and frequency of other (non-formal) supervisory meetings may also vary depending on the stage and needs of an individual PGR.

5.39 Any PGR or supervisor can request a supervisory meeting if they believe it is necessary and all parties should endeavour to ensure that the meeting happens as soon as possible.

Supervision after the normal period of enrolment has ended

5.40 Formal supervisory meetings must continue as normal during a continuation period/submission pending or extension to submission deadline for PGRs who are Student Visa holders (see the University's Student Academic Engagement and Wellbeing Policy). For PGRs who are not Student Visa Holders, supervisory meetings must continue on a regular basis at a frequency determined by the supervisor(s) in consultation with the Graduate Chair: these meetings must be recorded in SkillsForge.

5.41 A PGR who receives a revise and resubmit outcome should receive formal supervisory meetings every 6-7 weeks and a maximum of 8 supervisory meetings over a 12 month period. Student Visa holders must also continue to meet the attendance requirements set out in the University's Student Academic Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. Milestones should be set for the PGR, so that they deliver revised thesis documents in advance of the formal supervisory meetings. It is recommended that Graduate Chairs work with supervisors to maintain a close oversight of all PGRs in a revise and resubmit period.

Providing feedback on, and dealing with challenges to, the supervisory relationship (can also be applied to challenges with the TAP)

5.42 Sometimes the relationship between a PGR and a supervisor can become strained or, in rare cases, break down. Where a supervisory relationship is not working as well as it might, the PGR and the supervisor are encouraged, in the first instance, to discuss the issue together and attempt to find a resolution. If the PGR feels unable to discuss the issue directly with the supervisor, or the issue remains unresolved having done this, or a discussion would be inappropriate, there are a number of options: (i) review of supervision, (ii) request to change supervisor, (iii) raise a complaint. PGRs are reminded that if they have a supervisory issue but do not raise it, action cannot be taken to resolve it.

Independent advice and support

5.43 York SU Advice & Support Service can provide independent advice on how to manage

challenges with a supervisory relationship and support with navigating the options available for resolution.

Review of Supervision

5.44 PGRs should feel free to talk confidentially about a supervisory issue with another member of their Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP), the Graduate Chair (or their alternate), or other departmental officer (as set out in the department's PGR handbook).

5.45 Towards the end of each TAP meeting (see section 8), the Independent Panel Member should encourage the PGR to complete and submit the Review of Supervision form, thereby offering the PGR an opportunity to discuss their supervisory relationship in a safe environment. *The Review of Supervision form can also be completed independently of the TAP process.* Review of Supervision forms are triaged by the department's Graduate Administrator and, where appropriate, sent to the Graduate Chair (or their alternate where the Graduate Chair is the PGR's supervisor) for action.

5.46 If a PGR feels unable to flag their concerns within their department (directly or via the Review of Supervision form) they can arrange to speak in confidence to one of the Faculty PGR leads.

5.47 When a supervisory issue is raised with a member of staff (directly or via the Review of Supervision form), they will advise the PGR of possible solutions. Some issues may be easily resolved, others may involve an offer of a facilitated discussion between the PGR and the supervisor and/or their department.

5.48 PGRs should be reassured that if they raise a supervisory issue in confidence (including via the Review of Supervision form) that it will not be disclosed to the supervisor concerned without the PGR's explicit written consent, although this may limit the options available for action. Options for action that do not require supervisory disclosure may include interventions that do not target an individual supervisor (e.g. changing departmental policy or providing training for all departmental supervisors) or direct support to the affected PGR (e.g. training to help them address the situation and/or signposting to University or students' union advice and support services).

Requesting a change of supervisor

5.49 A PGR can make a request to their department to change supervisor. PGRs may give a reason for their request or make the request on a 'no blame' basis. Departments should endeavour to fulfil reasonable requests (note that this extends only to the request to change, *not* the choice of the replacement supervisor). If a department does not believe there are any ground for a change of supervisor (or that a request is frivolous or vexatious), the case should be referred to the PGR Faculty Lead for arbitration (or the PGR Faculty Lead for another faculty if the PGR is in the Faculty Lead's department).

5.50 Occasionally, a PGR may request a change of supervisor but this is not possible due to *unresolvable* expertise or funder/sponsor issues [note that funder/sponsor issues should almost always be resolvable when the funding is from or paid via the University]. In this case, other options should be explored: for example, a department might appoint a new main supervisor and retain the existing supervisor as a co-supervisor (perhaps where that individual has knowledge vital for oversight of the PGR's research project) or appoint additional co-supervisors.

Absence and replacement of a supervisor

5.51 A change of main supervisor - for any reason - has implications for PGRs who require ATAS clearance and affected departments must contact the Student VIsa Compliance Team.

5.52 PGRs should be informed who would be their first point of contact if their main supervisor were to be temporarily unavailable. This would normally be the co-supervisor, if one has been appointed, or, if not, another member of their Thesis Advisory Panel.

5.53 Heads of Departments should liaise with Graduate Chairs regarding forthcoming resignations from the University, or any likelihood of prolonged absence e.g. for personal reasons, of members of staff with supervisory responsibility for PGRs. Departments should, as soon as practicable, inform PGRs formally in writing if a supervisor resigns or has to step aside, giving information on the arrangements for continued supervision.

5.54 In the event of a main supervisor becoming unable to continue supervising a PGR on a permanent or long-term basis, 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 absent supervisor. Appropriate arrangements should also be made where co-supervisors become unable to continue supervising a PGR on a permanent or long-term basis.

5.55 If a PhD PGR's research project, as agreed by the department on entry, is dependent on the academic expertise of a single, specialist member of academic staff, the department should consider what steps it might need to take to ensure continuity of supervision if that individual were to leave the University within the PGR's normal period of enrolment. If the supervisor does leave, the department must ensure that the PGR has appropriate academic support to enable them to successfully complete their PhD. A range of options may be appropriate, including team supervision, appointing the previous supervisor as a cosupervisor, supporting the PGR's transfer to another institution (see section 7), or, rarely, appointing a specialist co-supervisor from another institution (paid for by the department if necessary).

5.56 If a PGR wishes to change their research project substantially (and where applicable, this change has been approved by funder/sponsor) such that their allocated supervisor(s) is(are) no longer able to supervise this research, the department should endeavour to find an alternate supervisor(s) in the new research area (either from within the department or another department within the University - the latter may be subject to a transfer of resources to the other department). If that is not possible then the University will not be bound to provide alternative external supervision and the PGR will be advised to transfer to another institution.

If a supervisor has concerns about a supervisory relationship

5.57 If a supervisor believes that their supervisory relationship with their PGR is not functioning as it should, they should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss the issue directly with their PGR, or the issue remains unresolved having done this, then they should raise the matter with their Graduate Chair (or alternate). As a last resort - if the supervisory relationship has broken down irretrievably - a supervisor can - in consultation with their Graduate Chair - resign their position (without needing to give reasons) and then the department should appointment a new supervisor for the PGR as it

would under any other circumstances where a supervisor needs to be replaced.

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 PGRs are required to attend formal supervisory meetings **at least every 6-7 weeks (pro-rata for part-time PGRs)** 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) making themselves aware of and adhering to the University's regulations, policies and guidance regarding PGR programmes (particularly the Policy on Research Degrees), including those relating to academic and research misconduct, 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 pastoral support and, where appropriate, referring the PGR to dedicated support services within the University;

(xv) Where applicable, working with relevant parties to ensure that a PGR's Student Support Plan is implemented and/or identifying if a PGR has specific needs that require reasonable adjustment even if not covered by an SSP;

(xvi) 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;

(xvii) where appropriate, helping and encouraging the PGR to submit conference papers and

articles to refereed journals;

(xviii) maintaining the necessary supervisory expertise;

(xix) recognising the diverse needs of individual PGRs, including PGRs from demographic groups that are underrepresented in research degree programmes or that face additional challenges.

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. PGR Status and Journey

Periods of enrolment

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, MbyR programmes are as set out below.: These limits do not include any allowance for leave of absence or extension of submission, the criteria for which are outlined below.

Full-time degrees

Degree	**Normal period of enrolment**	**Minimum period of enrolment)**	**Maximum continuation period/submission pending**	**Maximum period of study (including any continuation period/submission pending)**
PhD (standard)	three years (36 months)	two years and nine months	12 months	four years
PhD (four-year version)	four years (48 months)	three years and five months	Not applicable (unless agreed by YGRS for a programme on exceptional grounds in which case 12 months)	four years (unless continuation period/submission pending agreed by YGRS in which case five years)
PhD (3.5 years)	three years and six months (42 months)	three years	6 months	four years
Integrated PhD	four years (48 months)	three years and nine months	12 months	five years
EngD	four years (48 months)	three years and nine months	12 months	five years

MPhil	two years (24 months)	one year and nine months	12 months	three years
MbyR	one year (12 months)	nine months	3 months	one year and three months
[PhD (3.75) for ESRC WRDTP ONLY]	three years and nine months (45 months)	three years and two months	3 months	four years

Part-time degrees on a 0.5 full-time-equivalent basis (fte)

Degree	**Normal period of enrolment**	**Minimum period of enrolment**	**Maximum continuation period/submission pending**	**Maximum period of study (including any continuation period/submission pending)**
PhD (standard)	six years	five years and six months	24 months	eight years
PhD (four-year version)	eight years	seven years and five months	Not applicable (unless agreed by YGRS on exceptional grounds in which case 24 months)	eight years (unless continuation period/submission pending agreed by YGRS in which case ten years)
PhD (3.5 years)	seven years	six years	12 months	eight years
Integrated PhD	eight years	seven years and six months	24 months	ten years
EngD	Not currently available.	Not currently available.	Not currently available	Not currently available.
MPhil	four years	three years and six months	24 months	six years
MbyR	two years	one year and nine months	6 months	two years and six months
[PhD (3.75) for ESRC WRDTP ONLY]	seven years and six months	six years and nine months	6 months	eight years

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 their funded period whichever is the sooner (and subject to the minimum period of enrolment).

7.3 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.

7.4 Periods of enrolment and maximum periods of study for part-time PGRs are pro rata full-time study. Part-time PGRs are 0.5 fte, unless there is an exceptional reason (e.g. mandated by the funder or reasonable adjustment for a disability) for an alternative intensity of study and this is approved by PGR Special Cases. Periods of enrolment and maximum periods of study for part-time PGRs who are 0.5 fte are set out above, periods of enrolment and maximum periods of study for PGRs who are part-time but not 0.5 fte will be determined on a case by case basis.

7.5 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.

7.6 In some programmes there is a period between the end of the normal period of enrolment and the maximum period of study: this is known as the continuation period/submission pending. The continuation period/submission pending, where applicable, provides a contingency against the research project not going according to plan. PGRs should not normally undertake any primary research (e.g. laboratory, archival or field work) during their continuation period/submission pending and should focus on the production of the thesis. Access to practical/specialist facilities for PGRs in a continuation period/submission pending 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 such permission cannot be used as grounds for a request for an extension of the submission deadline.

7.7 The maximum period between the PGR's initial enrolment and the submission of the thesis, **including any leave of absence or extensions**, is normally the maximum period of study plus four years (PhD/MPhil full-time and part-time) or two years (MbyR full-time and part-time) although this will normally be extended to accommodate maternity leave.

Extensions of submission deadline

7.8 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/submission pending). Extensions of submission deadline are granted only in exceptional circumstances, namely: where a PGR's work has been significantly adversely impaired by severe (serious and of sufficient duration), unforeseen, and unavoidable issues, normally of a medical or personal nature. The magnitude of the research task, or failure on the part of the PGR 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/submission pending.

7.9 Only PGR Special Cases can grant an extension to a submission deadline. An extension request will not normally be considered until the PGR is within three months of their submission deadline. An extension 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

MyR, where the total period of extension that may normally be approved is a maximum of one year). See B3 Policy on PGR extensions for more details.

