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YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

# Code of Practice for Research Degrees

2025/26



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## Section 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 The 'Code of Practice for Research Degrees' should be read alongside the University's 'Regulations for Research Degrees' and 'Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees'. YSJU ensures its arrangements for the provision of research degrees, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the [UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees](#).
- 1.1.2 This code outlines the principles, processes, general rules and conventions relating to research degrees.
- 1.1.3 This code is updated on an annual basis.
- 1.1.4 The Research Degrees Committee are responsible for approval of changes to this code.

### 1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 The processes set out in this code apply to all postgraduate researchers on the following research degrees (including Practice-led and Distance Learning routes, where applicable):
  - PhD
  - Doctor of Education/Professional Doctorate
  - MPhil
  - MA/MSc by Research
- 1.2.2 Master of Research degrees are managed following the [Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Awards](#) and the [Code of Practice for Assessment and Academic Related Matters](#).
- 1.2.3 Students are bound by the University policies and regulations that are in force for the current academic year. This edition of the 'Code of Practice for Research Degrees' is the definitive guide to all research degrees and replaces all earlier versions.

### 1.3 Audience

- 1.3.1 This code is made available to all university staff and postgraduate researchers (PGRs).

### 1.4 Update summary

- 1.4.1 Version 5.1 September 2025
- 1.4.2 A record of updates is stored in **Section 20**.

## Section 2 Management of Research Degrees

### 2.1 Senior management oversight

- 2.1.1 The Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & International) has overall responsibility for research, including PGRs, including:
- Ensuring that an adequate management structure and procedures are in place for handling PGR matters.
  - Ensuring that minimum standards of facilities are available to PGRs (operation, monitoring and reporting to be carried out by student representatives and the PGR School).
  - Ensuring that there are appropriate procedures in place in the University to consider appeals by PGRs as set out in the procedures governing PGRs published on the website.
- 2.1.2 The Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & International) delegates day-to-day responsibility for PGRs to the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor - Research and School Postgraduate Research Leads (SPGRLs) via Deans/Heads of School.

### 2.2 Committee oversight

- 2.2.1 The **Quality and Standards Committee (QSC)** is a sub-committee of the Academic Board and is responsible for the quality of programmes and standard of awards for all provision, including research degrees.
- 2.2.2 The lead committee for research degrees is the **Research Degrees Committee (RDC)**. The RDC is a sub-committee of QSC with responsibility for oversight of research degree provision, including:
- Developing and reviewing policies and procedures relating to research degree provision.
  - Managing collaborative partnerships relating to research degree provision.
  - Identifying issues of concern and good practice in relation to pgrs.
  - Monitoring recruitment and the overall student experience of pgrs.
  - Monitoring the progress of PGRs.
- 2.2.3 RDC is chaired by a research-active senior member of staff, with significant experience of supervising PGRs. RDC's constitution includes the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor - Research, PGR School Manager, School Postgraduate Research Leads, a Dean/Head of School and Associate Dean/Head of School representative, PGR representation. To ensure confidentiality, matters relating to individual PGRs are dealt with as reserved business without the student representatives present. RDC refers relevant matters relating to the wider research environment to the Research Committee.
- 2.2.4 RDC has a sub group, comprising membership from each academic school and the Research Office, which meets electronically. The business of the sub group is to consider applications from academic staff to be added to the Register of PGR Supervisors and exceptional requests made in relation to individual PGR admissions, suspensions/extensions and other change of circumstances.
- 2.2.5 The **Research Committee** is responsible for the development, promotion and performance of research and innovation (including REF preparation) through the setting and maintenance of standards for research programmes including research ethics and integrity and enabling the contribution of research to teaching and assessment.
- 2.2.6 The **Research Degrees Examination Panel (RDEP)** is responsible for the implementation of University policy and procedures for the examination of research degrees. Its Chair is appointed by the Quality and Standards Committee from RDC members. Its responsibilities include the appointment of examiners for individual research degree candidates and approval of joint examiners' reports.

### 2.3 Operational oversight

- 2.3.1 YSJU **Registry** has responsibility for:
- Enrolment processes.
  - Change of circumstances for PGRs.
- 2.3.2 YSJU **PGR School** has operational oversight and responsibility for:
- Oversight of procedures relating to quality and standards of research degrees.
  - Provision of induction and generic research skills training for PGRs.

- Provision of training for research degree supervisors.
- Provision of research administrative support.
- Maintaining comprehensive central records for PGRs, including in relation to their progress through the programme.
- Examination processes for research degree candidates.
- Ensuring that PGRs are represented on RDC and on Research Committee.

## 2.4 Academic oversight

- 2.4.1 Each of the Schools is managed by a Dean/Head of School and has a School Research & Knowledge Transfer Lead who has specific responsibilities in relation to research, and a School Postgraduate Research Lead who has specific responsibilities for PGRs.
- 2.4.2 Deans/Heads of School have responsibility for the following:
- Recommending supervisors for PGR candidates.
  - Recommending alternative and acceptable supervision arrangements when a supervisor leaves YSJU.
  - Ensuring that no supervisor is overloaded with supervisory responsibilities and reviewing the position regularly.
  - The delegation, where relevant, of responsibilities for postgraduate matters to appropriate individuals.
- 2.4.3 Under this *Code of Practice*, Deans/Heads of School may delegate specific responsibilities to a SPGRL and/or to Postgraduate Research Tutors.
- 2.4.4 Specific SPGRL responsibilities include:
- Overseeing the recruitment and admission of PGRs and approval of supervisory teams, ensuring that appropriate expertise for supervision and adequate resources for the proper conduct of the research are available, and that any potential ethical issues arising from the application are considered.
  - Providing on-going support and mentoring to supervisors and potential supervisors.
  - Overseeing the processes for reviewing and assessing PGRs.
  - Approving requests for individual PGR matters in relation to admissions, suspensions, extensions, changes to supervisory teams, changes of programme and postponement of the transfer process.
- 2.4.5 SPGRLs may delegate and/or share their responsibilities subject to approval by the Dean/Head of School.
- 2.4.6 Each School should have two or more academic staff acting as Postgraduate Research Tutors. Postgraduate Research Tutors are responsible for wellbeing and general research experience support and conducting annual tutorial meetings.
- 2.4.7 Oversight of collaborative provision for research degrees is provided by partnership leads based within academic schools, the collaborative partner, and joint representation at RDC.

## 2.5 PGR record

- 2.5.1 A comprehensive record of the PGR's time at YSJU will be maintained on the central student records system (SITS/eVision), including reports of supervision meetings, review reports, agreed training plan, records of suspensions and extensions, transfer assessment, examination entry and other information (for example, medical certificates). These records will be maintained in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

## Section 3 Admission

### 3.1 Admission requirements

3.1.1 The 'Postgraduate Researcher Admission Policy and Interview Guidance Notes' set out current information on admission and interview requirements. The minimum requirements for entry to a research degree are normally:

- MRes level study: an honours degree.
- Masters level study: an upper second-class honours degree (2:1) in a relevant discipline.
- Doctoral level study: a Master's degree and an upper second-class honours degree (2:1) in a relevant discipline.
- Applicants who wish to proceed to the degree in a subject not studied as a substantial part of their first degree or equivalent level work may be required, before acceptance as candidates, to reach a satisfactory standard in a preliminary examination on that subject.
- For candidates whose first language is not English, evidence of English language competence as set out in the 'Postgraduate Researcher Admission Policy and Interview Guidance Notes'.

3.1.2 Or, in exceptional circumstances:

- Such other qualifications and/or experience as may be deemed by the RDC to be acceptable as equivalent.

### 3.2 Application process

3.2.1 Applications for research degrees must be made through the Online Admission System and **must** include:

- A fully completed application form.
- Draft research proposal (Some MRes programmes may be an exception to this. Details will be specified on individual programme specifications).
- Evidence of English language qualification to YSJU minimum standard (for those whose first language is not English).
- Two academic references.

3.2.2 Where applicants do not meet the minimum requirements (stated above) a rejection decision may be made by the SPGRL acting alone, but all other admissions decisions must involve at least two members of academic staff. SPGRLs are responsible for the availability of an appropriate research environment for all PGR applicants in advance of an offer being made, including expertise for supervision, adequate resources for the proper conduct of the research and for ensuring that any potential ethical issues arising from the application are considered.

3.2.3 Research proposals are subject to assessment via Turnitin and must adhere to YSJU [Guidance on use of generative Artificial Intelligence](#). Whilst the use of genAI tools are not prohibited, their use must adhere to the principles of fairness, transparency and academic integrity and be explicitly acknowledged.

3.2.4 Accreditation of prior learning (APL) may be considered against the taught components of the Doctor of Education. APL is not permitted, in any circumstances, against the research thesis or thesis preparation components.

3.2.5 SPGRLs are responsible for approving recommendations for admission and for identifying an appropriate supervisory team (see [Section 4.1](#)). Once approved, the PGR Admissions Office is responsible for making a formal offer on the University's behalf, setting out any relevant conditions.

3.2.6 The University requires applicants whose first language is not English to meet or exceed the minimum English language entry requirements detailed in the 'Postgraduate Researcher Admission Policy and Interview Guidance Notes' or equivalent deemed suitable by the University.

3.2.7 Tests must have been completed within the two years prior to issue of a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) by the University. Interviewers should take steps to ensure that the applicant has a sufficient use of the English language to embark on the research, bearing in mind the demands of the discipline. Where PGRs have satisfied these English language requirements, but further English language training needs are identified after admission, further training is available. This should be included in the development needs analysis and training plan.

3.2.8 This Code of Practice is available on the YSJU website and is drawn to the attention of applicants at the time of application.



3.2.9 Additional guidance in respect of **PhD (by Published Work)** programmes is contained in [Section 18](#).

### 3.3 Bench Fees

3.3.1 Bench fees will be applied to Biosciences research degree courses. The bench fee is additional to the tuition fee and is charged per year at the following levels:

- MSc by Research programmes - £5,000 (unless a higher amount is stipulated at the interview stage).
- PhD programmes - £5,000 (unless a higher amount is stipulated at the interview stage).
- MRes programmes - £3,000.

3.3.2 Applicants will be advised of the relevant bench fee in their offer letter.

### 3.4 Policy for the Transfer of a PGR from another University

3.4.1 The University will consider a request from a postgraduate researcher (PGR) at another University to transfer their programme of study to YSJU in accordance with the following policy and procedure.

3.4.2 A PGR can only transfer their research degree candidature if they are doing so because their supervisor is taking up a post at York St John University.

3.4.3 Applicants must remain as a current student at their existing institution up to the point that they accept the offer from YSJU.

3.4.4 The University requires that PGRs who transfer to register for at least 12 months full-time or 24 months part-time study at York St John University.

3.4.5 A transfer can be considered at any point in the programme as long as the PGR will be registered for the minimum period of study and will be continuing to carry out research on their project during the remainder of their programme whilst at YSJU.

3.4.6 Recognition of the PGR's period of study at the other institution will be considered during the application process. However, the combined periods of registration at both universities must equate to, or exceed, the minimum period of study for the award and not exceed the maximum period of study.

### 3.5 Procedure for Transfer-In

3.5.1 An online application must be completed and considered by the School in regard to meeting the University's admissions criteria.

3.5.2 A Request for a Postgraduate Researcher transfer from another University form must then be completed.

3.5.3 A letter from the PGR's current institution must be provided to confirm:

- The registration period at the other institution.
- The award for which the individual was registered.
- The mode of study.
- The thesis title.
- The date of transfer to PhD (if relevant).
- Details of any period of suspension and/or extension to the registration.
- No debt is outstanding to the other institution.
- Whether an ethical review process has been done at the other institution, and if so, copies of the ethical approval given.
- Disclosure of any associated research integrity or misconduct cases.
- Intellectual Property ownership.
- PGR training record.

3.5.4 The PGR is responsible for initiating the transfer of any sponsorship.

3.5.5 A request for a transfer of registration will be considered by Research Degrees Committee.

3.5.6 If approved, the PGR will be required to withdraw from the other University before registration at YSJU can begin.

## **3.6 Procedure for Transfer-Out**

- 3.6.1 Where a PGR is seeking to transfer to another University they will need to go through the admission/transfer process in place at the other institution.
- 3.6.2 Once they are satisfied that they have received an unconditional offer which they wish to accept they will need to withdraw from their studies at YSJU. The withdrawal request should be made through the Change of Circumstances tab in e:Vision.

## Section 4 Supervision

### 4.1 Supervisory Teams

- 4.1.1 The document 'Eligibility criteria for research degree supervision and supervisory teams' sets out full details on the eligibility criteria, training, monitoring and support for research degree supervision.
- 4.1.2 PGRs will normally have a supervisory team which is comprised of one main supervisor with one or more co-supervisors. It is not necessarily the case that the main supervisor will be the most senior or experienced member of the team.
- 4.1.3 The main supervisor and at least one co-supervisor should normally be members of YSJU staff with approved supervisor status to ensure that all PGRs have at least two 'in house' supervisory points of contact, but other co-supervisors may be external, for example from other HEIs. Where supervision is being carried out as part of collaborative provision there may be one supervisor from YSJU and one from the partner institution.
- 4.1.4 PGRs on a MA/MSc by Research programme may have a main supervisor only, if deemed appropriate by the School.
- 4.1.5 PGRs on an MRes programme may be supervised by any member of YSJU staff on an academic contract, who has the appropriate experience and expertise (as determined by the academic school).
- 4.1.6 In cases where a main YSJU supervisor moves to another employer, they may, if appropriate, continue to supervise the PGR to completion. If this is the case, a second YSJU co-supervisor will be appointed.
- 4.1.7 All supervisors are appointed by RDC. It is the responsibility of the School to recommend suitable supervisors for appointment. Potential supervisors are required to submit an online application form, and once approved by RDC, they will need to complete the research degree supervisor training course before being appointed to a supervisory team. The mandatory training will need to be completed every three years if the individual has not supervised within that period.
- 4.1.8 Supervisors will be appointed provisionally at the time that a formal offer of admission is made, and will be confirmed or, where appropriate, alternative arrangements will be made when the PGR registers. It is the responsibility of the Dean/Head of School, in conjunction with line managers within the School, to ensure that no supervisor is overloaded with supervisory responsibilities and the position of individual members of staff should be reviewed regularly. RDC maintains oversight of the register of YSJU approved supervisors and the list of collaborative/external supervisors.
- 4.1.9 YSJU supervisors should not normally be supervising more than six as the main supervisor, or ten in total as co-supervisor. The numbers of PGRs allocated to each member of staff will be reported annually to RDC.

### 4.2 Supervisor responsibilities

- 4.2.1 Ensuring that the PGR is introduced to the facilities of the School and the University that are relevant to their research and that they are fully aware of relevant Health and Safety regulations.
- 4.2.2 Assisting the PGR in defining the topic which is to be investigated during the research. It is vital that this should give sufficient scope for investigation appropriate to the degree, but not be so large a topic that it cannot be mastered within the standard period of study. Where the research is sponsored by an outside body, the terms of such sponsorship must be carefully considered.
- 4.2.3 Assisting the PGR to clarify the research question which the study seeks to address, and to establish details of the research programme, such as resources required and, where appropriate, the experimental design.
- 4.2.4 Ensuring, in consultation with the SPGRL that the PGR has access to the necessary facilities for the research.
- 4.2.5 Approving a timetable of work and endeavouring to see that it is followed by adhering to the deadlines for review and transfer processes (as set out in sections 8 and 9 respectively). Supervisors should emphasise to PGRs that the University attaches great importance to the timely completion of research.
- 4.2.6 Conducting, with the PGR, a development needs analysis (or approved equivalent, i.e. Vitae Researcher Development Framework planner or professional body portfolio) within one month of commencement of study and agreeing a training plan.
- 4.2.7 Reviewing the training plan regularly (at least annually) and assisting the PGRs in identifying other training needs and in reflecting upon their personal development, for instance by reference to the [Statement on Learning Outcomes](#).

- 4.2.8 Where the programme contains subject-specific modules, directing the PGR through the relevant programme of courses.
- 4.2.9 Seeking to ensure that the PGR receives available research training which may be necessary or appropriate in the individual case.
- 4.2.10 Making the PGR aware of any relevant [research ethics and integrity requirements](#) and informing them of ethical procedures and ethical review.
- 4.2.11 Making the PGR aware of the '[Research Data Management Policy](#)', including storage, backup and encryption.
- 4.2.12 Agreeing a supervision programme with the PGR and arranging regular meetings with the PGR (see [4.5](#) below).
- 4.2.13 Ensuring that, where appropriate, the PGR is aware of the University's arrangements for transfer to full degree registration and that appropriate guidance on preparing for transfer is provided.
- 4.2.14 Preparing regular reports on the PGR's progress.
- 4.2.15 Ensuring, in partnership with the PGR, that there are written records of all formal supervisory meetings.
- 4.2.16 Commenting within a reasonable time on written work submitted by the PGR.
- 4.2.17 Otherwise advising generally on the research and preparation of the thesis.
- 4.2.18 Alerting the SPGRL and Registry in a timely manner, to any situation where it may become necessary to request a suspension or extension of study for a PGR.
- 4.2.19 Reporting to the Academic Registrar any suspected instance of [research misconduct](#).
- 4.2.20 Reporting to the SPGRL in the first instance any suspected case of [academic misconduct](#).
- 4.2.21 Ensuring that the PGR receives written feedback on the assessment of progress, and to draw to the attention of the PGR problems when they arise, where necessary, in writing.
- 4.2.22 Taking action to bring to the attention of the SPGRL any concerns about a PGR's unsatisfactory progress.
- 4.2.23 Reading and commenting on the whole of the draft thesis prior to submission provided that it is made available by the PGR in reasonable time. It is essential that a timetable for submission of the draft thesis is agreed with the PGR in advance of the maximum time limit which allows the supervisor a reasonable length of time to carry out this duty and for the PGR to act on any comments received. Any planned periods of absence by the supervisor from the University should be taken into account.
- 4.2.24 Keeping the Dean/Head of School and SPGRL informed of any absences likely to impact upon time available for supervisory duties.
- 4.2.25 Sending forward recommendations, through the SPGRL, for the appointment of examiners for consideration by RDEP.
- 4.2.26 Ensuring that the PGR is aware of the appropriate YSJU arrangements for the examination of research degree theses (and the time limits for submission) and ensuring that the PGR receives appropriate guidance about the oral examination including, and where requested, a 'mock viva'.
- 4.2.27 Reporting to the SPGRL and (in the case of overseas PGRs) the Visa & Compliance team when there has been no contact with an individual PGR or when there has been a pattern of absences which is affecting the PGR's progress or causing concern for the PGR's well-being (see Section 6 PGR Engagement).
- 4.2.28 Engaging with internal and external opportunities for CPD in research supervision to maintain contemporary expertise.

### 4.3 PGR responsibilities

- 4.3.1 To be familiar with, and comply, with all University policies, particularly in respect of the requirements for:
  - [Research Degrees Regulations](#)
  - [Research Ethics and Integrity](#)
  - [Research Data Management Policy](#)
  - [Guidance on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence](#)
  - [Health and Safety](#)
  - [Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity](#)
  - Wellbeing and Welfare – [Consent Matters](#)

- [YSJ Student Charter](#)

- 4.3.2 To reach agreement with the supervisory team on an appropriate training plan and to actively engage with opportunities to review their skills and develop them further.
- 4.3.3 To carry out research effectively, to attend relevant University meetings, to present work regularly and to an adequate standard in an appropriate form and against an agreed timescale, taking into account any holiday entitlements.
- 4.3.4 To identify matters they wish to discuss at supervision meetings and to seek out the supervisor as problems arise.
- 4.3.5 To agree to a supervision programme, to maintain regular contact with their supervisory team and to attend formal supervision meetings throughout the programme of study (including the overtime period) (see [section 4.5](#)).
- 4.3.6 Ensuring, in partnership with the supervisory team, that there are written records of all formal supervisory meetings.
- 4.3.7 To draft reports of supervision meetings and to submit, when requested, regular written summaries of overall progress to their supervisors or, where appropriate, to the Head of School, SPGRL or Postgraduate Research Tutor.
- 4.3.8 To comply with normal working arrangements in their School.
- 4.3.9 To discuss with their supervisory team whether any teaching or other work undertaken will adversely affect the time available for the conduct of the research and make appropriate arrangements.
- 4.3.10 To take measures to attend appropriate training courses, personal development programmes and research seminars in consultation with their supervisory team.
- 4.3.11 To ensure that they complete registration and make payment of fees at the appropriate times, including the payment of Bench Fees if appropriate to the course.
- 4.3.12 To make use of relevant facilities provided by YSJU and abide by the regulations specified for the use of these facilities.
- 4.3.13 To keep their personal University record up to date by engaging fully with administrative procedures.
- 4.3.14 To promptly draw to the attention of the supervisory team or SPGRL when there is a situation where it may be necessary to request a suspension or extension of study. If appropriate, documentary evidence should be provided (e.g. medical certificate).
- 4.3.15 To consult with a Postgraduate Research Tutor or appropriate senior member of staff within the School, in confidence, if they have serious concerns about the PGR/supervisor relationship.
- 4.3.16 To discuss with their supervisory team, in good time where possible, should they wish to be away from their research activity for a substantial period (e.g. in the case of a full-time PGR for more than five working days).
- 4.3.17 To make available to their supervisory team for comment, within an agreed timescale, the whole of the draft thesis prior to submission.
- 4.3.18 To ensure that at all times they observe high standards of academic conduct and integrity and are aware of the consequences of failure to observe relevant requirements in the context of the University's '[Policy on Academic Misconduct](#)' and '[Policy on Research Misconduct](#)'.