PGRs who exceed the normal period of enrolment with permission (continuation period/submission pending or extension of submission deadline)

7.10 PGRs who have permission to exceed the normal period of enrolment, i.e. are in a continuation period/submission pending, or have an approved extension of submission deadline, or who have been given the opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis for examination, will pay a continuation fee to remain as candidates for the degree concerned, and to retain access to computing and library facilities. Continuation fees are payable by a PGR regardless of their source of funding; most sponsors/funding bodies will not cover the fees. Continuation fees are waived if the PGR submits within three months if full-time or six months if part-time (the fee for part-time PGRs is split over two years). The continuation fee is only paid once (so if a PGR has an extension in addition to a continuation period/submission pending they are not required to pay a second fee). Continuation fees are not paid by PGRs on 3.5 and 3.75 PhD programmes for entry into the shortened continuation period/submission pending for those programmes (but are applicable in other circumstances).

7.11 PGRs who have permission to exceed the normal period of enrolment should continue to receive supervisory and pastoral support from their department and supervisor(s) until they are ready to (re)submit their thesis for examination (see section 5). The PGR can expect their supervisor(s) to read and comment on final draft(s) before (re)submission.

Residence and attendance

7.12 PGRs are required to provide the University with accurate and up-to-date contact details.

7.13 PGRs are expected to engage with the academic requirements of their programme unless they are: (i) taking annual leave in accordance with this Policy, or (ii) are taking an approved break from their programme on medical or personal grounds in accordance with this Policy.

7.14 Full-time and part-time PGRs who are non Student Visa holders, on campus-based programmes and in their normal period of enrolment must reside in the UK and within reasonable commuting distance of the University of York, such that they can participate in the academic life of their department and benefit from the facilities and support on offer at York. They must meet their obligations under the University's Student Academic Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. They should attend York for all formal contact points (including formal supervisory meetings, TAP meetings, progression meetings). Temporary absence from York may be permitted for programme related reasons including a change of study location or mobility period for a collaborative programme, in accordance with the time-limits and approval requirements in this Policy, or where an individual exemption is approved by PGR Special Cases. PGRs who are non Student Visa holders and on campus-based programmes may be based away from York for some or all of their continuation period/submission pending.

7.15 PGRs who are Student Visa holders must reside in the UK and within reasonable commuting distance of the University of York, such that they can participate in the academic life of the department and benefit from the facilities and support on offer at York. They must meet their obligations under the University's Student Academic Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. They

must attend York for all formal contact points (including ALL formal supervisory meetings, TAP meetings, progression meetings) throughout the duration of their sponsorship (ie including any continuation period/submission pending and beyond) unless they have prior approval (from both their department and the Visa Compliance Team) for a change of study location or they are on a placement that forms part of an approved placement route. If a Student Visa holder wishes to leave the UK prior to the end of their programme and does not plan to return they must follow the steps for early departure.

7.16 Different residence and attendance requirements apply to PGRs on approved distance learning, off-site or split-site programmes (see F4 Framework for Collaborative Off-site and Collaborative Split-site PGR Programmes and F4 Framework for Collaborative Off-site and Collaborative Split-site PGR Programmes.

7.17 In a serious force majeure situation, a University-wide exemption to residence and/or attendance may be approved by YGRS as part of a wider University response.

Annual leave and flexible working arrangements

7.18 Periods of enrolment include an allowance for annual leave (including flexi-leave). This means that absence for annual leave/flexi-leave is not grounds for changing a PGR's period of enrolment or their final submission date.

7.19 The annual leave allocation for full-time PGRs is the same as for full-time staff (i.e. normally 38 days including public holidays and University closure days) in any year (pro-rata for part-time PGRs), subject to any further conditions imposed by any funder/sponsor.

7.20 PGRs should aim to take their full allocation of annual leave in order to maintain an appropriate work-life balance. Untaken annual leave may, however, be treated as per staff leave in terms of carry-over of days unless funder/sponsor terms dictate that this is not possible.

7.21 The FlexiLeave system should be used by PGRs and their supervisor(s) for, respectively, requesting and approving annual leave. Requests for annual leave should not be turned down without good reason.

7.22 Departments should monitor the uptake of annual leave to ensure that they are promoting good working conditions.

7.23 PGRs in many departments will have autonomy over their working hours. In some disciplines, however (particularly those where PGRs are based in laboratories) there may be an expectation that PGRs will work set hours per week in much the same way as an employee. Where this is the case, it is recommended that departments implement the staff system of flexi-time/flexi-leave for PGRs and use the FlexiLeave system to record this. Departments should also consider reasonable requests for compressed hours working.

Hours of study, employment and voluntary work

7.24 Full-time PGR programmes are based on a notional 1800 hours of study 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). The notional hours of study for part-time PGRs is pro rata. Actual hours of study 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 the hours are not excessive.

7.25 **Full-time PGRs** must ensure that the time spent on paid employment and/or voluntary work does not jeopardise on-time submission, or compromise well-being. Undertaking paid employment and/or voluntary work will not be considered as grounds for programme extensions.

7.26 Full-time PGRs (during designated periods of study i.e. excluding annual leave) may, subject to the approval of their supervisors(s) undertake a maximum of twenty hours per week 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. This is a maximum figure and may be reduced by conditions imposed by a PGR's funding body/sponsor AND/OR, where applicable, any additional UKVI restrictions. The UKRI recommends that its funded PGRs should work no more than six hours/week. The 20 hours per week rule is advisory for full-time PGRs who have entered a continuation period/submission pending AND are not subject to UKVI or funder restrictions. Where a PGR is working as a GTA for the University of York and is not subject to UKVI or other restrictions, some limited flexibility in the 20 hours/week rule to accommodate peaks and troughs in the volume of GTA work can be applied in accordance with GTA Policy guidance.

7.27 Full-time PGRs undertaking paid employment or voluntary work that contributes to or is very closely related to the programme of study may be granted an exception to the working hours maximum. Exceptions can be approved by the Graduate Chair - on the recommendation of the supervisor(s) - for individual PGRs or at programme level - on the recommendation of the Graduate Chair - by YGRS. Exceptions are not possible for PGRs subject to UKVI restrictions.

7.28 **Part-time PGRs** may undertake paid employment/voluntary work on an inverse pro-rata basis (this means that a 0.5 fte PGR may opt to work full-time alongside their PGR programme). Part-time PGRs should discuss their plans with their supervisor(s) and must ensure that their paid employment/voluntary work does not jeopardise on-time submission, or compromise well-being. Undertaking paid employment and/or voluntary work will not be considered as grounds for programme extensions.

Absence due to illness or personal reasons: short-term leave/authorised absence and leave of absence

7.29 For full details of short-term leave/authorised absence and leave of absence please see the Policy on PGR Leave.

7.30 Short-term leave (non-Student Visa Holders) or Authorised Absence (PGR Student Visa holders) enables a PGR to take authorised time away - typically less than 30 days, but up to 60 days in some circumstances - from their studies for a valid reason. Short-term leave is used for minor/short-term ill-health (‘sick leave’), but short-term leave can also be requested for other reasons including: parental leave (for childcare eg if your child is ill or your usual childcare arrangements have broken down), emergency leave (for caring responsibilities or to deal with a serious domestic situation), or compassionate leave (eg to attend a funeral). Short-term leave does not pause a PGR’s enrolment and is requested via e:vision account. For further details, please see the Policy on PGR Leave.

7.31 A leave of absence allows a PGR to take an authorised break - normally at least one month - 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 (and is neither extended nor prorated for part-time PGRs).

7.32 If a PGR wishes to take a leave of absence they should consult with their supervisor(s) and must apply in advance to PGR Special Cases for permission (leave of absence that is entirely retrospective will not normally be considered or approved). A leave of absence will not normally be considered in a PGR's first month of enrolment or in the three months prior to a PGR's submission deadline.

7.33 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. Leave of absence requests, particularly those of 24 months or over (in total, i.e.including the sum of multiple requests) may be referred to support to study.

7.34 During a leave of absence, PGRs are expected to abide by terms and conditions set out in the Policy on PGR leave. This includes the requirement to take a complete break from their studies and not work on their research. PGRs on a leave of absence should not have formal supervisory meetings or TAP meetings and contact with their supervisor(s) should be for pastoral support only. UKRI-funded PGRs or York-enrolled registered PGRs in receipt of a York-funded stipend, may be eligible for paid short-term leave/authorised absence or leave of absence in certain circumstances.

Maternity, paternity and adoption leave

7.35 A PGR may request a leave of absence on the grounds of maternity, paternity, adoption, or neonatal care. UKRI-funded PGRs or York-enrolled PGRs in receipt of a York-funded stipend, may be eligible for paid leave.

Transfer of programme within York

Transfer of programme variant: full-time to part-time equivalent (or vice versa)

7.36 A PGR may request a transfer from full-time to the equivalent programme part-time (where both variants exist) or vice versa. There is no limit to the number of times a PGR can change from FT to PT, or vice versa, as long as there are reasonable grounds for each request. Requests to transfer from FT to PT in the final stage of the normal period of enrolment of a PGR programme (the last 3 months of the normal period of enrolment for a MbyR or the last six months of the normal period of enrolment for an MPhil/PhD) or in the continuation period/submission pending will be rejected unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. a deterioration in a PGR's disability or significant new caring responsibilities) and an alternative solution (e.g. an extension) is not more appropriate.

Transfer of programme variant: campus to distance learning equivalent or vice versa

7.37 A PGR may request a transfer from campus-based to the equivalent distance-learning programme (where both variants exist) or vice versa. There must be reasonable grounds for a transfer request to be approved. When a PGR wishes to transfer from campus based to distance learning they must be evaluated against the distance learning checklist as per a new applicant to ensure that distance learning is suitable in their individual case, and they must

have completed any campus-based training required. Requests to transfer from distance learning to campus-based should normally take place no later than the first TAP (Masters by research), no later than the first formal review of progress (MPhil), or not later than the second formal review of progress (PhD).

Transfer of programme variant: programme duration

7.38 A PGR who has enrolled on a three-year PhD programme may transfer to the equivalent four-year (or 3.5 year) PhD programme only exceptionally and with the express permission of PGR Special Cases, and on the understanding that the PGR will complete any additional requirements of the four-year (3.5 year) programme (including the payment of additional fees). A PGR who has enrolled on a four-year/3.5 year PhD programme may transfer to the equivalent three-year PhD programme only exceptionally and with the express permission of PGR Special Cases (and will remain liable for fees due for year three/four)

Transfer to an alternative programme at the same level in the same department

7.39 If a PGR wishes to transfer to an alternative programme at the same level and in the same department this must be agreed by the department. Transfers should take place as soon as possible, ideally before the first formal review of progress (MPhil and PhD PGRs) and normally (for PhD PGRs only) no later than the second formal review of progress. Transferring to an alternative programme at the same level is an academic decision and there is no right of appeal other than on procedural grounds.

Transfer to a programme at the same level in a different department

7.40 If a PGR wishes to transfer to a PGR programme in a different department this must be agreed by the receiving department and should be agreed by the sending department. Transfers should take place as soon as possible, ideally before the first formal review of progress (MPhil and PhD PGRs) and normally (for PhD PGRs only) no later than the second formal review of progress. Transferring to an alternative programme at the same level is an academic decision and there is no right of appeal other than on procedural grounds.

Transfer of programme level: to a higher level programme

7.41 Where a PGR wishes to transfer from an MbyR to an MPhil/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 and subsequent submission to PGR Special Cases (pgr-special-cases@york.ac.uk). Transfers must always take place before the PGR has submitted a thesis for the programme on which they were initially enrolled. Transfers should normally take place in time to enable the PGR to undergo the first formal review of progress as a PGR on their 'new' programme (i.e. that to which they have transferred) to ensure that there is the same rigorous assessment of the PGR's ability to complete the degree, within the required timeframe, as PGRs who initially enrolled on the programme. Transferring to an alternative programme at a higher level is an academic decision and there is no right of appeal other than on procedural grounds.

Transfer of programme level: to a lower level programme

7.42 Transfers to a lower level programme can be facilitated up until a PGR submits their thesis (with an exception for PGRs given a revise and resubmit outcome, see below).

7.43 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 MbyR, they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard MbyR continuation period/submission pending (as applicable depending on whether

they are full-time or part-time) to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MbyR, they will have the standard MbyR continuation period/submission pending (as applicable depending on whether they are full-time or part-time) added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

7.44 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 MPhil continuation period/submission pending (as applicable depending on whether they are full-time or part-time) to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have the standard MPhil continuation period/submission pending (as applicable depending on whether they are full-time or part-time) added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

7.45 If a PGR opts to transfer from an iPhD to an MPhil or MbyR the first/integrated studies year of the iPhD will be discounted in terms of calculating whether or not they have exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the degree that they are transferring to. On the request of a department, PGR Special Cases may grant additional time when a PGR transfers to a lower award if the first year of their (non-iPhD) programme contained a significant taught component such that the PGR was not been able to make the same progress in their research as might normally be expected.

7.46 PGRs who receive a revise and resubmit outcome may opt to transfer to a lower award and be examined on this basis rather than be reexamined for the award on which they were originally registered.

All internal transfers

7.47 All transfers must be requested as set out on the YGRS 'change of plan' webpages, and must be approved by the department(s) and PGR Special Cases. PGRs may need the permission of their funder/sponsor to transfer. The Visa Compliance Team must be contacted by a PGR prior to any proposed transfer for a PGR on a Student Visa, as a transfer may impact their visa or ATAS certificate. PGRs should be aware that transferring programme may affect their minimum/normal/maximum period of enrolment and final deadline for submission, the fees they pay, the funding they receive from a funding body or sponsor, their access to accommodation, their eligibility for Council Tax and other issues and should check these issues before making a request. A coherent and realistic plan for the completion and submission of the thesis within the new normal period of enrolment (where applicable) may be required as part of the approval process.

Transferring into or out of the University of York

7.48 In exceptional cases, a PGR may wish to transfer to or from the University of York. This is most likely to be the case when the PGR's main supervisor is transferring to or from York and the PGR wishes to move with them.

Transfer from York

7.49 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).

Transfer to York

7.50 If a PGR wishes to transfer from another university to York, they must apply through the usual postgraduate admissions process for PGRs. **Departments must adhere to the Code of Practice on the Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Postgraduate Researchers, which provides further details of the constraints and practical considerations.**

7.51 Where a PGR transfers from another university to York, the normal, minimum, and maximum periods of enrolment (excluding any allowance for leave of absence or extensions) and the maximum period between initial enrolment and submission of the thesis (including any leave of absence or extensions) should be calculated from the date the PGR started their PGR programme at the other university, taking into account any adjustments to enrolment periods approved on admission to York.

7.52 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.

Repeat study

7.53 PGRs (including those transferring in from other institutions) are not permitted to repeat any part of their degree programme.

Entry with advanced standing on the basis of prior experiential learning in research

7.54 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 Dean of YGRS and PGR Special Cases. If advanced standing is approved, the PGR will receive written notification. 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 YGRS 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. For the avoidance of doubt, prior completion of an MRes, MbyR or MPhil (or similar qualification) does not entail any entitlement to a reduced period of enrolment for an MPhil or PhD (as applicable) at York.

Support to study

7.55 Where there are substantial concerns about a PGR's welfare and/or their impact on the safety or welfare of others, the University's Support to Study procedure may be used.

Exceptional circumstances

7.56 Exceptional circumstances relating to any formal assessment in a PGR programme, including, but not limited to, formal reviews of progress, the thesis and the oral examination in accordance with B4 Policy on PGR extenuating circumstances.

7.57 Exceptional circumstances relating to credit-bearing taught modules are covered by the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy.

7.58 Other exceptional circumstances relating to PGR programmes are dealt with PGR Special Cases (see B2 Policy on PGR leave and B3 Policy on PGR extensions).

7.59 If a PGR dies or is rendered permanently unable to complete their studies, normally due to serious medical circumstances, the University may be able to grant a posthumous or aegrotat award.

Assumed withdrawal

7.60 If a PGR fails to engage with, or disengages from, their programme (for example, misses more than 2 scheduled formal supervisory meetings without due cause), and/or sustained attempts by the University to make contact have failed, and/or the PGR does not comply with requests to indicate their intention to continue (or not) with their programme, the University may exercise its right to terminate the PGR's registration on the basis of an 'assumed withdrawal'. The department should make a case to Student Records for assumed withdrawal.

International PGRs

7.61 For PGRs who are Student Visa holders , all time limits and changes to status etc. are subject to current Home Office visa regulations. Student Visa holders must be monitored by departments in accordance with the University's Student Academic Engagement and Wellbeing Policy; this includes the monitoring of formal supervisory meetings and Thesis Advisory Panel meetings. Additional points of contact are required for PGRs who exceed the normal period of enrolment. A PGR who is Student Visa holder and who needs to remain in the UK after the expiry of their visa, for example to complete corrections or in the light of a revise and resubmit outcome, will need to apply for a new Student Visa before their existing visa expires.

National security legislation/export control and PGR mobility

7.62 PGRs whose research could fall under national security legislation/trusted research protocols (including dual use technologies) may require an export control licence if they wish to access 'controlled items' when outside the UK. This includes PGRs who wish to reside outside the UK (including in any continuation period/submission pending) or undertake research-based trips outside the UK (including conferences). Early advice must be sought from PIP. PGRs and departments must be aware that the granting of an export licence cannot be guaranteed.

8. Progress and review arrangements

Overview of PGR review points

8.1 Regular review points maximise the likelihood of PGRs completing successfully and on time and help identify PGRs who are struggling, so that advice and support can be offered. For PGRs at York, key review points are formal supervisory meetings (see above), Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) meetings (see below) and formal reviews of progress (see below).

8.2 The University requires a full-time PGR in their normal period of enrolment to have two holistic review points in a year of study, comprising either two TAP meetings OR a TAP meeting and a progression meeting. These events are pro-rata for part-time PGRs: so a 0.5 fte PGR in their normal period of enrolment will have one holistic review point - either a TAP meeting or a progression meeting - in a year of study.

Development milestones

8.3 Departments are encouraged to specify their own developmental milestones for PGRs. This could include expectations regarding skills training (e.g. the completion of certain courses/modules by a particular point), and 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, and present their work at an external conference and be in the process of submitting a paper for publication by the time of thesis submission). Departments may opt to incorporate some or all of these milestones into their evidence requirements for formal reviews of progress.

Significant changes to research projects

8.4 If a PGR has to make any significant changes to their research project for any reason (including but not limited to force majeure events), this should be discussed at formal supervisory meetings, TAP meetings and progression meetings. The discussion and any actions should be recorded in SkillsForge for future reference.

Thesis Advisory Panels

8.5 Each PGR must have a Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP), the purpose of which is to provide supportive oversight of a PGR's research project and their role as postgraduate researcher, and help the PGR reflect on and plan for their:

- Academic progress
- Professional and personal development
- Relationship with their supervisory team.

8.6 In some departments, TAP members also supplement the advice and guidance given by the supervisor(s).

8.7 The University mandates some aspects of TAPs (including the core membership and the number of required TAP meetings) but allows flexibility in other respects to accommodate differences in departmental and disciplinary pedagogical traditions in PGR supervision.

TAP membership

8.8 Departments should ensure that the composition of each TAP (in terms of the number of people and their expertise and experience) is such that it can fulfil its purpose. TAP membership must be approved by the Graduate Chair (or their nominee).

8.9 A PGR's TAP must include the PGR's supervisor(s) (the supervisory team) and a non-supervisory independent panel member (IPM) who chairs TAP meetings. The IPM will normally be part of a PGR's progression panel, providing a link between the TAP and formal reviews of progress. Additional TAP members are at a department's discretion. PGRs may be consulted on their TAP membership.

8.10 The IPM must be a member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff (i.e. on Teaching and Research, Research, or Teaching and Scholarship contract) at grade 7 or above OR a member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff who has experience of supervising PGRs. The IPM must be independent of the supervisory team (i.e. excluding anyone with a close personal relationship (e.g. spouse/partner) to a supervisor such that it might hinder - or be perceived to hinder - their independence).

8.11 The following are eligible to serve as additional TAP members but not as the IPM: research fellows who do not otherwise qualify as an IPM (see above), emeritus and honorary staff at the University of York; technicians at the University of York; academic staff based in other academic institutions; researchers based in industry or professional practice.

8.12 The TAP should be appointed within the first three months of the PGR's first enrolment, and the PGR informed of its membership.

Required TAP meetings

8.13 A full-time PGR in their period of normal enrolment must have two holistic review points in a year of study. Taking into account the timing of progression meetings (see below and the Policy on PGR Progression) this means that the following TAP meetings must take place:

- Masters by research: two TAP meetings in year one (part-time: one/year)
- MPhil: one TAP meeting in year one, two TAP meetings in year two (part-time: one TAP meeting in years one, three and four)
- PhD (3-year and 3-year variants e.g. 3.5/3.75): one TAP meeting in years one and two, two TAP meetings in year 3 (part-time: one TAP meeting in years one, three, five and six)
- PhD (4-year): one TAP meeting in years one, two and three, two TAP meetings in year 4 (part-time: one TAP meeting in years one, three, five, seven and eight)

8.14 For full-time PGRs, in years when there is a single required TAP meeting (and a progression meeting), the TAP meeting must take place by week 26 from first enrolment (or its anniversary, and subject to any adjustments). For full-time PGRs in years with two required TAP meetings (and no progression meeting), the first TAP meeting must take place by week 26 from first enrolment (or its anniversary, and subject to any adjustments), and the second TAP meeting must take place by week 51 from first enrolment (or its anniversary, and subject to

any adjustments). For part-time PGRs, required TAP meetings must be completed by week 51 from first enrolment (or its anniversary, and subject to any adjustments).

8.15 The timing of required TAP meetings is calculated for each PGR within the student record system. Adjustments are made for non-standard start times, leave of absence, and change of mode (between full-time and part-time).

Organisation of required TAP meetings

8.16 Departments should decide if required TAP meetings are scheduled by the department, or organised by the PGRs. Departments are, however, ultimately responsible for ensuring that required TAP meetings happen on time and are correctly recorded.

8.17 Prior to a required TAP meeting, a PGR and their supervisor(s) should complete their sections of the TAP record form and the PGR should provide any supporting documentation requested by their department. Departments may also require PGRs to make a presentation in their required TAP meeting.

8.18 For on-campus PGR programmes (unless a permitted exemption applies), required TAP meetings should be held in-person on-campus (not video-conferencing) to facilitate discussion (unless a PGR is on an approved mobility period). If, exceptionally (e.g. emergency caring responsibilities or disability), a member of the TAP or the PGR (excluding Student Visa holders) has to participate remotely this should be by means of video-conferencing and should be approved by the Graduate Chair. Student Visa holders must have permission from the Visa Compliance team if they cannot participate in-person on-campus. Not all TAP members need to be present at a required TAP meeting: the minimum is one supervisor and the IPM.

8.19 During or immediately following a required TAP meeting, a brief summary of the discussion and future actions must be produced on the TAP record form for reference by all parties.

8.20 The Graduate Chair should monitor TAP record forms to ensure that the TAP process is working well and to intervene if any issues are flagged.

Final TAP: applies PGRs on a Masters by Research, MPhil and PhD programmes that have access to a continuation period/submission pending (i.e. 3/3.5/3.75 year PhD programmes and part-time equivalent)

8.21 No formal review of progress is required for PGRs to enter into a continuation period/submission pending but the PGR's final TAP meeting should have a greater focus on whether the PGR is on track to complete successfully and in good time.

8.22 The PGR should provide evidence, as specified by their department, to demonstrate that they are in a position to conclude their research, and have planned in a realistic fashion how the thesis will be completed to the required standard within the time available.

8.23 Where a TAP has concerns about a PGR's progress in a final TAP meeting, the IPM should notify the Graduate Chair. The Graduate Chair should agree with the PGR and their supervisor(s) a number of check-points in the continuation period/submission pending at which progress will be reviewed with the IPM and/or the Graduate Chair.

Additional TAP meetings

8.24 Departments may choose to mandate an additional TAP meeting per year for full-time PhD/MPhil PGRs (and pro rata equivalent for part-time PGRs) if they feel that this would be pedagogically appropriate within their discipline. Departments are encouraged to provide an additional TAP meeting per year for full-time PhD/MPhil PGRs (and pro rata equivalent for part-time PGRs) if a PGR has a single supervisor.

8.25 PGRs or TAP members can request additional TAP meetings if they believe that this is necessary or would be beneficial. All parties should endeavour to ensure that a requested meeting takes place within a reasonable timeframe (one month, making allowance for common vacation periods).

8.26 Key points and actions arising from an additional TAP meeting should be recorded on SkillsForge as a general meeting. Alternatively, the TAP record form can be used but this is not a University requirement.