## 4.4 Change of Supervisor

- 4.4.1 Where a supervisor is likely to be absent from the University for an extended period, the Dean/Head of School should ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for advising the relevant PGRs and that their progress is not detrimentally affected by the absence of the supervisor. Where the absence exceeds two months, arrangements will normally be put in place to identify an alternative supervisor to ensure the continuity of supervision is maintained. If the absence occurs close to a review or transfer date, arrangements will be made as soon as possible.
- 4.4.2 A replacement for a supervisor leaving the University should be added to the supervisory team as soon as possible. In circumstances where a supervisor will be leaving the University, they must ensure that, as soon as possible, the Dean/Head of School and SPGRL are notified. In this situation, the Dean/Head of School, through the SPGRL, is responsible for ensuring that alternative and acceptable supervision arrangements are put in place and that the PGR is informed at the earliest opportunity. The University will take all reasonable steps to seek an appropriate replacement for the leaving supervisor, including the possibility of external supervision. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the University is unable to identify an alternative supervisor for a particular research project.

- 4.4.3 In instances where a supervisory relationship is deemed not to be working, there are three possible options: (1) mediation, (2) change of supervisor, or (3) withdrawal of the PGR. In terms of (1), in the first instance, this will be an informal process overseen by the SPGRL (or SRKTL in cases where the SPGRL is already involved). In terms of (2), the Dean/Head of School, through the SPGRL, is responsible for ensuring that alternative and acceptable supervision arrangements are put in place and that the PGR is informed at the earliest opportunity. However, in exceptional cases where no suitable alternative supervisor is available, in line with (3), PGRs may be required to withdraw from the programme.
- 4.4.4 Any changes to the supervisory team should be discussed within the team, and the PGR should be made aware, before a decision is taken to request a change for approval by the SPGRL.
- 4.4.5 In all cases where a change of supervisor takes place the departing and replacement supervisors should ensure that a hand-over meeting takes place so that the transition for the PGR is a smooth process. The handover should preferably be done as a face-to-face meeting, but a written report could be done as an alternative if necessary.

## 4.5 Supervisory Meetings

- 4.5.1 PGRs are required to maintain regular contact with their supervisor(s) and attend for formal supervision. In addition, PGRs will need to attend appropriate training courses, personal development programmes and research seminars in consultation with their supervisor(s). Persistent neglect of work and failure to make progress and/or achieve a satisfactory academic standard may result in the instigation of the 'Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure (see Section 10)'.
- 4.5.2 Whilst academic progress may have been judged by the supervisory team as satisfactory this does not guarantee transfer or that the degree will be awarded. To qualify for the award of a research degree, a PGR must meet the required learning outcomes for the degree and satisfy the examiners. An award is not guaranteed simply because the supervisory team has indicated general approval for the thesis before it is submitted.
- 4.5.3 The requirement is that a full-time PGR will have a minimum of 10 supervision meetings a year. The relevant number for part-time PGRs is 6 a year. SPGRLs may specify a higher minimum number of formal supervision meetings than the University minimum given above. Whilst the pattern and timing of formal supervision meetings will vary according to the needs of individual PGRs and between subject areas it is expected that meetings will be held regularly throughout the standard period of study with gaps between meetings of no more than 8 weeks for full-time PGRs (or 12 weeks for part-time PGRs).
- 4.5.4 PGRs who have been examined and are required to resubmit are able to have 6 supervision meetings per year during the resubmission period.
- 4.5.5 Supervisory meetings can take place either face-to-face or by an agreed form of electronic meeting (e.g. MS Teams, Skype, Zoom, FaceTime). Where circumstances mean neither is possible for a supervisory meeting a telephone call or email communication can be a short-term substitute. Records of the contact, e.g. copies of emails, should be kept in these circumstances.
- 4.5.6 Audio or video recordings of the meeting must not be made. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting.
- 4.5.7 It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that written reports of formal supervision meetings are maintained. Draft notes of the supervision meetings should be prepared by the PGR for agreement with the supervisor. Copies of the supervision reports should be held on the PGR's student record.
- 4.5.8 Attendance at formal supervision meetings and the recording of this attendance are requirements of the University. Failure of the PGR to attend their formal supervision meetings or to document supervisory meetings properly may result in enforced withdrawal of registration.
- 4.5.9 Additional guidance in respect of **PhD by Distance Learning** programmes is contained in [Section 17](#).
- 4.5.10 Additional guidance in respect of **PhD (by Published Work)** programmes is contained in [Section 18](#).

## 4.6 Annual Tutorial Meetings

- 4.6.1 Whilst all PGRs have a supervisory team to support them and SPGRLs are also available to provide additional support, a one-to-one tutorial meeting with a Postgraduate Research Tutor (PGRT) is available annually to all PGRs. This provides an opportunity for a PGRT to review progress, discuss this with the PGR and to enable the PGR to comment upon the nature of the supervision received and to draw attention to any matters of concern.

- 4.6.2 Audio or video recordings of the meeting must not be made. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting.
- 4.6.3 The SPGRL will normally carry out the role of PGRT. However, where the SPGRL is the supervisor, an alternate must be appointed to enable PGRs to seek an independent source of advice when a PGR/supervisor relationship is not working well.
- 4.6.4 The PGR is responsible for making contact with the PGRT to arrange the annual tutorial meeting as required.

## **4.7 Commitment to Research Activity**

- 4.7.1 It is important that a research project is completed within the standard period of study. A research project provides the preparation and training for a professional career and requires the same commitment to meeting objectives and timescales for the completion of work. Full-time PGRs are therefore expected to work on their research project (and related professional activity e.g. conference attendance, research skills training) for periods of time that are comparable to a full-time academic post (the equivalent of an average of 40 hours a week). Part time PGRs are expected to work on their research project for the equivalent of an average of 20 hours per week.
- 4.7.2 A PGR's workload will vary during the course of the year and should be agreed with the supervisor(s). When approaching a specific deadline such as the submission of a transfer report or thesis, additional hours of work may be necessary but PGRs are encouraged to maintain a good work/life balance and make use of the holiday entitlement available to them, in addition to days when the University is officially closed. Full-time PGRs may take up to 25 days holiday a year (pro rata for part-time PGRs) in consultation with their supervisory team.
- 4.7.3 PGRs may find it useful to consider dates of religious observance in planning for meeting key deadlines in their research degree candidature. The Open University has a calendar of religious festivals which is available from the OU [website](#).



## Section 5 Periods of Study

### 5.1 Standard, minimum and maximum periods of registration

5.1.1 Normal periods of study for research degrees are set out in the University [Research Degree Regulations](#).

5.1.2 These are reproduced, for information only, below:

Award	Mode of Study	Minimum period of registration	Standard Period of study	Normal maximum period of registration to submission
<b>Doctor of Philosophy<sup>1</sup></b>	Full-time	2 calendar years	3 calendar years	4 calendar years
	Part-time	3 calendar years	6 calendar years	7 calendar years
<b>PhD (by Published Work)<sup>2</sup></b>	Part-time	3 calendar months	1 calendar year	2 calendar years
<b>Professional Doctorate<sup>3</sup></b>	Part-time	4 calendar years	6 calendar years	6 calendar years
<b>Master of Philosophy</b>	Full-time	1 calendar year	2 calendar years	3 calendar years
	Part-time	2 calendar years	4 calendar years	5 calendar years
<b>Master of Arts/ Master of Science by research Master of Research</b>	Full-time	1 calendar year	1 calendar year	1 calendar year
	Part-time	2 calendar years	2 calendar years	2 calendar years

5.1.3 PGRs must remain fully enrolled for the duration of their study. Once they reach the end of the standard period of study their enrolment status will change from that of a current student to a 'writing up' status, and will change again to 'under examination' once they have submitted and are in the pre and post examination phases.

5.1.4 In order to keep the research on course for submission before the maximum time limit, it is expected that supervisory contact will continue during any overtime period after the end of the standard period of study. Full-time PGRs will continue to be entitled to a minimum of 10 formal supervision meetings a year (and part-time PGRs a minimum of 6 a year).

### 5.2 Change of programme

5.2.1 A change of programme request must be submitted via e:Vision (Change of Circumstances tab). It is advised that PGRs check in advance of making a request to ascertain the viability of the change being requested.

5.2.2 PGRs who are in their standard period of study may submit a request to change their mode of study. Once a PGR is in the overtime period it is not possible to change the mode of study. The request will need to be approved by the SPGRL. The remaining period of study will be re-calculated and confirmation sent out to the PGR and their supervisory team.

5.2.3 A change of programme from PhD to MPhil may be possible depending on the length of time studied to date. It is not possible for those on a Master's by Research programme to change to another degree.