Review of supervision discussion and form

8.27 The review of supervision (a discussion of supervisory relationship leading to completion of the review of supervision form by the PGR) may be undertaken at the end of the TAP meeting by the IPM and the PGR in the absence of the supervisor. Alternatively, the PGR and the IPM can agree that the review of supervision will be undertaken separately from the TAP meeting as this may provide a more relaxed environment for this discussion.

Raising an issue about a TAP

8.28 If a PGR or TAP member is concerned about any aspect of the TAP or its operation (e.g. a requested TAP meeting does not take place) they should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss the matter directly with those concerned, or the problem remains unresolved having done this, PGRs and TAP members should contact their Graduate Chair (or alternate) for advice.

8.29 All forms for TAPs and Progression must be completed on the designated University IT system (currently SkillsForge). Review of supervision forms are separate for reasons of confidentiality.

Formal reviews of progress

8.30 For full details of formal reviews of progress please see the Policy on PGR Progression.

Introduction and purpose of formal reviews of progress

8.31 Every individual is admitted to a PGR programme on the basis of their potential: remaining on their programme is conditional on making satisfactory progress.

8.32 The purpose of formal reviews of progress is to determine whether a PGR, on a programme of more than one year in duration (full-time equivalent), is making satisfactory progress and is on track to complete successfully and on-time.

8.33 Formal reviews of progress consider not only a PGR's progress in their research project but also other aspects of their programme (e.g. taught/training elements) and their engagement

with responsible research (e.g. ethics and data management).

8.34 A formal review of progress should give a PGR an indication of how well they are performing, providing reassurance for those who are meeting expectations and identifying those who are not meeting expectations in a timely manner so that appropriate support can be offered. PGRs are, however, reminded that the outcome of a formal review of progress does not serve as a prediction for the outcome of the final examination.

Brief overview of the process for formal reviews of progress (for full details see the Policy on PGR Progression)

8.35 In a formal review of progress, a PGR is assessed against the relevant University progression criteria by a progression panel, which is independent of a PGR's supervisor(s).

8.36 Formal reviews of progress take place on an annual basis for full-time PGRs and on a biennial basis for part-time PGRs on all PGR programmes with a duration of more than one year (full-time equivalent). 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 (or three year variant i.e. 3.5/3.75) PhD programme (and part-time equivalent) will have two formal reviews of progress, a PGR on a four-year PGR 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.

8.37 The progression panel considers evidence from the PGR and their supervisor(s) at a progression meeting at which the PGR is present. Based on the evidence and the discussion with the PGR, the progression panel will make a decision as to whether the PGR has met or not met the relevant University progression criteria and make a recommendation regarding PGR progression.

8.38 If the progression panel decides that the PGR has met the relevant University progression criteria, it should recommend that the PGR be progressed.

8.39 If the progression panel decides that the PGR has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria, it may recommend:

i. that the PGR be given a second and final opportunity to meet the relevant University progression criteria; *or*
ii. that the PGR be invited to transfer to an MPhil programme (for PGRs enrolled on a PhD programme only) or an MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or*
iii. that the PGR be invited to withdraw from the University.

8.40 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 withdrawn.

8.41 At the first attempt, a PGR is not obliged to accept a recommendation for transfer or withdrawal and may instead opt for a second and final opportunity to meet the relevant University progression criteria.

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 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 Research Culture & Researcher Development. Research Culture & Researcher Development offers a comprehensive suite of personal and professional skills training. Training is also provided by external partners, for example within collaborative Doctoral Training Entities and nationally (for example vitae.ac.uk).

9.3 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 a means for recording training and other activities alongside records of professional development engagement.

Funder-training requirements

9.4 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.

University-training requirements

9.5 All new PGRs must complete successfully the online Research Integrity Tutorial (see section 11) and departments should check that this has been done.

9.6 All PGRs must complete successfully online 'Respect at York' learning package: failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

9.7 PGRs should complete the 'Being an Effective Researcher' (BERT) tutorial within three months of the start of their programme. PGRs should complete information security awareness online tutorials as and when these are released to PGRs. PGRs are encouraged to undertake training in the production of accessible documents so that they can ensure their e-theses are accessible.PGRs are required to undertake Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) training prior to teaching or demonstrating (see below).

Professional development planning

9.8 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.

9.9 PGRs are expected to complete, in consultation with their supervisor and with guidance from

Research Culture & Researcher Development, a Professional Development Plan (PDP). A PDP is a record of the skills developed throughout a PGR's programme and its purpose is to prompt reflection on, and discussion about, the PGR's personal, professional and career development. The PDP process is as follows:

(a) initial analysis - by six months for full-time PhD/EngD/MPhil PGRs and by three months for full-time MbyR PGRs). PGRs should use the relevant Research Culture & Researcher Development resources to: (i) take stock of their existing skills, strengths and opportunities, (ii) consider future professional development opportunities, (iii) identify appropriate professional development goals and record them in a PDP. PGRs should share their initial PDP with their supervisor(s) for comment;

(b) review and updating - PGRs should review and update their PDP on a regular basis. PDPs should be considered during regular supervisory meetings and at TAP meetings (with this discussion recorded as part of the TAP form). PDPs should also be considered during the progression process (MPhil, PhD and EngD PGRs only).

9.10 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

9.11 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 YGRS for approval (normally by Chair's action).

9.12 The Graduate School Board should ensure that formal departmental training requirements are: (i) necessary (directly relevant to the PGR programme), (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 Entity or equivalent).

9.13 YGRS 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 YGRS e.g. a DTE 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.

9.14 Departmental training requirements must be explained to the PGRs at departmental induction and specified in the department's PGR handbook. The department must specify: (i) the level of engagement or achievement required from the PGR, (i) if an exemption from some or all of the departmental training requirements can be obtained (e.g. if a PhD PGR has already completed a relevant MRes programme they might be eligible to gain an exemption

from compulsory methodology training), (iii) any opportunity to repeat/retake the departmental training requirements.

Additional rules relating to taught modules

9.15 PGRs may be required to take taught modules - normally at Masters or Doctoral level - within a PGR programme. Masters level modules may be taken from a taught postgraduate programme. Any modules created specifically for a PGR programme and not part of an existing taught programme require departmental approval and may require YGRS approval.

9.16 All taught modules must be on the module catalogue. Where PGRs are required to undertake a taught module they should be registered for the module in the University student records system and will be eligible for an academic transcript. 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%). Where a module is shared with other students, the assessment tasks should be the same for all. It should be clear whether credit-bearing modules can be compensated or re-assessed and these rules must be approved by YGRS and specified in the department's PGR handbook.

9.17 Where a PGR requests RPL for a taught module that forms part of an integrated taught award, the department must follow the principles set out in the University's RPL Policy, in consultation with YGRS.

9.18 When PGRs are taking taught modules they are subject to the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy. The department must record on SkillsForge (general meeting form) the outcome of any use of the EC Policy in relation to a PGR, and should also inform the PGR Special Cases officers.

Taught modules: external examination

9.19 All credit-bearing modules must be overseen by a taught external examiner in line with the University's standard procedures. Where PGRs undertake credit-bearing modules that form part of a taught programme, the external examiner for that programme must be asked to take responsibility for overseeing the marks awarded to PGRs registered on that module. Where PGRs undertake credit-bearing modules that do not form part of a taught 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 programme if applicable) from the SCA.

Failure to meet departmental training requirements

9.20 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 YGRS.

Role of PGRs in teaching and demonstrating

9.21 Departments are encouraged to offer PGRs opportunities to engage in teaching (including 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 by UEC, 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.

9.22 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 YPAD route.

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 and progression reports, 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 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).

10.3 Graduate School Boards should consider relevant PGR data (including PRES data, submission and completion data etc.) and ensure that any issues raised are dealt with appropriately.

10.4 When undertaking reviews of its provision, a department should ensure that PGRs and their programmes are fully covered and, where relevant, issues are flagged for consideration by YGRS.

10.5 YGRS will ensure that the institution's academic review processes pay due attention to PGRs and their programmes. The students' union represents PGRs on relevant University committees.

11. Responsible research

11.1 For the avoidance of doubt, PGRs are subject to Regulation 7 with regard to disciplinary offences, other than offences of academic misconduct. Allegations of PGR academic misconduct are dealt with as set out below in the Section on Academic Misconduct and in A2 PGR Academic Misconduct policy (this includes referral to Regulation 7 in certain circumstances)

11.2 The University expects the highest standards of integrity from its PGRs and regards any form of research or academic misconduct as an extremely serious matter. For the avoidance of doubt, inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) may constitute academic or research misconduct in accordance with the latest University guidance on generative AI use in PGR programmes.

Research integrity

11.3 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 familiarise themselves and act 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.

Ethical approval

11.4 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 relevant ethics committee.

11.5 Where formal ethical approval from an internal ethics committee and, where necessary, an external body is needed, the supervisor and the PGR are jointly responsible for securing this in accordance with the Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance

11.6 Ethical approval must be obtained before any research that requires ethical approval commences. Confirmation of ethical approval (where needed) must be checked by the department at TAP meetings, at formal reviews of progress, and at the point of thesis submission.

11.7 Ethical approval **cannot be given retrospectively**, and any data obtained prior to ethical approval cannot be used. Failing to gain ethical approval when required can lead to investigation for research misconduct.

Academic integrity

11.8 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. PGRs should pay attention to ensuring that they avoid plagiarism resulting from poor academic practice. All sources, whether published books or articles or unpublished material of any kind, must be explicitly acknowledged, and quotations or close paraphrases correctly attributed.

11.9 When PGRs are requested to do so, they must submit their work to text matching software. Text matching software may be used to check any work submitted by a PGR, including (but not limited to) work submitted to TAPs, work submitted for progression, and work submitted for the final examination.

11.10 PGRs are bound by A1 Policy on Transparency of Authorship in PGR Programmes.

Use of generative AI

11.11 PGRs are bound by A1 Policy on Transparency of Authorship in PGR Programmes. For the avoidance of doubt, inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) may constitute academic or research misconduct in accordance with the latest University guidance on generative AI use in PGR programmes.

Allegations of academic and research misconduct

11.12 **Allegations of misconduct by a PGR in any formal assessment** (including but not limited to reviews of progress, the thesis and the oral examination) other than in credit-bearing taught modules will be dealt with according to the A2 PGR Academic Misconduct policy. No decision about the PGR's progression or the outcome of the examination may be made until the investigation has been concluded.

11.13 **Allegations of misconduct by a PGR in credit-bearing taught modules** that form part of their PGR programme will be dealt with according to the Academic Misconduct Policy for taught students, with a report being made to the Progression Panel (where applicable). Note that disciplinary academic misconduct offences in a taught component are dealt with under Regulation 7: Student Discipline via the Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedure

11.14 **Allegations of research misconduct by a PGR** (including, but not limited to, ethics approvals, data management and dissemination), even if identified in a formal assessment and whether or not the research is published or otherwise disseminated, will be dealt with according to the Policy for the Investigation of an Allegation of Research Misconduct. Where there is doubt as to whether the Assessment Misconduct Policy for PGRs or the Policy for the Investigation of an Allegation of Research Misconduct should apply, the latter 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 Research Misconduct policy take precedence. Where research misconduct is alleged during the assessment process but is investigated under the Policy for the Investigation of Allegation of Research Misconduct, then no decision about the PGR's progression or the outcome of the examination may be made until the investigation has been concluded. If an allegation of research misconduct is upheld, a PGR who has committed serious or repeated research misconduct may be dealt with under Regulation 7: Student Discipline.

11.15 **Allegations of academic misconduct in elements of a PGR's programme that are mandated or expected but not formally assessed** (e.g. TAP submissions, internal presentations etc.) may be investigated and dealt with as probationary offences according to the A2 PGR Academic Misconduct policy).

11.16 **Allegations of misconduct regarding a PGR aiding or abetting an individual at the University of York or elsewhere** to commit academic misconduct are dealt with under Regulation 7: Student Discipline via the Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedure.

Disciplinary offences

11.17 PGRs are subject to Regulation 7 with regard to non-academic disciplinary offences, as set out in Regulation 7.2 (a)-(i). PGRs are also subject to Regulation 7 as set out above in relation to academic and research misconduct.

Training for integrity and ethics

11.18 The University (via Research Culture & Researcher Development) and departments will provide PGRs with guidance on good research practice, with reference to the University's policy framework, and the avoidance of research and academic misconduct.

11.19 PGRs are required to complete successfully the University Online Research Integrity Tutorial (this includes both academic and research misconduct) before their first TAP meeting. Confirmation of successful completion is required for MbyR 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.

Data management planning

11.20 All PGRs are expected to work with their supervisor(s) to put in place a data management plan (for PhD/MPhil PGRs this should be by the first formal review of progress). The data management plan should be updated as required and, where applicable, checked at subsequent progression points . The data management plan should include consideration of how research data is to be treated once the PGR has completed their programme (e.g. secure disposal or archiving and sharing via an appropriate data repository).

Information and cyber security

11.21 PGRs must comply with the University's rules and regulations regarding information and cyber security, including the Information Classification Policy, and the Policy for device access to university information.

11.22 Where a PGR is required to store or process information that is classified as “Confidential” (including but not limited to personal or commercially sensitive data) they must use a University Managed Device. PGRs who are not required to use a University Managed Device may use a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) device but must abide by the relevant University rules for permitted use. PGRs based or travelling outside the UK may need to take additional precautions with regards to information and cyber security.

Fair attribution of research

11.23 PGRs must abide by, and be recognised in line with, the Fair Attribution Guidance which ensures that the contributions of all research team members are appropriately and visibly recognised and attributed.

Public disclosure (whistle blowing)

11.24 If a PGR has a concern about an actual or potential danger, fraud, illegal conduct or unethical conduct they can raise this, without fear of detriment, via the University's Speak up (public interest disclosure) policy.

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 be on the basis of a thesis and/or approved alternative assessment format (see below) and an oral examination (viva voce) if required (see below). Material submitted for examination or re-examination remains the property of the University.

12.3 For the avoidance of doubt, references in the PoRD to the thesis will also include any approved alternative assessment format.

Expectations of the thesis

12.4 The University's expectations for the format of the thesis are set out on the YGRS pages. Departments must ensure that required word counts and referencing requirements are set out in their PGR departmental handbook, alongside any additional departmental formatting requirements. Departments may permit a single or multiple referencing style, as fits with disciplinary needs (PGRs should use one style consistently). Where a PGR is supervised cross-departmentally, there should be agreement between the PGR and the supervisors as to the most appropriate referencing style.

12.5 Monograph thesis. A monograph thesis is a unified, single author document comprising a number of chapters with an introduction and conclusion. The relevant Graduate School Board should determine - and specify in its PGR handbook - the length (word count/page count) of a monograph thesis for each of its PGR programmes (including associated transfer and exit awards), taking into account the type and length of the programme and disciplinary norms.

12.6 Journal-style thesis. A journal-style thesis presents research of an equivalent quality and volume as a monograph thesis but incorporates one or more chapters that are in a format suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed title alongside a supporting commentary. The relevant Graduate School Board should determine - and specify in its PGR handbook - if a journal-style thesis is permitted for a PGR programme (including associated transfer and exit awards) and any additional stipulations that apply (additional stipulations require YGRS approval), taking into account the type and length of the programme and disciplinary norms. Departments and PGR should refer to F1 Framework for journal-style theses.

Alternative assessment formats for practice-based PGR programmes

12.7 For a practice-based PGR programme (and associated transfer and exit awards), an alternative assessment format, for example a portfolio of practice-based work (which may include creative products such as musical compositions, performances, films, literary works) may be appropriate instead of, or in addition, to a thesis. If the alternative assessment format replaces a thesis, there must be a written element. The thesis or written element should put the practice into its research context (fit with the wider field of study, research methodology and process, originality and relevance). A department wishing to introduce or modify an alternative assessment format must seek approval from YGRS for what is being proposed - which should take into account the type and length of programme and disciplinary norms - and include the details in its PGR handbook. Departments and PGRs should refer to F2 Framework for PGR programmes by practice.

Requirements for all assessment formats

12.8 Work submitted by a PGR candidate for assessment must:

i. meet the criteria for the degree on which they are enrolled, including in terms of original contribution to the field (PhD and MPhil);

ii. form a coherent body of interrelated work;
iii. meet the University's standards with respect to academic and research integrity;
iv. be chiefly their own, and where work has been undertaken in collaboration with others this is explicitly acknowledged in the submission in accordance with University guidance;
v. with respect to the main text, be written in English (unless permission for an exception is granted, pre-submission, by SCA on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board);
vi. be derived from research undertaken whilst enrolled on their PGR programme (unless permission for an exception is granted, pre-submission, by SCA on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board and this fact is explicitly acknowledged in the submission. All research must have had appropriate ethical sign-off);
vii. not have been previously submitted for any degree or other qualification at the University or elsewhere (unless a resubmission for a lower award, OR where the previously submitted work is explicitly identified in a declaration signed by the candidate (which also identifies their contribution to the previously submitted work) as preliminary work from which the remaining work submitted has developed, OR an element of collaborative work between PGR candidates, subject to meeting rules around the level of contribution and statement of authorship);
viii. meet the University's and any relevant departmental and - where applicable - programme-specific requirements for the format of the thesis and submission of the thesis and/or approved alternative assessment format (e.g. word count) (unless permission for an exception is granted, pre-submission, by SCA on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board)
ix. not lead to liability under English law, including (but not limited to) intellectual property law, data protection law, defamation law, and discrimination law;
x. be deposited with the University post-examination in its original form or as a detailed record where the former is not appropriate (e.g. in the case of a performance) in accordance with University guidance .

Variation from the approved departmental assessment requirements

12.9 If a PGR wishes to deviate from the approved departmental assessment requirements (e.g. thesis word count, the nature of an approved alternative assessment format) for the programme on which they are enrolled this must be approved, pre-submission, by SCA on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board. The examiners must be informed of the approved exception by the department.

12.10 If a PGR submits work that deviates from the approved departmental assessment requirements without prior SCA approval, the examiners should notify the Graduate Chair but continue with the examination process. It is then for the examiners to decide, as part of the examination process, whether, and if so in what way, the deviation from departmental requirements should affect the outcome (e.g. corrections, or revise and resubmit, or failure, depending on the nature of the transgression and with reference to the criteria for the PGR award in question (see section 2 of the PoRD).

Submission of the thesis for examination

12.11 A PGR should submit the 'intention to submit' form no less than two months before they plan to submit their thesis (this is a procedural requirement only). A PGR should consult their supervisors(s) before submitting their thesis for examination and should consider their advice

on the readiness of their submission.

12.12 A PGR must submit their thesis for examination (or re-examination) by the deadline specified on e:Vision (see section 7). PGRs must plan accordingly to achieve this and failure to submit by the submission deadline will result in automatic failure. Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. documented wholesale disruption to the internet on the day of submission) will mitigation be granted for failure to submit by the deadline due to difficulties with the submission process.

12.13 Once a thesis has been submitted, it cannot be retracted or substituted for a different version (even if submitted prior to the final submission deadline) unless exceptional circumstances apply. PGRs must notify SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) immediately if there is an issue with their submission.

Unexaminable theses

12.14 In cases of a thesis being rendered unexaminable as a result of remote (i.e. third-party) printing errors or file corruption, the examiners must notify SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) as soon as possible, and no later than four weeks after receipt. SEE 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 of the thesis

12.15 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.

Examiner appointment

12.16 Examiners are appointed by the SCA, acting on behalf of Senate, on the nomination of the relevant Graduate Chair. SEE has delegated authority from the SCA to undertake external examiner approval within certain set parameters. Those examining a journal-style thesis or alternative format assessment should ensure that they are aware of the department's rules and the relevant University guidance.

12.17 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. Where two external examiners are used, and there is no internal examiner, an independent chair should be appointed to chair the oral examination and one of the external examiners must be designated to fulfil the academic expectations normally assigned to the internal examiner following the examination (e.g. to look at any corrections).

12.18 Any candidate for a PGR award who is (or has been during the five years prior to the date on which they submit their thesis for examination) an Academic, Research or Teaching member of staff of the University at grade 6 or above (but excluding PGRs offered grade 6 ART positions in the six months prior to submission or between submission and examination; also excluding Marie-Curie trainee positions and equivalent) shall be examined by at least two, and not more than three, examiners, two of whom shall be external examiners. This

requirement is to reduce the risk of bias (positive or negative) towards the candidate and to protect the University from accusations of bias. 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 examiner's fee should be paid by: (i) the candidate's employing department, where the research is relevant to candidate's employment and normally undertaken as part of their day-to-day work, or (ii) by the candidate where the PGR award is not as (i).

Internal examiners

12.19 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.

12.20 An internal examiner will normally be a member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff, other than the candidate's supervisor(s). The internal examiner must be able to make an independent academic judgement on the candidate's thesis. **Full details regarding eligibility for appointment, and support for new internal examiners, are in C2 Policy on the appointment of PGR examiners.**

External examiners

12.21 An external examiner will normally be a senior member of the academic staff of another higher education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. External examiners must be independent, impartial, of suitable professional standing and not have any known conflict of interest which might impinge on their role as external examiner. **Full details regarding eligibility for appointment, and support for new internal examiners, are in C2 Policy on the appointment of PGR examiners.**

The role of the supervisor in the examination process

12.22 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 this work to best advantage. The role of an examiner is to determine whether work presented for examination meets 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 prejudges 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 examination, while making it clear that they are unable to predict how the examination will be conducted, or its outcome.

Independent chair

12.23 The role of an independent chair (where used) is to chair the oral examination and ensure it is conducted according to the University's policies and good practice expectations. The chair is not expected to be an expert in the field being examined and they are not expected to read or comment on the thesis. An independent chair should be a member of current academic staff in the relevant department or faculty who has experience of PGR examinations and no close association with the candidate or the examiners (where these conditions are met it can be the Graduate Chair or their alternate).

12.24 An independent chair must be used when there is no internal examiner (i.e. when two external examiners are appointed), or the internal examiner has been retired for more than 3 years, or when indicated by a PGR's SSP, or for an oral examination following a revise and resubmit outcome [*when a revise and resubmit outcome is given at a viva on or after 1/9/2026*], or when required by SCA or YGRS as being in the best interests of one or more of the parties. An independent chair is recommended when there is an inexperienced (or newly retired) internal, or an inexperienced external examiner. An independent chair may be requested by a PGR or their supervisor or Graduate Chair. Independent chairs are approved by SEE under delegated power from SCA (with referral of any issues to SCA).

12.25 The independent chair may submit a brief report on the conduct of the oral examination to the SCA, if they believe this to be necessary and/or on the request of the SCA.

Requirement for an oral examination

12.26 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.

MA (by research)/MSc (by research) (MbyR)

(i) Candidates for the degree of MbyR 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) If an oral examination is not a requirement of the MbyR programme, there must be a robust procedure in place for the department to ensure that the work submitted for examination is the candidate's own (this might, for example, be an expectation that the candidate will give a presentation on their work, followed by a question and answer session in the presence of, and with input from, the internal examiner.

(iii) Where an oral examination is held for an MbyR 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

12.27 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).

MA (by research)/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).

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

12.29 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).

12.30 Candidates are encouraged to access support in preparation for the oral examination. Research Culture & Researcher Development 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 (this should not aim to replicate the oral examination but rather to give a PGR an idea of the sorts of questions that they might expect).

Timing and location of the oral examination

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

12.32 The internal examiner should agree on the date of the oral examination in consultation with the external examiner(s) and the candidate. The oral examination should be held within three months of the date of submission of the thesis. If a PGR is on a Student Visa, the Visa Compliance team must be consulted before any decision to delay or reschedule an oral

examination is made.

12.33 Permission to hold the oral examination more than three months after the submission date due to examiners' availability must be obtained from SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) (acting under powers delegated from the SCA) with candidate and examiners copied in.

12.34 Permission to hold the oral examination more than three months after the submission date due to delays in the process of appointing examiners/ examiners' availability OR a PGR's extenuating circumstances must be obtained from SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk acting under powers delegated from the SCA). There must be written confirmation from the candidate, examiners and Graduate Chair. The delayed oral examination should be held as soon as reasonably possible. SEE will refer to SCA all cases where a requested extension would take the oral examination to more than five months after the submission date.

12.35 Where a request for an extension to the examination window is due to a PGR's extenuating circumstances, suitable evidence must be provided by, or on behalf of, the PGR. Oral examinations due to a PGR's extenuating circumstances should not normally be delayed for more than 12 months after the submission date.