<sup>1</sup> Includes PhD by Distance Learning (further details in [Section 17](#))

<sup>2</sup> See [Section 18](#) (PhD (by Published Work)) for details of the programme of study

<sup>3</sup> See [Section 16](#) (Professional Doctorates) for details of the programme of study



## Section 6 PGR Engagement

### 6.1 Guidelines for Monitoring the Engagement of PGRs

- 6.1.1 The following types of sessions may be used for recording the engagement of PGRs during their period of study:
- Formal supervision meetings
  - Meetings with members of University staff
  - Annual tutorial meeting with Postgraduate Research Tutor
  - Formal review and transfer assessment meetings
  - Attendance at internal/external conferences, meetings or research seminars
  - Attendance at internal/external training sessions
  - Attendance at modules
  - Other central/school events
- 6.1.2 The requirement is that a full-time PGR will have a minimum of 10 supervision meetings a year; the relevant number for part-time PGRs is 6 supervision meetings a year. The pattern and timing of supervision meetings may vary according to the stage of the candidature and between subject areas, however meetings will be held regularly throughout the standard period of study with gaps between meetings of no more than 8 weeks for full-time PGRs (or 12 weeks for part-time). Supervision reports of all formal supervision meetings must be kept.
- 6.1.3 Supervisors should report to the SPGRL when there has been no contact or missed supervision meetings with individual PGRs for a month (unless an absence has been authorised or a suspension is in place), or where there is a pattern of absences which is affecting the PGR's work or causing concerns for the PGR's wellbeing. **For PGRs on a Student Visa, if one supervision meeting is missed with no contact or engagement from the PGR, the PGR will be reported to the Home Office.**
- 6.1.4 The supervisor should contact the PGR promptly to explore any problems, in consultation with the SPGRL. This provides an opportunity for issues to be resolved with the PGR and to identify any more serious problems early. It may, for example, be appropriate to consider instigating the Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure. The PGR School should also be informed where there is continued absence or lack of contact with a PGR.
- 6.1.5 Where issues cannot be quickly resolved, the supervisor should work with the SPGRL to explore whether support can be offered that enables the PGR to return to studies, or whether a suspension of studies should be considered until issues are resolved.
- 6.1.6 Where issues remain unresolved and prolonged absence continues, it may be necessary for the PGR to suspend or withdraw or, if they are not in contact, to be presumed withdrawn.
- 6.1.7 **It is essential that problems are identified and responded to as quickly as possible. This is particularly important in the case of PGRs studying on a Student Visa as the additional requirements of the Home Office must be considered.** Delays can turn relatively simple problems into much more complex ones. Delays can also prevent PGRs from getting crucial, timely immigration, financial or other professional advice. For further information on engagement for international PGRs, please contact the University's Visa & Compliance Team via the [Student Hub](#).

## Section 7 Suspension, Extension, Leave of Absence and Authorised Absence

### 7.1 Outline

- 7.1.1 Some PGRs will encounter events or circumstances which disrupt their academic progress (e.g. ill-health, personal difficulties). In many cases PGRs will recover any time that is lost during their candidature but where difficulties are sufficiently disruptive this may not be possible and such circumstances may be accommodated by considering a period of suspension, extension or leave of absence (see the definitions given below) to mitigate against the circumstances encountered and to ensure that the PGR is not disadvantaged.
- 7.1.2 In all cases the PGR must, at the point of examination, meet the criteria for award of the research degree; there can be no 'mitigating circumstances' with regard to meeting the criteria for the award. All PGRs must complete an examination and the thesis submitted for examination must reach the required standard for the award of the degree and the specified learning outcomes must be met. Any mitigating circumstances which may have affected the candidate during their period of study cannot be considered as part of the assessment of the thesis and will not lead the examiners to award a research degree where the work is not felt to be of the appropriate standard.
- 7.1.3 It is the responsibility of the PGR to check the implications of a suspension, extension or leave of absence with their scholarship awarding body, provider or employer as appropriate. External funders may place limits on the length of suspension/extension allowed and PGRs are responsible for checking the implications of a request for suspension/extension on their funding.

### 7.2 Suspension of Study

- 7.2.1 A 'suspension of study' is a period of interrupted study when the PGR temporarily leaves the programme of study and loses their registration status. During this period the PGR does not receive supervision and does not have borrowing rights for the library or VLE access. Access to IT facilities, including email, will remain available and PGRs are reminded to check their university email account regularly while their studies are suspended. During this period a PGR is not liable for academic fees and is not expected to progress their research. The remaining period of study will be re-calculated to take account of the suspension and the deadline for submission of the thesis, along with future review/transfer meetings will be adjusted in accordance with the period of suspension.
- 7.2.2 Examples include, but are not limited to: serious illness (for those in possession of supporting medical evidence, e.g. doctor's note), significant personal difficulties, bereavement, financial reasons or accident.
- 7.2.3 The PGR is expected to return to study immediately after the period of suspension has ended unless an additional period of suspension has been requested. PGRs returning to study are required to re-enrol. In all cases the SPGRL should be satisfied that the PGR is able to resume study, and the difficulties have been overcome. Where appropriate, documentary evidence should be sought. For example, when a PGR resumes study following a period of suspension due to ill-health it will be on the basis that they are medically fit to do so and satisfactory medical evidence should be provided by the PGR.
- 7.2.4 Suspensions will not normally be backdated for more than one month. A request for a retrospective suspension of study will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances. It is, therefore, essential that prompt action is taken by the PGR, supervisory team, Postgraduate Research Tutor and SPGRL to formalise requests for suspensions of study.
- 7.2.5 Students registered on an MRes degree will follow the [Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Awards](#) regarding suspensions.

### 7.3 Extension of Study

- 7.3.1 An 'extension of study' is a lengthening of the candidature to take account of a period of disruption to studies. The PGR will not leave the programme of study and will normally continue to progress their research but with some disruption of study over a limited period slowing progress rather than interrupting progress completely. The thesis submission deadline date will be amended to add on the time approved for the extension. The due date for the next review will not change on account of the extension as there has been no break in study and it is expected that would take place as intended.
- 7.3.2 Examples include, but are not limited to: equipment breakdown, serious illness or recovery from accident/surgery, significant personal difficulties or family illness which have substantially affected progress. In very exceptional cases where the research of a PhD PGR reveals a substantial quantity of unexpected new material during the final year of study consideration might be given to an extension of up to one year.

- 7.3.3 Extension requests will normally be made prior to the completion of the standard period of study and at a point when it is clear how much of the time lost has been compensated for during the standard period of study. In the case of a request made on academic grounds this should be made towards the end of the standard period of study.
- 7.3.4 Cases will be expected to show that some unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances have arisen which have significantly and adversely affected the progress of the research of the PGR and against which precautions could not reasonably have been taken.
- 7.3.5 Research projects require careful time management. Delays to the delivery of equipment and/or equipment breakdown are not uncommon. During periods of such inconvenience consideration should be given to the other aspects of the research the PGR can progress to avoid impact on the length of the overall candidature. In such cases waiting until the end of the standard period of study to assess the impact of delays is appropriate.
- 7.3.6 Where an unexpected event/disruption to study occurs during the overtime period the extension request should be made at the point the event occurs. The PGR and the supervisor(s) should agree a timetable for completing the writing up of the thesis which includes milestones.
- 7.3.7 During periods of extension PGRs will continue to have access to Library and IT facilities and will be entitled to supervision. All research work, including experiments, should have been completed within the standard period of study and any period of extension granted should be for writing up the thesis.
- 7.3.8 Students registered on an MRes degree will follow the [Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Awards](#) regarding extensions.

## 7.4 Leave of Absence

- 7.4.1 PGRs seeking a period of leave for maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave may request a leave of absence in line with the periods of time defined in also be made to the University's [Student Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Parental Leave Policy](#). The remaining period of study will be re-calculated to take count of the leave of absence and the deadline for submission of the thesis, along with future review/transfer meetings will be adjusted in accordance with the period of leave.
- 7.4.2 A leave of absence on the grounds of maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave will not count towards the maximum period of study as detailed in the University regulations. See also Section 8 of the Code of Practice for Assessment and Academic-related Matters.
- 7.4.3 PGRs on maternity, extended paternity, adoption or shared parental leave will retain access to online resources, including email, and to the University library.
- 7.4.4 PGRs may be able to attend external research conferences while on maternity, extended paternity, adoption or shared parental leave. This should be discussed and agreed with the research supervisor and any risk assessments required completed.

## 7.5 Authorised Absence

- 7.5.1 In some cases, a period of suspension of study may not be necessary and a period of authorised absence is more appropriate subject to the following requirements:
- if the period of absence will be for a short period (up to four weeks) in addition to any period of annual leave (five weeks) in any one calendar year; and
  - the time away from studies will have no impact on the PGR's ability to meet deadlines (e.g. transfer, maximum time limit for submission of the thesis).
- 7.5.2 In such cases the supervisor and the PGR must agree that the short period of absence can be absorbed into the candidature with no allowance made for the PGR to meet academic deadlines for submission of work. A record of the agreement should be kept in writing (e.g. email) and a copy forwarded to the PGR School.
- 7.5.3 The University is not required to report short periods of authorised absence (for international PGRs holding a Student Visa to the Home Office provided they do not impact on the overall time limit for completion of the programme of study).

## 7.6 Grounds for Suspension/Extension of Study

- 7.6.1 Approval of requests for suspensions/extensions of study is not guaranteed. Poor academic progress is not reasonable grounds for a suspension/extension.
- 7.6.2 Cases where the SPGR is likely to be sympathetic to an application for suspension/extension include (provided that the length of time requested is reasonable in that it bears close relation to the events experienced by the PGR):

- Accidents.
- Bereavement.
- Serious ill health (of the PGR).
- Family illness.
- Unexpected events e.g. theft, equipment not being delivered or equipment breakdown.
- Significant personal difficulties.
- Systemic catastrophe in home country (e.g. war, natural disaster, civil unrest).

7.6.3 Cases where the SPGRL is unlikely to be sympathetic to a request for suspension/extension include:

- When the PGR has completed the standard period of study on a full-time basis and is in the overtime period and now in employment and is making a request based on 'pressures of work'.
- Where the request is based on the grounds that the PGR has got married/honeymoon period (this should normally be taken from the PGR's annual leave entitlement).
- Where there is no clear relationship between the amount of extra time being requested and the problem being encountered by the PGR.
- Where permission has been granted for the PGR to register concurrently for another programme of study and a request is based citing academic or other commitments linked to the other registration.

7.6.4 In all cases the length of time requested needs to be specified and reasonable, in the sense that it bears close relation to the events experienced by the PGR.

7.6.5 PGRs who are carrying out amendments following examination may also make a request for suspension, extension or leave of absence in line with the above circumstances. SPGRLs may also give exceptional consideration to requests made where the PGR is now in full-time employment and is making a request based on 'pressures of work'. Full details should be included in the request.

## **7.7 Extensions and long-term medical conditions**

7.7.1 The University acknowledges the practical difficulties related to individual circumstances resulting from long-term medical conditions. Communication of difficulties encountered by PGRs at an early stage is encouraged as this will facilitate early intervention to address any difficulties and for appropriate support to be identified. Consideration will, therefore, be given, to requests for extensions based on long-term medical conditions at the time the difficulty occurs or at the end of the calendar year of study (as part of the annual progress review process) rather than waiting until the end of the standard period of study as described above.