12.36 If an oral examination is subject to continued postponement by a PGR without good reason (e.g. where supporting evidence for a postponement is lacking or weak), SCA may place a time-limit on holding the oral examination, after which the examiners will be permitted to choose: (i) at first attempt: a revise and submit, downgrade (with or without corrections) or fail outcome, or (ii) following a revise and resubmit outcome: downgrade (with or without corrections) or fail outcome.

12.37 The examination party (i.e. the candidate, the external examiner(s), and the internal examiner and/or the independent chair) must all participate in the oral examination. The oral examination should be held at the University of York, with all the examination party physically present, unless alternative arrangements are approved (see below).

Off-site oral examinations (all the examination party are physically present but not at York)

12.38 A Graduate Chair may grant permission for off-site oral examination i.e. for the oral examination to be held away from the University of York - but with all the examination party physically present at the venue - as long as the premises are suitable for conducting an oral examination. A written proposal must be sent to the Graduate Chair from the internal examiner that indicates that the candidate and all members of the examination party are in agreement.

Hybrid oral examinations (the candidate is physically present but an examiner is video-conferencing)

12.39 The Graduate Chair may grant permission for a hybrid oral examination i.e. where the candidate is physically present at York (or approved off-site venue) with at least one other member of the examination party but one or more other members of the examination party participates in the oral examination remotely via a video-conference link. A written proposal must be sent to the Graduate Chair from the internal examiner that indicates that all members of the examination party are in agreement. Hybrid oral examinations will typically be used where a department believes that the most suitable external examiner is international and it makes sense for that individual not to travel to York.

Online oral examinations (the candidate is remote)

12.40 Online oral examinations (ie where the candidate participates in the oral examination remotely (by a video-conference link), without being accompanied by any other member of the examination party) are not an automatic right. Online oral examinations are not appropriate where there are any concerns about the candidate in terms of academic misconduct, or there are likely to be practical difficulties in establishing a reliable and safe internet connection. It is recommended that online oral examinations are avoided, where possible, where a department has concerns about a candidate's wellbeing or where a downgrade or fail outcome is likely. Guidance on online vivas is available.

12.41 For permission for an online oral examination to be granted - by SEE (acting under powers delegated from the SCA) - the request must be submitted by the Graduate Chair to SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) on the required form, which includes notification that the examiners' and the candidate have given their agreement (permission is not required if an online oral examination is part of a PGR's SSP and there are no concerns about academic integrity).

Preparing for and conducting the oral examination

12.42 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 (where relevant). Once both examiners have completed their independent preliminary reports (and prior to the oral examination, where relevant), access should be provided to each other's reports.

12.43 The internal examiner is responsible for ensuring that reasonable adjustments are put in place for the final examination. If an independent chair is appointed to oversee the oral examination, they take over responsibility for ensuring that reasonable adjustments are put in place only once the oral examination commences (e.g. approach to questioning, breaks etc.).

12.44 In order to ensure that the oral examination is conducted fairly and in accordance with this Policy, the oral examination must be chaired. If there is an independent chair they will perform this role.; if not, the internal examiner should undertake this role .

12.45 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.

12.46 Care should be taken to make sure the candidate has the best opportunity to perform well in their oral examination. Examiners and independent chairs should make use of the University's guidance on inclusive oral examinations.

12.47 Candidates should have access to a copy of their thesis in the oral examination. This may be hard copy (including annotations) or electronic copy (including annotations). If the thesis is an electronic copy, then the examiners should ask the candidate to position the device/screen so that they can be reassured that the candidate does not have access to generative AI, translation software or any other unfair means in the examination.

12.48 A candidate 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.

Ensuring the integrity of oral examinations

12.49 PGRs are expected to work with the examiners to ensure the integrity of oral examinations. This means, for example, that the PGR may be asked to demonstrate to the examiners' satisfaction (in the case of an online examination through the positioning of their camera(s)) that they are not using unfair means (e.g. generative AI, ear-pieces) to aid them in their oral examination. For online oral examinations, the University may mandate the use of proctoring software.

12.50 If an examiner or independent chair has concerns about the integrity of an examination which is in progress they should flag their concerns to their fellow examiner(s)/chair and may bring a halt to proceedings. The internal examiner/independent chair should then instigate the PGR academic misconduct procedure for cheating.

Recording the oral examination

12.51 The department must ensure that a recording is made of *all* oral examinations for research degrees, as a means of providing an objective record. C1 Policy on recording PGR examinations
provides full details of how recordings must be made, their storage, usage and disposal.

Non-attendance at or compromised oral examination

12.52 First attempt: if the candidate does not attend their scheduled oral examination (or presentation in the case of MbyR PGRs), the examiners may choose between a revise and resubmit, downgrade (with or without corrections), or fail outcome.

12.53 Revise and resubmit: if the candidate does not attend their scheduled oral examination (or presentation in the case of MbyR PGRs), the examiners may choose between a downgrade (with or without corrections) or fail outcome.

12.54 If the candidate is prevented from attending their scheduled oral examination (or presentation in the case of MbyR PGRs) - or their oral examination (or presentation in the case of MbyR PGRs) is compromised - due to a serious unforeseen extenuating circumstance refer to B4 Policy on PGR extenuating circumstances.

Examination outcomes

12.55 Following the (oral) examination of a candidate for a research degree, the following recommendations are open to the examiners. **Further guidance for examiners on when the various examination outcomes should be used is available in C3 Guidance for PGR examiners.**

For PhD and EngD candidates

(a) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2)

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

In choosing between (ii) and (iii), the examiners should take into account the scale of the corrections and the other commitments of the PGR (e.g. full-time work). If in doubt, examiners should opt for (iii), as a PGR can submit their corrections earlier than the six-month deadline.

(b) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not yet been satisfied** AND it is reasonable to assume that the criteria ***could*** be satisfied if the PGR undertakes further work, as set out by the examiners, AND that this further work *could* realistically be completed within 12 months, they may recommend: 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 re-examination (referral). An oral examination is a required part of the re-examination. A candidate will normally be given only one opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis.

(c) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not been satisfied** they may recommend:

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

Additionally, for EngD candidates:

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

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

For MPhil candidates

(a) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) 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; *OR*
(iii) that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within six months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners

In choosing between (ii) and (iii), the examiners should take into account the scale of the corrections and the other commitments of the PGR (e.g. full-time work). If in doubt, examiners should opt for (iii), as a PGR can submit their corrections earlier than the six-month deadline.

(b) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not yet been satisfied** AND it is reasonable to assume that the criteria ***could*** be satisfied if the PGR undertakes further work, as set out by the examiners, AND that this further work *could* realistically be completed within 12 months, they may recommend: 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). An oral examination is a required part of the re-examination. A candidate will normally be given only one opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis.

(c) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not been satisfied** they may recommend:

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

For MA (by research)/MSc (by research) candidates

(a) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) 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 two months of receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners;

(b) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not yet been satisfied** AND it is reasonable to assume that the criteria *could* be satisfied if the PGR undertakes further work, as set out by the examiners, AND that this further work *could* realistically be completed within 4 months, they may recommend: that the candidate should be allowed a period not exceeding four 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). An oral examination will be a required part of the re-examination if it is a condition of the programme at the first attempt or if the examiners deem it necessary. A candidate will normally be given only one opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis.

(c) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not been satisfied** they may recommend: that no degree should be awarded.

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

Completion of examiners' reports

12.56 The examiners must complete and submit the Examination Outcome form and Examiners Joint Report form as soon as possible (ideally within three working days of the oral examination (if held) and at the most 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.

12.57 If the examination forms have not been received by the Graduate Chair by the deadline specified above, the Graduate Chair should follow up with examiners as a matter of urgency. If, despite intervention, the examination reports have not been received by the Graduate Chair within two weeks of the oral examination (if held) and/or there is a known issue regarding the receipt of the forms (e.g. one of the examiners has fallen seriously ill), then the Graduate Chair should contact YGRS for advice on how to proceed, marking the request as urgent.

12.58 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'. 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.

12.59 In any case where the examiners recommend that the candidate should not be awarded any degree or should be awarded a degree for which they were not enrolled (i.e. an MPhil or MbyR if a PhD or EngD candidate; an MbyR 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.

Ratification of the examiners' reports and approval of the result

12.60 The Examiners' Joint Report should be submitted to the Graduate Chair in the department concerned for ratification as soon as possible (see above). 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.

12.61 The Graduate Chair should flag to the Dean of YGRS/PGR Faculty Lead, as appropriate, any issues (positive or negative) in the Examiners' Joint Report that might be of interest either institutionally or at faculty level, for example relating to academic standards, the assessment process or the PGR experience.

12.62 After departmental ratification, the Joint Examiners Report should will be sent to SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk), who will forward it to the candidate and the supervisor. SEE will arrange for the result to be approved by a member of the SCA, acting on behalf of the Committee.

Dealing with corrections

12.63 If the examiners recommend that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections , they should submit their list of corrections in the Examiners Joint Report form and submit any other corrections material (e.g. an annotated thesis) to SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) within two weeks of the examination. SEE will process and send the corrections to the candidate within two weeks of receipt from the examiners**.**

12.64 It is recommended that the candidate consult with the internal examiner about the direction and/or appropriateness of corrections well in advance of the deadline for the submission of the corrected thesis to avoid delays or issues.

12.65 The candidate must submit their corrected thesis plus a 'tracked changes' version of the corrected thesis (not required for theses set in LaTeX) and document that summarises the changes made electronically to SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) within the timeframe set out in the examination outcome section (counting from the date on which the candidate was sent the list of corrections).

12.66 SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) will send the corrected thesis and other documents to the internal examiner. The internal examiner should consider the corrections and **if satisfied** send a completed Corrections approval form to SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) within two weeks of receipt of the corrected thesis.

Examiner is not satisfied with the corrections

12.67 If the examiner is not satisfied with the corrections, they may require the candidate to undertake further corrections to address the outstanding issues, normally on one occasion only. The examiner should notify SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) and SEE will send them a Further Corrections Form. Once the Further Corrections has been completed, the examiner should return this to SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk), who will, in turn, notify the candidate. SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) will automatically extend the deadline for the submission of corrected thesis by five weeks (counting from the date that the PGR is informed of the further corrections to be undertaken). When the further corrections have been satisfactorily completed, the examiner should send a completed Corrections approval form to SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) within two weeks of receipt of the final corrected thesis.

Extenuating circumstances and corrections

12.68 If a candidate has extenuating circumstances that means they will be unable to meet the deadline for the submission of the corrections (at the first or further attempt) they should contact PGR Special Cases (pgr-special-cases@york.ac.uk) to request an extension.

Failure to submit corrections

12.69 Failure to submit a corrected thesis by the deadline noticed by SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk)
or failure to satisfactorily complete the corrections will result in the candidate being withdrawn from the degree.

Deposit of the thesis and conferral of the award

12.70 If the examiners recommend that a degree should be awarded, and following the completion, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners, of any required corrections, the candidate must deposit the thesis in accordance with the University's requirements (see also Deposit of research data below) and within the deadlines stipulated in the relevant correspondence from SEE. Deposited material remains the property of the University.

12.71 The approval of the award following examination will usually be communicated to the candidate within two weeks of the deposit of the final version of the thesis to the White Rose eTheses Online (WREO) repository.

12.72 The award will be conferred (i.e. the degree certificate issued) to the candidate at the next available degree ceremony. If the award being conferred is PhD, the candidate may choose to use the title of Dr from the date of conferral although many opt to use the title from the date of the receipt of the award letter.

Failure to deposit the final version of the thesis

12.73 For a PGR degree to be awarded, the final version of the thesis must be deposited in accordance with the University's requirements. Failure to deposit the thesis within a maximum of two months from the relevant notification will result in the candidate being withdrawn from the degree.

Disposal or deposit of research data

12.74 PGRs should, with reference to their data management plan (see section 11), ensure that their research data is treated appropriately at the end of their programme. Where research data is archived and shared in a data repository this should be recorded when the thesis is deposited.

Disagreement between examiners

12.75 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 SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) 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.