## **7.8 Requesting a suspension, extension or leave of absence**

7.8.1 PGRs should promptly draw to the attention of their supervisor or SPGRL any situation in which it may be necessary to request a suspension, extension or leave of absence. Failure to take prompt action may lead to the PGR losing the time available to complete their studies.

7.8.2 A request for suspension, extension or leave of absence should be made by the PGR completing and submitting the required form via the Change of Circumstances tab on e:Vision.

7.8.3 The SPGRL is responsible for considering, and reaching decisions on, requests for suspension, extension and leave of absence. When considering requests for suspensions and extensions of study the SPGRL will take due regard of external factors including Home Office Visa Regulations and UK Research & Innovation Funding requirements.

7.8.4 Registry will advise the PGR of the outcome of the request by email to the PGR's YSJU email address on the PGR record. A copy of the email will also be sent to the supervisors and the PGR School. The PGR record will be updated to show the revised maximum time limit and due date for future review/transfer meetings.

## **7.9 Duration of suspension, extension or leave of absence**

7.9.1 Suspensions should be requested in whole months only, with the minimum being one month. A period of up to 12 months suspension can be considered by the University at any one time, with a review at the end of that period if necessary.

7.9.2 Extensions can be given in days/weeks/months as appropriate to the circumstances. A period of up to 12 months extension can be considered by the University at any one time, with a review at the end of that period if necessary. In the case of Master's by Research the maximum period of extension permitted on academic grounds is three months.

- 7.9.3 A PGR will not be granted periods of suspension and extension totalling more than 24 months. In the event of a PGR wishing to exceed this period, unless exceptional permission is granted, they will be required to withdraw from the research degree.
- 7.9.4 For PGRs recommended for award of the degree and completing amendments, given the period for amendments is 6 months requests for long extensions are unlikely to be given sympathetic consideration, unless the circumstances are exceptional.
- 7.9.5 A request for a leave of absence may be submitted in line with the limits set out in the University's [Student Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Parental Leave Policy](#). A leave of absence for maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave will not count towards the maximum period of study.

## 7.10 Documentary Evidence

- 7.10.1 PGRs are required to submit documentary evidence from an independent and relevantly qualified third-party professional in support of requests for suspensions and extensions of study where appropriate. The supporting evidence must provide confirmation of the circumstances, the impact on the PGR and indicate the period of disruption/duration of impact. **This evidence should be forwarded to Registry and will be retained in line with data protection requirements.**
- 7.10.2 Where illness is proposed as the grounds for suspension or extension of study the PGR must provide satisfactory medical evidence (eg full medical certificate) as evidence in support of the request. The medical certificate might take the form of a fit to study note, letter or report from a medical professional (eg PGR's GP or doctor). See further guidance below.

## 7.11 Guidance on providing satisfactory medical evidence

- 7.11.1 The evidence should demonstrate how the PGR's medical situation is affecting their ability to study and contain objective medical evidence (not just 'the patient told me that ...'). In the case of a suspension it should cover the period for which the suspension is required.
- 7.11.2 PGRs should be advised to obtain information which includes:
- The dates and duration of any period when the PGR's health has completely prevented or will completely prevent them from studying/when they are not fit to study.
  - The dates and duration of any period when the PGR 'may be fit for study' if their doctor thinks that returning to study will help them recover. The doctor should be asked to advise on how the PGR's health may affect their ability to study (for example unable to use a keyboard for long periods or decreased mobility so difficult to get onto campus).
  - For international PGRs studying in the UK on a Student Visa only, confirmation of whether the PGR is fit to fly.
- 7.11.3 The presentation of a prescription or the box cover of medication or the submission of a series of medical appointments is not acceptable evidence as this gives no professional opinion of the PGR's capacity to study.
- 7.11.4 A suspension or extension request based on illness should reflect the severity and duration of the illness as described in the medical evidence, and recuperation or recovery time may be included within a requested suspension or extension.
- 7.11.5 In all cases it is the responsibility of the PGR to ensure that the evidence provided addresses these requirements.
- 7.11.6 PGRs who have taken suspensions of study on medical grounds may be required to provide evidence that they are medically fit to resume study at the end of the period of suspension (eg doctor's note).

## 7.12 Returning from suspension or leave of absence

- 7.12.1 The Student Records Team will contact PGRs by email approximately 4 weeks prior to their expected return to university to check their intentions, ensure they can meet any conditions of return and to set re-enrolment processes in place.
- 7.12.2 International students on a Student Visa will be required to apply for a new visa before their return to studies following a long suspension or leave of absence. For more advice on immigration issues please contact the Visa and Compliance Team via the [Student Hub](#).
- 7.12.3 Prior to return PGRs are advised to contact their supervisory team about how they should prepare for returning to their programme and to discuss any potential support arrangements.
- 7.12.4 PGRs who do not reply to the University email by their expected return date will be assumed that they no longer intend to return to their programme and will be withdrawn from their studies at the University. Their withdrawal will normally take effect from their last date of engagement (as defined in section 6.1.1).

## 7.13 Supporting disabled PGRs

- 7.13.1 PGRs are able to access Disability and Inclusion support through the University's [Student Hub](#) and this may lead to recommendations for reasonable adjustments being identified through a Learner Adjustment Plan (LAP). Support may be available either as reasonable adjustments for assessment or by applying an extension of study as appropriate to the individual circumstances and advice should be sought from the [Disability Support and Inclusion Team](#).
- 7.13.2 PGRs should be encouraged to seek advice/and or support from the [Disability Support and Inclusion Team](#) and [Wellbeing and Welfare Team](#) where difficulties occur. Where a needs assessment/practitioner's view is that a reasonable adjustment is to provide an extension to the candidature consideration can then be given to the length of time required. Schools are encouraged, where appropriate, to liaise with the PGR and the staff in the relevant support team before submitting requests for such extensions or adjustments.

## 7.14 Absence requests for PGRs on a Student Visa

- 7.14.1 There are additional requirements placed upon the University by the Home Office in relation to international PGRs who are in the UK on a Student Visa. Any adjustments made to a research degree candidature must continue to satisfy the conditions set by the Home Office if the University is to continue to sponsor the PGR. These include:
- The PGR remains registered as a full-time PGR and makes progress with their research, attending all supervision meetings, seminars, research skills training and other research events.
  - If the PGR stops studying the University is required to make a report to the Home Office and the PGR's leave may be curtailed. In this event the PGR is required to leave the UK. PGRs whose study is suspended should be referred to the Visa & Compliance Team ([Student Hub](#)) for advice.
  - Any short periods of authorised absence must not have an effect on the PGR's ability to meet deadlines for their research studies, including the transfer deadline and the maximum time limit for submission of the thesis.
- 7.14.2 All PGRs on a Student Visa who wish to leave the UK for a period of time (e.g. research visit, conference, medical issues, holiday or family visit) during their research degree must complete an [absence request form](#). This is to confirm that the School agrees with their plans to leave the country and that the absence is approved by the Visa & Compliance Team.
- 7.14.3 It is, therefore, **essential** that international PGRs holding a Student Visa are aware of the following in the event of a suspension to their studies:
- Their visa will be curtailed by the Home Office; and
  - They are required to leave the UK during this period: and
  - They will need to request a new CAS and apply for entry clearance before returning to the UK; and
  - They should seek immigration advice from the University's Visa & Compliance Team via the [Student Hub](#).
- 7.14.4 In exceptional cases the University may report absence to the Home Office but not recommend that a PGR leave the UK. Examples of this are where there is civil unrest in the PGR's home country or extreme medical incapacity. The PGR may then be advised to make an immigration application outside the rules. This would usually involve a referral for specialist immigration advice outside the University.
- 7.14.5 International PGRs should not wait for receipt of medical evidence before contacting Registry and the Visa & Compliance Officer.
- 7.14.6 Where appropriate, the Visa & Compliance Officer will report the absence to the Home Office and inform both the PGR and School concerned that a report to the Home Office has been made. Failure to comply with this requirement could jeopardise the University's Highly Trusted Sponsor status as well as causing the PGR to breach the immigration regulations.
- 7.14.7 PGRs seeking an extension should contact the Visa & Compliance Team in the first instance to discuss whether there are implications in terms of their visa requirements.
- 7.14.8 During an extension of study engagement should be monitored in accordance with established University policy. If the PGR fails to engage, action should be taken in line Section 6 (PGR engagement).



## Section 8 Progress Review

### 8.1 Timeline for Review

- 8.1.1 The first formal review meeting will be held as follows:
- Full-time PGRs – by the end of the 6th month.
  - Part-time PGRs – by the end of the 9th month.
- 8.1.2 An annual progress review will take place at 12 month intervals after the first review meeting for MPhil or part-time Masters by Research PGRs and at 12 month intervals after transfer assessment for PhD PGRs.
- 8.1.3 A PGR/supervisor may request a delay to the review meeting which will need to be approved by the SPGRL before the date can be amended. Email approval from the SPGRL should be sent to the PGR School for the record to be updated.
- 8.1.4 The PGR School will track the review meetings timeline for RDC reporting purposes and identify where the documentation in e:Vision has not been completed within 8 weeks of the expected date.
- 8.1.5 Where the PGR has not completed the progress report an email will be sent to the PGR reminding them to do the report in e:Vision and advising them to contact their supervisory team for support if there are any factors they wish to bring to their attention affecting their ability to do the review. The main supervisor and SPGRL will be copied in to the email.
- 8.1.6 If the PGR has completed their progress report but the supervisor progress report has not been done an email will be sent to the supervisor (copied to the SPGRL) to remind them to go in to e:Vision and complete the report. Supervisors should contact the SPGRL to discuss any difficulties in carrying out the review meeting within the expected timescale. The SPGRL can agree to a short delay in the date when the review meeting is due to be held.
- 8.1.7 In cases where the progress reports have been done and the review meeting has taken place, but the chair's report has yet to be submitted in e:Vision a reminder will be sent to the chair (copied to the SPGRL).
- 8.1.8 A reminder will be sent to the SPGRL if the reports have all been submitted but are awaiting sign-off by the SPGRL.
- 8.1.9 The PGR School will liaise with the RDC Chair to identify further actions in cases where the process remains uncompleted after the above steps have been taken.

### 8.2 Review Process

- 8.2.1 Review reports will be completed online through e:Vision but additional documentation will need to be emailed to those involved (see below).
- 8.2.2 The first formal review meeting should include the PGR, main supervisor (and co-supervisors if available) and an independent assessor (from a cognate discipline, but from outside the supervisory team) who will chair the review meeting. The meeting may be conducted as a face-to-face or online meeting.
- 8.2.3 Annual reviews for those who registered on a PhD programme and are in the post-transfer stage may not need a formal meeting to be scheduled and the review can be carried out as a paper-based review, although the review reports will still need to be completed in e:Vision as per the above timelines. In this case the supervisor can recommend (via the supervisor progress report) that the review be held as a paper-based exercise, and this may be most appropriate for those at a stage where they are close to their thesis submission. However, the chair may request the review take place as a face-to-face or online meeting if they consider that would be more beneficial for the PGR and assessment of their progress. Where the PGR has recently returned from a period of suspension it is recommended that a review meeting be held rather than a paper-based review.
- 8.2.4 Audio or video recordings of the meeting must not be made. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting.
- 8.2.5 With a paper-based review the chair should contact the PGR to establish if they would like to discuss any matters relating to their progress or supervision in the absence of their supervisory team.
- 8.2.6 The chair for the review must be on the Register of Supervisors and have completed the mandatory training course for assessing PGRs (Being a Reviewer, Internal Examiner and Independent Chair). The mandatory training will need to be completed every three years if the individual has not been involved with PGR assessment within that period.

## 8.3 Documentation to be produced before the review

8.3.1 In consultation with their supervisory team PGRs will need to prepare the following documentation for each review:

### Submitted via e:Vision

- Progress Report that briefly reflects on progress to date and the development of the project's research trajectory, listing completed chapters / laboratory work / exhibition / performance and conference attendance.

### Submitted to the supervisors via email or secure shared folder such as OneDrive

- A piece of sole-authored written work or, in the case of practice-based PGRs, written and practice components to assess academic progress. This work should emerge from the development of the thesis submission, not stand alone as a separate task. The word limit and content of the written work, and weighting of practice and written work is to be agreed between the supervisor and the PGR in accordance with any School requirements and appropriate to the point the PGR has reached in their candidature. The PGR will need to put the written work submitted for their first formal review through [Turnitin](#) (using the self check tool) and provide a copy of the originality report alongside other documentation submitted to the panel. The YSJU [Guidance on use of generative Artificial Intelligence](#) should also be followed; and
- First Formal Review: Completed 'Training and Development Needs Analysis' (or approved equivalent, i.e. Vitae Researcher Development Framework planner or professional body portfolio) and 'Training Plan'; OR
- Annual Review: Completed/Updated 'Training Report' (or approved equivalent, i.e. Vitae Researcher Development Framework planner or professional body portfolio); and
- From year 2 FT year 3 PT a plan for completion of the research and the thesis within the remaining period of study (eg Gantt chart or Table).

8.3.2 Supervisors will need to prepare the following documentation on **e:Vision** for each review:

- Supervisory Report on the PGR's progress.
- Approved supervisory reports covering the previous 12 month period.

## 8.4 Outcome of the review

8.4.1 The independent assessor (chair) completes the 'Review Report' (online via e:Vision) **within 10 working days of the meeting** and submits it to the SPGRL for approval. The SPGRL should approve the report via e:Vision within **5 working days** and the report will then be available for the PGR to view.

8.4.2 The possible outcomes of the review are that progress at the point of the review is deemed to be:

- Satisfactory; or
- Unsatisfactory.

8.4.3 Where the outcome is that progress is unsatisfactory the SPGRL will need to consider what the next steps should be for the PGR. At this point the SPGRL should discuss the outcome of the report with the supervisory team and possibly the PGRT if appropriate. They may decide that the situation warrants a meeting to be held with the PGR on the instigation of the Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure (see section 10), or they may consider that there are sufficient mitigating factors and that the PGR should continue as planned with closer monitoring by the supervisory team.

8.4.4 The student record and progress stage for the PGR will be updated accordingly following approval of the review.

8.4.5 Where there are complex circumstances in an individual PGR's review the SPGRL may refer the report to RDC for consideration and approval (under reserved business).

8.4.6 RDC will receive a list of the reports approved by the SPGRLs.



## Section 9 Transfer assessment (Doctoral PGRs only)

### 9.1 Provisional Registration

- 9.1.1 All doctoral PGRs are initially registered as provisional doctoral PGRs and are subject to a formal transfer assessment within a specified timescale. If successful in this assessment PGRs are transferred to full doctoral registration.
- 9.1.2 The transfer assessment is intended to identify whether the individual PGR and the research project have the potential for research at doctoral level and also whether completion of a thesis within the standard period of study for the programme concerned is a reasonable expectation. It will also consider whether the PGR has made satisfactory progress with the agreed training plan.

### 9.2 Timeline for Transfer Assessment

- 9.2.1 Full-time PhD PGRs are required to complete the whole transfer process, including the transfer review and any potential revisions to the transfer progress report, within 12 months of their start date (24 months for part time PGRs). If a transfer decision is deferred, a final decision must be made with 18 months of the start date (30 months for part time PGRs).
- 9.2.2 A PGR can make a request to postpone the date for transfer which would need to be approved by the SPGRL. If the request is approved, the date for maximum limit for completion of transfer would still apply (as set out below), i.e. the period of postponement, transfer assessment meeting and any period for deferral of the transfer decision must take place within that overall timescale. A form is available on the website.
- 9.2.3 The time limits for completion of transfer assessment are given below. Any exception to these must be approved by the RDC sub group.

Mode of Study	Normal time line for submission of transfer material <sup>4</sup>	Normal time limit for completion of transfer	Maximum limit for completion of transfer for deferred or extended candidates
Full time	10-12 months	12 months	18 months
Part time	22-24 months	24 months	30 months

- 9.2.4 The PGR School will track the transfer meetings timeline for RDC reporting purposes and identify where the documentation in e:Vision has not been completed within 8 weeks of the expected date.
- 9.2.5 Where the PGR has not completed the progress report an email will be sent to the PGR reminding them to do the report in e:Vision and advising them to contact their supervisory team for support if there are any factors they wish to bring to their attention affecting their ability to do the transfer. The main supervisor and SPGRL will be copied into the email.
- 9.2.6 If the PGR has completed their progress report but the supervisor progress report has not been done an email will be sent to the supervisor (copied to the SPGRL) to remind them to go into e:Vision and complete the report. Supervisors should contact the SPGRL to discuss any difficulties in carrying out the review meeting within the expected timescale. The SPGRL can approve a postponement to the date when the transfer meeting is due to be held (within the overall time limits set out above).
- 9.2.7 In cases where the progress reports have been done and the transfer meeting has taken place but the chair's report has yet to be submitted in e:Vision a reminder will be sent to the chair (copied to the SPGRL).
- 9.2.8 A reminder will be sent to the SPGRL if the reports have all been submitted but are awaiting sign-off by the SPGRL.
- 9.2.9 The PGR School will liaise with the RDC Chair to identify further actions in cases where the process remains uncompleted after the above steps have been taken.

### 9.3 Transfer submission

- 9.3.1 Transfer reports will be completed online through e:Vision but additional documentation will need to be emailed to those involved.

<sup>4</sup> This is the normal time frame for transfer assessment to be conducted and the deadline for receipt of work by the transfer assessment panel will normally be two weeks before the meeting is held.

- 9.3.2 In consultation with their supervisory team PGRs will need to prepare the following documentation for the transfer assessment:

**Submitted via e:Vision**

- Progress Report, covering work carried out to date, a description of the key research question and how this has been refined, and a proposal of how the research and thesis will be completed.

**Submitted to the supervisors via email or secure shared folder such as OneDrive**

- Standard Thesis: a sample of sole-authored written work relating to the topic of at least 10,000 words. This may be a draft chapter from the thesis, a critical review of the literature/evidence base, a critical discussion of methodology or another piece of work agreed by the supervisor and SPGRL (work that has been co-authored is not permissible for transfer assessment purposes).
- Practice-Led Submissions: evidence of creative practice (creative writing component, exhibition of artwork, live performance, or documentation of creative practice/performance in a retainable form). The practice element of a transfer submission may relate to collaborative practice. This should be accompanied by a sole-authored written piece of at least 5,000 words that critically reviews, analyses and contextualises the practice and its methodology (written work that has been co-authored is not permissible for transfer assessment purposes).
- A planned schedule for completion of the thesis (eg. a table or Gantt chart) within the standard period of study (three years full-time or six years part-time) cross referenced to a draft of the thesis chapter headings and, if practice-led, the development and dissemination of creative work.
- Training Plan and record of training undertaken.

- 9.3.3 Supervisors will need to prepare the following documentation on **e:Vision** for the transfer assessment:

- Supervisory Report on the PGR's progress.
- Approved Supervision reports covering the previous 12 month period.

- 9.3.4 **PGRs on Professional Doctorate/Doctor of Education** will follow a similar process for transfer, however the written work will consist of the research proposal (see [Section 16](#) for further information).

## **9.4 Transfer Assessment Panel Meeting**

- 9.4.1 The transfer assessment meeting should be conducted as a face-to-face or online meeting.
- 9.4.2 Transfer Assessment Panels must comprise at least two academics with research expertise from the same or a cognate subject or discipline as the PGR, who are independent of the supervisory team<sup>5</sup>. The chair of the panel must either have successful supervision of a doctoral PGR to completion or doctoral examination experience (as either an internal or external examiner). The role of the panel is to read the written submission and conduct the transfer review.
- 9.4.3 Audio or video recordings of the meeting must not be made. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting.
- 9.4.4 The independent assessors and chair for the transfer must be on the Register of Supervisors and have completed the mandatory training course for assessing PGRs. The mandatory training will need to be completed every three years if the individual has not been involved with PGR assessment within that period.
- 9.4.5 In exceptional cases, consideration may be given by RDC for the use of an external assessor on the Transfer Assessment Panel. Such cases might, for example, include situations where it is not possible to identify a member of staff who has relevant expertise and who is unconnected with the supervision of the PGR<sup>6</sup>. Where an external assessor is approved for appointment, the SPGRL is responsible for ensuring that the assessor is fully briefed on the regulations and procedures. It is **not possible** for the same individual to act as the external assessor at transfer stage and as the External Examiner for the final examination of the candidate.
- 9.4.6 Supervisors may attend the transfer review as observers/note-takers at the request of the PGR.

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<sup>5</sup> It is possible for the same individual to serve on the Transfer Assessment Panel and as the Internal Examiner in the final examination, but they should not be involved in the continued assessment and monitoring of the PGR's work after the transfer assessment.