Downgrade wordcount exemption

12.76 If a PGR receives a downgrade to an MPhil or MbyR then an automatic exemption is granted with respect to the department's word count for the MPhil/MbyR to ensure that the PGR is not required to edit their thesis merely to satisfy the MPhil/MbyR word count (they will of course have to satisfy any required corrections if given a 'with corrections' outcome).

Revision and resubmission of the thesis

12.77 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 if the PGR undertakes further work, as set out by the examiners, and this further work could realistically be completed with the time allotted (see above), they may recommend that the thesis should be revised and resubmitted for examination. SEE will send an official letter of notification to the candidate once the examiners' report (plus the list of required revisions) has been received in SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) and has been approved by the SCA.

12.78 If the examiners recommend the revision and resubmission of the thesis, they should submit their list of required revisions in the Examiners Joint Report form and submit any other revisions material (eg an annotated thesis) to SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) within two weeks of the examination. SEE will process and send the required revisions to the candidate within two weeks of receipt from the examiners.

12.79 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.

12.80 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

12.81 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. In

addition to their revised thesis, the candidate must submit a document which details how the revised thesis addresses the points raised by the examiners in the Corrections/Revisions form. The document should be sufficiently detailed (including examples where relevant) to show clearly where and how all the points in the Corrections/Revisions form have been addressed. The examiners may, in addition, require a 'tracked changes' version of thesis and, if so, should specify this in the Corrections/Revisions form. The candidate must pay the prescribed re-examination fee before submission.

12.82 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.

12.83 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.

12.84 An oral examination must be scheduled within three months of the submission of the revised thesis. An independent chair should be appointed to oversee the oral examination. An oral examination is required after a revise and resubmit outcome as, by definition, a revise and resubmit outcome indicates that the first submission was not of a suitable standard. That being the case, the original oral examination (for PhDs/MPhils and some Masters by research) could not have been a valid test of the work as a whole, and certainly cannot have been a test of the later submission that is, by definition, substantially revised.

12.85 Each examiner must submit an independent preliminary report on the revised thesis.

12.86 The examiners must complete and submit the Examination Outcome form and Examiners Joint Report form (in the candidate's Google examination folder) within two weeks of the oral examination.

12.87 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. outcome (b) does not apply).

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.

Open research

13.3 The University is committed to the values, principles and culture of open research. PGRs should work with their supervisors to explore how open research practices might apply to their work.

13.4 In line with the University's commitment to Open Research and funder requirements (where applicable), 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). Where PGRs create scholarly articles during or as a consequence of their programme, they are strongly encouraged to follow the principles set out in Research Publications and Open Access Policy.

13.5 When a PGR is requested to do so by the Library, they must obtain a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) for their thesis and include this in the version deposited with WREO.

Changes to deposited theses

13.6 Once a thesis has been deposited to WREO it is not possible to make changes to the thesis (other than redaction of the thesis where permitted by the policy on embargo and redaction), as WREO provides a record of examined theses. If an alumni wishes to correct an error (normally substantive) in their deposited thesis they may make a thesis errata request. This will be sent to their department for approval and if approved, can be uploaded to WREO to sit alongside their thesis.

Embargo and redaction policy

13.7 In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for a thesis to be embargoed (ie withheld from the general public and, normally with the exception of an abstract, none of the material reproduced) for a fixed period AND/OR made available with redaction (the PGR must deposit a redacted version of the thesis, which will be made publicly available (i.e. in addition to their examined (unredacted) thesis which will not be made publicly available).

13.8 Embargo may be for one or more of the following reasons: (i) intent to publish; (ii) commercial sensitivity; (iv) issues of personal safety or national security; (vi) exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. An embargo should not be used when redaction could be used to achieve the desired goal and ensure that the vast majority of the research is in the public domain as soon as possible.

13.9 Redaction may be for one or more of the reasons specified for embargo and/or for (v) data

protection compliance; (vi) unlicensed reproduction of third-party copyright material (copyright guidance is provided by the Library). Redaction for third-party copyright infringement will be indefinite unless notification of clearance is received.

13.10 In considering whether to embargo or redact a thesis, all appropriate considerations must be taken into account, including funding requirements, intellectual property issues and Research Data Management expectations.

13.11 A request for embargo or redaction may be made by the PGR and/or the supervisor(s) and/or the funder of the PGR's research, subject to a valid reason as set out above.

13.12 If a dispute about the embargo or redaction 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.

13.13 Funder requirements around permitting or restricting access to the thesis (or material within the thesis) may be determined from the outset in the funder's terms and conditions and/or a studentship agreement OR a written request made by the funder (to the supervisor/PGR) when the thesis is finalised. Approval for any requested redaction/embargo period should be sought as below.

13.14 The PGR and their supervisor(s) are jointly responsible for adhering to any embargo or redaction terms agreed with the funder at the outset and/or facilitating reasonable requests from the funder for embargo or redaction once the thesis is finalised.

Embargo duration and approval

13.15 Any embargo period (counting from the date of the Award) should be as short as reasonably possible to meet the University's commitment to open research. Lifting an embargo in advance of the set date requires the consent of the PGR and their supervisor(s) and the funder if applicable.

13.16 Where a PGR is in receipt of ANY UKRI money (ie including collaborative projects such as CASE and CDAs), the maximum embargo period is normally 12 months (counting from the date of the Award), with an embargo of 12-24 months only being considered where there are strong grounds.

13.17 An embargo of up to 12 months (total period, including any extensions) can be approved by the PGR and their supervisor(s). An embargo of between 13 and 24 months (total period, including any extensions) requires the additional approval of the Graduate Chair and - for UKRI-funded PGRs - the PGR Faculty Lead. An embargo of between 24 months and five years (total period, including any extensions), requires the approval of the PGR Faculty Lead and - for UKRI-funded PGRs only - the Dean of YGRS.

13.18 Where funder open research requirements (e.g. UKRI) do not apply, the University may consider a longer (i.e. over five years, including any extensions, with an upper limit of ten years) embargo where evidence is provided that a publisher for a thesis is being actively sought and/or the alumni's availability to undertake the necessary work is limited (e.g. due to caring responsibilities or precarious work situation). The University may also be willing to grant a longer embargo (i.e. over five years, including any extensions, with an upper limit of ten years) where required, on exceptional grounds, as part of a contractual agreement and

where open research requirements (e.g. UKRI) do not apply. Any embargo of over five years (including any extensions) requires the approval of the Dean of YGRS.

Creative work embargos

13.19 The University recognises that it can take significantly longer to find a publisher or other suitable outlet for creative work (e.g. novels, poetry, theatre plays, screenplays, music scores, architectural designs) that is produced as part of a PGR programme by practice. In recognition of this fact, the University will offer an initial creative work embargo of five years. A creative work embargo can be renewed on request (typically for one further five-year period maximum i.e. a maximum of ten years), if evidence is provided that a publisher/outlet for the work in question is still being actively sought.

13.20 The creative work should be physically separated (e.g. into a separate document) from the critical component of the thesis (or alternative assessment format) to enable the critical component to be made publicly available in accordance with the usual rules on embargo periods and to meet the University's - and where applicable the funder's - commitment to open research.

13.21 The division into separate creative and critical components should ideally be undertaken prior to submission for examination (e.g. for creative writing, the thesis could be submitted as two separate documents, one comprising the creative work, one comprising the critical component) but could also be undertaken post-examination but pre-deposit.

Permanent embargo

13.22 A thesis may be subject to permanent embargo only in the most exceptional of circumstances, typically: (i) risks to national security, (i) risks to personal safety, or (iii) when requested by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research due to a breach of the Code of Practice on Research Integrity. All requests for permanent embargo must be approved by the Dean of YGRS and the PVC for Research.

13.23 Unredacted theses for copyright and privacy may be permanently embargoed without further approval as long as a redacted thesis is in the public domain and the redaction does not affect the cohesiveness and value of the thesis (NB the redacted thesis can also be subject to temporary embargo where there is good reason).

Copyright of thesis

13.24 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).

Contractual responsibilities to external organisations

13.25 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 (e.g. the adequacy of supervision) and non-academic nature from PGRs and others. There is a specific procedure for dealing with complaints relating to staff misconduct, such as 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 Special Cases (not PGR Special Cases).

14.3 If a PGR receives an examination outcome of a revise and resubmit or downgrade and they decide to appeal this decision they will still be required to abide by the approved timetable for the submission of the revised/thesis for the lower award (as set out in section 12) unless exceptional circumstances apply.

15. Change of study location (research away from York for campus-based PGRs)

15.1 PGRs on standard campus-based programmes are expected to live in the UK and within reasonable commuting distance of York. PGRs on standard campus-based programmes are also expected or, in the case of Student Visa holders required, to attend campus for formal supervisory meetings, TAP meetings and progression.

15.2 Permission may be granted for PGRs on standard campus-based programmes to undertake a period of research away from York in the UK or overseas: this is a **change of study location**. A change of study location is intended to contribute directly to a PGR's research project or thesis (cf. placements, see section 16).

15.3 Examples of a change of study include:

- academic conferences and training/workshops for research skills
- data collection including fieldwork and archival work
- consultation with reference institutions (libraries/archives/museums)
- visits to an industrial partner/NGO or similar to undertake research as part of an approved studentship
- undertaking research in a national laboratory, museum or other learned institution
- undertaking research in a partner academic institution, including as a visiting PGR or by participating in a student exchange (see below).

Time restrictions for a change of study location

15.4 The cumulative amount of time that a PGR (note that additional restrictions apply to PGR

Student Visa holders) can normally spend on one or more changes of study location, is as follows:

- PhD: up to 12 months for a full-time PGR (and equivalent part-time); exceptionally up to 18 months
- MPhil: up to nine months for a full-time PGR (and equivalent part-time)
- MbyR: up to six months for a full-time PGR (and equivalent part-time).

15.5 If a PGR needs to be away from York for a longer duration than specified above, this must be accommodated by a transfer to a distance-learning programme or offsite/splitsite programme as appropriate and where permitted. Note that Student Visa holders are not permitted to enrol on distance-learning programmes in the UK and not normally permitted to enrol on offsite/split-site programmes within the UK.

PGR Student Visa holders and change of study location

15.6 **PGR Student Visa holders are subject to more stringent time restrictions: a request for a change of study location of more than six months may be refused by Visa Compliance unless there is a strong case.** PGR Student Visa holders also have to meet additional approval requirements (see below).

Approval of a change of study location

15.7 A change of study location of up to one month should be approved by the supervisor. A change of study location of over one month or where a change of study location is higher risk (e.g. physically demanding, dangerous or lone fieldwork, some overseas travel) should also be approved by the Graduate Chair. A department may set a lower threshold for referral of a change of study location approval to the Graduate Chair. Departmental approval should be recorded on SkillsForge.

15.8 **PGRs who are Student Visa holders** must, additionally, have the permission of Visa Compliance for any change of study location of more than three days. A change of study location for a PGR Student Visa holder must be requested and agreed via e:Vision at least one week in advance of the start date (retrospective approval is not permitted). Approval for longer periods (six months or more) of change of study location for PGR Student Visa holders must be sought well in advance and cannot be guaranteed.

Actions required prior to a PGR commencing a change of study location

15.9 The PGR and their supervisor(s) are responsible for undertaking proportional due diligence on any proposed change of study location to check that it is suitable. Any identified risks should be subject to appropriate mitigation measures.

15.10 Where a PGR is being formally hosted by another organisation, a written agreement with the host partner (that sets out the respective responsibilities of the PGR, the host and York) is normally required. There must be a written agreement where intellectual property could be generated or when personal data will be transferred between the host and York. Written studentship agreements where a change of study location is linked to a PGR's funding (e.g. where a company/NGO is part-funding a PGR) should be requested from RKEC via Worktribe and in place from when a PGR starts. Written agreements for other changes of study location requiring a written agreement can be requested from RKEC via Worktribe.

15.11 PGRs are responsible for informing their departmental postgraduate administrator(s) when they will be on a change of study location, and for completing the University's travel log prior to travel overseas.

Supervision and monitoring when a PGR is on a change of study location

15.12 Where a PGR is on a change of study location: (i) the main supervisor retains primary responsibility for maintaining an oversight of the PGR and their research project; (ii) supervisory meetings and TAP meetings must continue as normal but may be held by video-conferencing; (iii) formal reviews of progress must be conducted in accordance with this policy (permission for conducting a progression meeting by video-conferencing must be sought from SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) - decision taken by the SEE Manager or their designated alternate); (iv) consideration should be given as to how research training and participation in other academic activities can be facilitated if the PGR is away from York for an extended period.