<sup>6</sup> In recommending the appointment of an external assessor, Schools will be required to provide details of the current employment of the proposed assessor (the normal expectation is that they will be senior members of the academic staff of a UK HEI).

## 9.5 Recommendation of the transfer panel

- 9.5.1 The recommendation of the transfer panel will be one of the following:
- Transfer to full PhD registration.
  - Transfer to MPhil registration (transfer to a Master's by Research at this stage is not permitted).
  - On the first occasion only, and provided that the University's prescribed time limit allows, deferral of a decision about transfer for a limited period to permit the work to be revised and then reassessed. If a transfer decision is deferred, a final decision must be made with 18 months of the start date for full-time PGRs or within 30 months for part time PGRs.
  - A decision that the PGR will be required to withdraw from the research degree.
- 9.5.2 PGRs should be asked to leave the transfer review meeting whilst the members of the Transfer Assessment Panel deliberate their decision before being called back to the meeting to be informed of the panel's recommendation.
- 9.5.3 The recommendation must be agreed by all members of the Transfer Assessment Panel and will be recorded on the Joint Report of the Transfer Assessment Panel by the Chair of the Panel. The Chair will complete the report on behalf of the Panel within **10 working days** of the transfer assessment meeting and submit to the SPGRL via e:Vision. The SPGRL should approve the report via e:Vision within **5 working days** and the report will then be available for the PGR to view.
- 9.5.4 The student record and progress stage for the PGR will be updated.
- 9.5.5 Where there are complex circumstances in an individual PGR's transfer assessment the SPGRL may refer the report to RDC for consideration and approval (under reserved business). If a recommendation other than transfer to doctoral registration has been made (i.e. deferral of decision, transfer to MPhil or withdrawal) the transfer assessment report must be referred to RDC for consideration.
- 9.5.6 RDC will receive a list of the reports approved by the SPGRL.
- 9.5.7 For PGRs registered on practice-led programmes details of the work that will contribute to their final submission will need to be included in the report.

## 9.6 Deferral of the transfer decision

- 9.6.1 The Transfer Assessment Panel may, on academic grounds, make a case for the deferral of the transfer decision when a realistic plan for completion of the thesis, within the standard period of study, is not evident. The decision should be deferred pending the receipt of a satisfactory plan.
- 9.6.2 The period of any deferral is normally no more than three months and cannot be more than six months. In all cases, a final decision must be reached within the time limit specified (see section 8.2 above).
- 9.6.3 The PGR must be given, in writing, clear guidance on why the work submitted is not of the right standard, details of the further work required by the Transfer Assessment Panel and the revised deadline for submission. This information will be contained in the Joint Report of the Transfer Assessment Panel and should be given to the PGR and main supervisor **within 2 working days** of the meeting.
- 9.6.4 If a decision on transfer is deferred it is expected that all members of the Transfer Assessment Panel will be involved in the re-assessment.
- 9.6.5 It should also be explained to the PGR that they will be required to attend a second transfer review if the Transfer Assessment Panel is not satisfied with the revised material. All deferred PGRs must be offered a second transfer review if, after considering the resubmitted work, the Transfer Assessment Panel is of the view that, from the consideration of the written submission, the PGR has not met the criteria for transfer. PGRs and Panel members must make themselves available for the second transfer review within a reasonable period of time.
- 9.6.6 Deferred PGRs should only proceed to further data collection following careful consideration by their supervisors and/or SPGRL.
- 9.6.7 If the Transfer Assessment Panel is unable to make a recommendation that the PGR should proceed to either PhD or MPhil study within the time limit allowed for transfer, then the PGR must withdraw. Where a grant-funded PGR initially registered for a provisional PhD is recommended to proceed to an MPhil, the grant awarding authority should be informed and the necessary adjustment in funding made.

## Section 10 Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure (UAPP)

### 10.1 Purpose of the UAPP

- 10.1.1 The University monitors the engagement and performance of PGRs as part of its quality control and pastoral obligations and is also aware of the considerable commitment of time and resource made by PGRs and their families in their research degree and seeks to ensure that such commitment is made in reasonable expectation of their success.
- 10.1.2 The purpose of the Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure (UAPP) is to investigate concerns about the PGR's ability to complete their degree successfully within the remaining period of study and to put measures in place to support the PGR in overcoming difficulties which are affecting their progress.
- 10.1.3 These actions are taken in the context that RDC will ensure the application of academic regulations relating to progress and award, which may result in enforced withdrawal from the programme. The UAPP does not apply in relation to non-academic disciplinary matters which are dealt with under the *University's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary procedures*. Matters relating to PGR health which come to light during an UAPP meeting may be referred for further consideration under the *Fitness to Study Procedures* if this is deemed appropriate.
- 10.1.4 The UAPP may take place at any stage in a research degree (that is both before and after the transfer stage and during the overtime period).
- 10.1.5 A PGR can expect, as part of the normal supervisory process, for their supervisor(s) to draw to their attention problems with their academic progress when they arise. This should be done in writing and records kept in the PGR's file.
- 10.1.6 Unsatisfactory academic progress is usually identified when a PGR has not met the requirements set out under responsibilities of the PGR in Section 4. Examples of unsatisfactory academic progress include:
- Failure to provide evidence of satisfactory progress.
  - Failure to present written work to an adequate standard.
  - Failure to present work to an agreed timescale.
  - Failure to maintain regular contact with their supervisor(s) and to attend formal supervision meetings.

### 10.2 Instigation of the UAPP

- 10.2.1 Initially the supervisor(s) will raise concerns about academic progress in writing with the PGR. This is an informal stage, but the SPGRL should be advised. In cases where the SPGRL is one of the PGR's supervisors, the Dean/Head of School should be informed.
- 10.2.2 If there is no improvement after the supervisor has raised concerns and no satisfactory explanation provided by the PGR regarding the level of progress, then the supervisor(s) should formally bring the matter to the attention of the SPGRL. In cases where the SPGRL is one of the candidate's supervisors the Dean/Head of School should be informed. Before bringing the matter to the attention of the SPGRL or Dean/Head of School it is expected that:
- The supervisors will consider the issue between themselves.
  - There will be evidence of written feedback to the PGR outlining the unsatisfactory academic progress (e.g. warning letter(s)/email(s), comments in the supervision log and/or formal progress reports) and indicating what progress is required.
- 10.2.3 the PGR will have had the opportunity to raise with the supervisor(s) and/or Postgraduate Research Tutor (PGRT) any circumstances which have prevented their ability to progress satisfactorily.
- 10.2.4 The process will be managed by the SPGRL, unless they are a member of the PGR's supervisory team in which case the Dean/Head of School will appoint a delegate to manage the process. The Dean/Head of School delegate should be a senior member of the academic staff in the School who has had no prior involvement with the supervision of the PGR.

10.2.5 If the concerns raised relate to absence, and there has been no contact with the PGR for a 2 month period (unless absence has been authorised for events such as fieldwork, illness etc.), the SPGRL (or Dean/Head of School's delegate) should seek advice from the PGR School on whether the engagement requirements have been met.

10.2.6 The SPGRL (or Dean/Head of School's delegate) will consider whether the concerns raised by the supervisor(s) are sufficiently serious to:

- (a) Warrant the instigation of the UAPP. That is that the concerns expressed adversely impact on the PGR's ability to complete their degree successfully within the remaining period of study but that there is at least some possibility that, with an immediate improvement in academic performance, the position may be rescued. If this is the case then the UAPP should be instigated. The SPGRL (or Dean/Head of School's delegate) will immediately write to the PGR concerned informing them that the UAPP has been instigated, the reasons for this, that a meeting has been arranged and informing them of the date, time and venue of the meeting. Notification will always be in writing and will give at least three working days' notice. Before reaching this decision there must be written evidence that the supervisor(s) has previously drawn to the attention of the PGR concerns regarding their academic progress. It is expected that the meeting will normally take place within 10 working days of the issue of the letter. The PGR must be advised that they may choose to be accompanied by a 'supporter' (see Section 10.8.2) to the meeting, who may speak on behalf of the PGR. The supporter may be the YSJ Students' Union Vice-president Education and Welfare at the invitation of the PGR. (See **Example Letter One**)

**OR**

- (b) Warrant an immediate recommendation to RDC that the PGR be required to withdraw from their studies immediately due to unsatisfactory academic progress. **This course of action, without instigation of the UAPP, will occur only in the most exceptional cases.** For a recommendation to be made to RDC for immediate withdrawal there must be:

- Clear evidence that serious concerns about academic progress have been made in writing to the PGR over a prolonged period of time (4 months or more).
- Evidence that support mechanisms have been made available to the PGR to address these concerns.
- A satisfactory explanation provided as to why it is not possible for realistic targets to be set and the PGR granted a further opportunity to improve progress under the UAPP.

10.2.7 The appropriate pro forma must be completed and returned to the PGR School.

## 10.3 Initial UAPP Meeting

10.3.1 Normally the SPGRL (or Dean/Head of School's delegate), at least one member of the supervisory team (normally the main supervisor) and PGR (who may be accompanied by a supporter, e.g. a YSJ Student Union representative) will attend the unsatisfactory progress meeting. Written notes of the meeting should be taken. Where a member of staff cannot attend the meeting, a written report may be submitted. The purpose of the unsatisfactory progress meeting will be to:

- Advise the PGR formally that their academic progress is deemed unsatisfactory and detail the reasons for concern.
- Reassure the PGR that the purpose of the meeting is to identify ways to address the concerns of the supervisor(s) and to support the PGR's future progress.
- Receive a summary of the PGR's performance and relevant reports from supervisors.
- Give the PGR the opportunity to raise any mitigating circumstances.
- Set clear, realistic and measurable targets for improving performance which allow the PGR to demonstrate satisfactory progress.
- Identify any training needs and support mechanisms. At least one formal supervisory meeting must take place before the final formal review meeting is held.

- Explain who will assess, and how, whether the set targets have been completed satisfactorily. Where the academic standard of work is to be considered, evaluation of any work must be completed by at least one of the supervisors and at least one senior member of the academic staff who is independent of the supervisory team but who is from the same or from a cognate subject area or discipline to the PGR's area of research.
- Explain that continued unsatisfactory progress may lead to a recommendation for enforced withdrawal of the candidature (or in some cases transfer to a lower award).
- Set a date for the final formal review of the UAPP. For a full-time PGR this will normally be no less than two months, and no more than three months, from the date of the meeting in which the UAPP is instigated. For a part-time candidate this will normally be no less than 3 months and no more than five months from the date of this meeting.
- Where progress is deemed unsatisfactory prior to the transfer stage and the timescale does not allow the UAPP to conclude, it will not be necessary to hold a separate final review meeting. The formal transfer stage (*viva voce* examination and review by a Transfer Assessment Panel) will provide an appropriate measure of progress. The PGR should be informed that this will be the case.