Change of study location: outgoing visiting PGRs

15.13 A York PGR may enrol as a visiting PGR at another academic institution. Note, however, that this option may not be available to Student Visa holders who will need to check with Visa Compliance. 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 (time limits as set out above). PGRs must not be awarded a qualification by the other institution. The PGR should follow the host institution's procedures for visiting PGRs. The University's Policy Statement on Study Abroad should be consulted where an academic institution is based outside the UK.

16. PGR placements [UNDER ONGOING REVIEW]

16.1 A PGR placement is when a PGR undertakes an activity (project, internship, mobility period), in the UK or overseas, to develop their professional or transferable skills. In contrast to a change of study location (see above), placements do not have to directly relate to a PGR's research project or contribute to their thesis and are often undertaken in non-academic organisations.

16.2 If a placement is a required part of a programme i.e. all PGRs on the programme are required to undertake a placement (e.g. to satisfy a research council), the programme should be configured 'with placement' for transparency and to ensure that Student Visa holders can participate on equal terms to other PGRs (see below). If a placement is an optional part of a programme (e.g. to satisfy a research council), a 'with placement' route should be set up in addition to the standard (non-placement) route for the reasons set out above.

16.3 The 'with placement' programme/route formulation should be used for programmes which have a required or optional mobility period where the primary aim is to develop a PGR's personal, professional or transferable skills but which could, in addition, contribute to their thesis, and as long as the other expectations of a placement (i.e. integrated and assessed) are met.

Departmental oversight of placements

16.4 Departments **are responsible** for the oversight of placements that are a required/optional part of a PGR's programme (i.e. all placements taken within a 'with placement' programme/route). Departments are also responsible for ad hoc placements undertaken within core programme time.

16.5 Departments **are not responsible** for ad hoc placements that are **not** a required/optional part of a PGR's programme **AND** are undertaken outside core programme time (i.e. accommodated as part-time working, annual leave, or a Leave of Absence).

Student Visa holders and placements

16.6 If a PGR Student Visa holder wishes to undertake a placement within core programme time, the placement must be an integral and assessed part of their programme in order to meet UKVI requirements. This means that there must be a 'with placement' programme/route, with a zero-weighted placement module (typically assessed on a pass/fail basis).

16.7 If there is no 'with placement' programme/route, Student Visa holders can only undertake a placement outside core programme time and only if this must be accommodated via part-time working, annual leave, or a Leave of Absence (the latter only if the placement is outside the UK).

Approval of a 'with placement' programme/route

16.8 A 'with placement' programme/route (with a zero-weighted placement module typically assessed on a pass/fail basis) must be approved by the departmental Graduate School Board and then by YGRS via a light touch approval process.

16.9 PGRs should be enrolled on a 'with placement' programme from the outset if required to undertake a placement or transferred to a 'with placement' route if a placement is optional (some restrictions apply to Student Visa holders).

Applying for and approval of ad hoc placements (i.e. where there is no 'with placement route')

16.10 An ad hoc placement of up to one month (or part-time equivalent) that is undertaken within core programme time (**NB not available to Student Visa holders**) should be approved by the supervisor. An ad hoc placement of over one month (or part-time equivalent) and/or higher risk (e.g. physically challenging; some overseas travel) that is undertaken within core programme time (**NB not available to Student Visa holders**) should also be approved by the Graduate Chair. Departmental approval should be recorded on SkillsForge. A department may set a lower threshold for referral of placement approval to the Graduate Chair.

16.11 Where an ad hoc placement is undertaken outside core programme time (i.e. accommodated as part-time working, annual leave, or a Leave of Absence), the PGR should notify their supervisor(s) of their plans but the department is not expected to approve the placement. The department will have to consider any associated request for Leave of Absence, where applicable, but any such approval should not be taken as approval of the placement itself.

Time restrictions for a placement

16.12 The period of time that a PGR may spend on a placement will depend on how the placement is accommodated.

16.13 If a placement is undertaken within core programme hours (i.e. including placements taken within a 'with placement' programme/route), it is recommended that a placement is no longer than three months full-time or part-time equivalent (two months for an MPhil and one month for MbyR) to ensure that on-time submission is not compromised. Undertaking a placement within core programme time is not considered grounds for requesting an extension of the submission deadline.

16.14 If a placement is accommodated outside core programme hours (e.g. as part-time working, annual leave, or a Leave of Absence) the rules for these activities apply as normal.

Actions required prior to a PGR commencing a placement

16.15 Where a prospective placement is a required/optional part of a PGR's programme **and/or** undertaken within core programme time, the PGR and their supervisor(s) are responsible (unless alternative arrangements are in place e.g. a placement coordinator) for undertaking a proportionate risk-based due diligence check on a prospective placement to check that it is suitable, to identify any risks, and to put appropriate mitigation in place. A written agreement with the host partner (that sets out the respective responsibilities of the PGR, placement provider and York) is normally required. Advice may be sought from Careers and Placements.

16.16 Where a prospective placement is not a required/optional part of a PGR's programme **and** is undertaken outside core programme time (i.e. accommodated as part-time working, annual leave, or a Leave of Absence) the PGR is responsible for undertaking a proportionate risk-based due diligence check of the placement to check that it is suitable, to identify any risks, and to put appropriate safeguards in place. Advice can be sought from Careers and Placements.

16.17 PGRs are responsible for informing their departmental postgraduate administrator(s) when they will be on a placement, and for completing the University's travel log prior to travel overseas (only when the placement is overseen by the department, for other placements PGRs must make their own insurance arrangements).

16.18 When a PGR Student Visa holder is on a 'with placement' programme/route, the department must inform Visa Compliance of the PGR's placement start date no later than one week before it commences.

Supervision and monitoring when a PGR is on a placement

16.19 When a PGR is away from York on a placement (excluding placements accommodated as annual leave or as a Leave of Absence but including all placements accommodated as part-time working): (i) the main supervisor retains primary responsibility for maintaining an oversight of the PGR and their research project; (ii) supervisory meetings and TAP meetings must continue as normal but may be held by video-conferencing; (iii) formal reviews of progress must be conducted in accordance with this policy (permission for conducting a progression meeting by video-conferencing must be sought from SEE (pgr-examinations@york.ac.uk) - decision taken by the SEE Manager or their designated alternate); (iv) consideration should be given as to how research training and participation in

other academic activities can be facilitated if the PGR is away from York for an extended period.

Oversight of the placement experience

16.20 Where a placement is a required/optional part of a PGR's programme, the department should ensure that there are mechanisms in place (e.g. in-placement catch ups with the PGR by the placement coordinator) to ensure that the placement is proceeding as planned, for example that it will deliver the required outcomes, and that the PGR is getting the support they need. Where a placement is not a required/optional part of a PGR's programme, this oversight is not required and the PGR is solely responsible for ensuring that the placement meets their needs.

17. Collaborative arrangements for York-enrolled PGRs

PGR exchange agreements

17.1 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 must follow the approval process set out in the Policy Statement on Study Abroad, amended as appropriate. The exchange must be approved by the relevant Graduate Chair and the Dean of YGRS (if it also involves taught students, also the PVC for Education and Students). Each incoming/outgoing PGR on an 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. PGRs must not be awarded a qualification by the institution that they are visiting. Incoming exchange PGRs should apply via the usual postgraduate admissions process for visiting PGRs.

Collaboration for external cosupervision/TAP membership only

17.2 An individual PGR may, with the approval of departmental Graduate School Board concerned, have a co-supervisor or TAP member based in industry or in another academic institution (university or research institute).

17.3 External co-supervisors and TAP members must be approved by the department concerned (see section 5) and recorded on SkillsForge. The department is responsible for ensuring that the co-supervisor/TAP member is qualified to take on the role (including undertaking right to work checks if required) and has an understanding of relevant York policies and procedures to enable them to undertake their role successfully. For external co-supervisors it is recommended that there is a written agreement between the parties concerned (see section 5). Any financial implications are the responsibility of the department concerned. Responsibility for monitoring external co-supervisors and TAP members lies with the departmental Graduate School Board.

Collaboration for external training only

17.4 An individual may, with the approval of departmental Graduate School Board concerned, receive training, or undertake taught courses, at a partner. The PGR should not be enrolled at the partner and must not be eligible for an award from the partner (see below for alternative models). Any financial implications are the responsibility of the department concerned.

Responsibility for monitoring externally provided training lies with the departmental Graduate School Board.

A collaborative DTE PGR programme: York PGRs receive input from other partners in the UK or overseas but only receive a York award

17.5 A departmental Graduate School Board must seek approval from RIKE/YGRS for a PGR programme leading solely to a York qualification but which requires or permits academic input from one or more academic partner institutions. This will typically be the case where York is a member of an approved multi-institution DTE.

17.6 The academic input may include appointment of co-supervisors or TAP members, training, or credit-bearing modules. It may also include a requirement for a period of study at a partner (subject to the time restrictions set out for a change of study location) which may involve enrolment at the partner institution as a visiting PGR.

17.7 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.

Offsite/splitsite PGR programmes: York PGRs are hosted by an external partner in the UK or overseas but receive only a York award

17.8 A departmental Graduate School Board must seek approval from YGRSB for a PGR programme leading solely to a York qualification but where PGRs are hosted and co-supervised by the partner institution.

17.9 Any prospective offsite/splitsite PGR programme must be flagged to YGRS as soon as possible. Offsite/splitsite PGR programmes must adhere to the Framework for Collaborative Offsite and Splitsite PGR Programmes (F4 of the PoRD). for approval, the procedure for the approval of offsite and splitsite PGR provision must be followed.

Joint/double/dual/cotutelle PGR programmes: York PGRs are hosted by York and the partner in the UK or overseas and receives an award from both York AND the partner

17.10 Where strategically justified, the University may collaborate with other, mainly international, universities to offer joint/double/dual PGR programmes (these may be referred to as cotutelles).

17.11 Due to the complexity of setting up joint/double/dual awards, YGRS will only consider requests for joint/double/dual PGR programmes where these are part of a strategic project and/or with strategic partners and/or associated with a significant research grant.

17.12 The rules that govern a joint/double/dual PGR programme (e.g. in terms of selection, admission, induction, supervision, progress and review arrangements, training, and assessment) will be negotiated between the institutions, so that the minimum requirements of both can be met. When considering a joint/double/dual PGR programme, YGRS will need to give approval to any exceptions to the PoRD and will only do this where there is good reason and when YGRS can be assured that the standard of the PhD and the quality of the PGR experience will not be compromised.

17.13 Any prospective joint/double/dual PGR programmes must be flagged to YGRS as soon as possible. For approval, the collaborative provision approval process must be followed.

18. Collaborative arrangements for non-York-enrolled PGRs

Supervision of non-York PGRs by York academics

18.1 An academic at York may serve as a co-supervisor for an individual PGR enrolled on a PGR programme at another awarding academic institution subject to 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

18.2 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 usual postgraduate admissions process and be considered by departments in the normal way. As a condition of admission, applicants must meet the University's normal admission requirements, including the minimum English language proficiency requirements of the relevant department/programme. Unless specific alternative arrangements are agreed by the University (e.g. under a PGR exchange scheme), visiting PGRs pay tuition fees as set out on the visiting students webpages. Visiting PGRs are not eligible for any award from York. Visiting PGRs may receive supervisory input but do not undertake TAP meetings or formal reviews of progress.

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

18.3 A departmental Graduate School Board may seek approval from YGRS to provide academic input into a PGR provision that does not lead to a University of York award. This will typically be the case where York is a member of an approved multi-institution DTE. The academic input may include appointment of co-supervisors or TAP members, training, or credit-bearing modules. It may also include a requirement for a period of study at York which may involve enrolment at York as a visiting PGR (subject to the time restrictions above). 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.

Document control			
Date posted	*Change*	*Approved*	*Material impact on PGRs*
15 Sept	Section 8, 8.30	N/A	N/A

2026	Link updated and rogue numbering corrected		
13 Oct 2026	Section 7, 7.60 replaced to correct where request should be sent which is Student Records not PGR Special Cases 16.1 Deletion of the word personal from the list of reasons for undertaking a placement	N/A	N/A
20 Oct 2026	Links updated	N/A	N/A

END