10.3.2 Audio or video recordings of the meeting must not be made. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting.

10.3.3 If the PGR fails to attend a meeting to which they have been called, decisions will be taken by the panel in their absence.

10.3.4 Notes of the UAPP meetings and the resulting recommendations will always be taken and circulated to participants normally within five working days. The PGR will be sent a copy of the notes of the meeting to their University email address. A copy of the minutes must be sent to the PGR School.

## 10.4 Action following the initial UAPP Meeting

10.4.1 Following the UAPP meeting the SPGRL or the Dean/Head of School's delegate will:

- Write to the PGR to confirm that either:
  - the UAPP has been instigated and to provide notes of the meeting and the required action plan with milestones. A date for the formal review meeting should be set at this stage (**Example Letter Two (a)**) or where progress will be assessed under the formal transfer process **Example Letter Two (b)**
  - or
  - it has been agreed that it is not appropriate to instigate the UAPP and no further action will be taken on this occasion (see **Example Letter Three**)
- Complete, in the case of (a) (i) above the *Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure pro forma* (stage one) and return it to the PGR School (for the information of RDC) to advise that the UAPP has been instigated in respect of a particular PGR.

## 10.5 UAPP Formal Review Meeting

10.5.1 A formal review meeting will take place to assess the PGR's progress against the action plan and milestones. Normally the SPGRL (or Dean/Head of School's delegate), at least one member of the supervisory team (normally the main supervisor) and PGR (who may choose to be accompanied by a supporter) will attend the meeting. Written notes of the meeting should be taken. There are 4 possible outcomes to the meeting:

- Agree the PGR has made satisfactory progress against the agreed action plan and milestones and that no further action will be taken under the UAPP.
- Agree that a decision on progression be deferred. For a full-time PGR the maximum period by which a decision may be deferred is 3 months (it is expected, however, that in most cases the period of deferral will be less than 3 months).

- iii. Agree that the PGR has not made satisfactory progress with the agreed action plan and milestones. In cases where the remaining period of study allows<sup>7</sup>, make a recommendation to RDC that the PGR be transferred to registration for a lower degree.
  - iv. Agree that the PGR has not made satisfactory progress with the agreed action plan and milestones and that a recommendation will be made, to RDC, that the PGR be subject to enforced withdrawal. In the case of an enforced withdrawal, once this agreed outcome has been formalised, the PGR will be given a rationale for why other outcomes were not offered, following a documented discussion between the panel members.
- 10.5.2 Audio or video recordings of the meeting must not be made. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting.
- 10.5.3 The PGR will have the right of appeal following a decision under the arrangements set out in the *Student Appeals Procedure*. The PGR may seek advice/guidance from YSJ Students' Union.
- 10.5.4 UAPP Formal Review Meetings should have written notes produced normally within five working days. The PGR will always receive a copy of the notes of the meeting, and a copy will be kept on the central PGR file.
- 10.5.5 On those occasions at which progress will be determined at the formal transfer stage (*viva voce* examination and academic review by a Transfer Assessment Panel) the usual transfer arrangements will apply and a Panel composed in accordance with Section 9 will be appointed. It is not appropriate, in these cases, for a 'supporter' to attend the transfer meeting.

## 10.6 Action following the UAPP Formal Review Meeting

- 10.6.1 Immediately following the formal review meeting the SPGRL (or Dean/Head of School's delegate) will:
- (a) Inform the PGR in writing of the outcome of the meeting (**Example Letters Four, Five and Six**);
  - (b) Complete the *Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure pro forma* (stage 2) and return it to The PGR School. Where a recommendation is made that the candidature be subject to enforced withdrawal because of unsatisfactory academic progress (or for transfer to a lower degree) the recommendation will be considered by RDC Chair's Action.
- 10.6.2 Action taken by the RDC Chair to consider the recommendation will be reported to RDC. A letter will be sent to the PGR confirming the outcome of the UAPP.

## 10.7 Expectations of a PGR to attend a UAPP Meeting

- 10.7.1 It is expected that a PGR will attend a UAPP meeting on the date and at the time proposed. Normally this will be a face-to-face meeting, but it may be conducted via MS Teams. Where the PGR is unable to attend for genuine reason, they must advise the SPGRL (or Dean/Head of School's delegate) immediately and provide an explanation for their unavailability (with documentary evidence where appropriate).
- 10.7.2 If the PGR does not attend a meeting to discuss their unsatisfactory academic progress within a reasonable timescale and without a reasonable and timely explanation the meeting should be held in their absence, and a record of the meeting should be sent to the PGR as soon as possible thereafter. Failure to attend the meeting will not prevent the instigation or conclusion of the UAPP.
- 10.7.3 The unavailability of a member of staff from YSJU Student Union to accompany a PGR to a meeting will be regarded as reasonable grounds upon which to request the meeting is re-scheduled provided that the PGR has sought such support within a reasonable timescale of receiving notification of the meeting date and can provide evidence to this effect.

## 10.8 Further Advice and Support for PGRs on the UAPP

- 10.8.1 PGRs seeking advice and support may contact YSJ Students' Union.
- 10.8.2 The PGR may choose to be accompanied by a single supporter to a meeting under this procedure. A supporter is permitted to be a current member of staff, a current registered student at the University, or a Students' Union representative. The role of the supporter is to provide support to the PGR at the meeting. For example, by taking notes during the meeting, or prompting the PGR if they omit to mention something of importance. The supporter is not normally permitted to represent the PGR or to speak on their behalf and they cannot normally appear if the PGR is not present in person<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> When consideration is given to a recommendation to transfer to registration for a lower degree consideration must be given to the period of study remaining on the candidature. Registration for the degree of MPhil is 2 years full-time study followed by up to 1 year overtime (or 4 years part-time with up to 1 year overtime).

<sup>8</sup> Exceptions might include cases such as disability.



## Section 11 Examination

### 11.1 Examination Requirements

- 11.1.1 The '[Regulations for Research Degrees](#)', '[Guide to the examination process for research degrees](#)' and 'Instructions to examiners for research degree examinations' ( [MA by R / PhD, MPhil, Prof Doc](#) ) prescribe the detailed procedures for assessment of YSJU research degrees.
- 11.1.2 The '[Guide to the examination process for research degrees](#)' includes **full details** of the requirements for the format, presentation and word limits of a YSJU thesis, and the steps and timescales for submission and assessment of the thesis from examination entry through to award and graduation from a PGR perspective. PGRs should ensure they are familiar with these requirements before submitting their thesis.
- 11.1.3 The 'Instructions to examiners for research degree examinations' ( [MA by R / PhD MPhil, Prof Doc](#) ) provides full details of the steps and timescales for the assessment of the thesis from an examiner perspective.
- 11.1.4 **PhD by Distance Learning:** see additional guidance in [Section 17](#).
- 11.1.5 **PhD by Published Work:** see additional guidance in [Section 18](#).

### 11.2 Entering for Examination

- 11.2.1 The Application for Assessment should be completed at least three months before submission of the thesis. This process will finalise the title of the thesis, provide details of proposed examiners and will ensure appropriate governance in respect of the research being submitted as part of the research degree.
- 11.2.2 The PGR should initiate completion of the form via e:Vision and it will then require input from the supervisory team. The main supervisor should approach potential examiners and complete their section of the form, including consent forms from those nominated as examiners. The SPGRL will review the contents of the form, nominate the independent chair and submit the form.
- 11.2.3 The PGR School will check the information on the form, confirm eligibility of the proposed examiners/independent chair and arrange for RDEP to consider the form. RDEP will review and approve the recommendations for the appointment of examiners and the independent chair.

### 11.3 Eligibility Criteria for Examiners and Independent Chairs

- 11.3.1 Particular attention should be given to the number and composition of examiners required for the specific degree under examination. Full details are available in the '[Guide to the examination process for research degrees](#)'.
- 11.3.2 To identify approval individuals to nominate for the roles of internal examiner, external examiner and independent chairs supervisors and SPGRLs should refer to the '[Criteria for the appointment of Examiners and Independent Chairs](#)'.
- 11.3.3 Responsibility for the consideration of recommendations for the appointment of examiners and independent chairs rests with RDEP.
- 11.3.4 Internal examiners and independent chairs are required to complete a mandatory training course before acting in the capacity. Briefings are also given to external examiners when required by RDEP. In order to ensure consistency within the examination process, examiners receive written instructions on the relevant YSJU procedures together with the criteria for the recognition of different levels of achievement. These instructions are supplied to all staff involved in examinations.

### 11.4 Submitting the thesis

- 11.4.1 The thesis should ideally be submitted at the end of the standard period of study and within the maximum period of registration for the degree on which the PGR is registered. A minimum period of study can also apply if the supervisory team confirm that they have read the thesis in its entirety and consider that it is ready for examination. The periods of study are set out in section 5.1.2.
- 11.4.2 PGRs must submit the eThesis in the correct format along with a Thesis Submission Form. Additional soft bound copies of the thesis may also be required if one or more of the appointed examiners have requested one.
- 11.4.3 The PGR School will check the format of the thesis and dispatch it to the examiners, normally within two working days of submission.



## 11.5 Examination of the thesis

- 11.5.1 Full details of examination arrangements are provided in the 'Guide to the examination process for research degrees'.
- 11.5.2 Examiners are asked to accept a timescale of 3 months in which to complete the examination. Arrangements for the examination will be co-ordinated by the PGR School.
- 11.5.3 Examination of Masters by Research theses will be conducted based on the submitted thesis, with no requirement for an oral examination, unless requested by the external examiner once they have read the thesis.
- 11.5.4 For all other research degrees an oral examination of the thesis will be conducted.
- 11.5.5 Oral examinations will normally be conducted as an online examination meeting, unless it is agreed that an on-campus examination should be held. An independent 'non-examining' chair will be present.
- 11.5.6 All oral examinations will be audio or video recorded in line with the 'Policy on the Recording of Oral Examinations'. Separate audio or video recordings of the meeting by individual participants must not be made. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting.
- 11.5.7 Where an oral examination is held the examiners must prepare separate, independent written reports before the oral examination.
- 11.5.8 A supervisor may be an observer at an oral examination at the request of the PGR and, if not present, must be available for consultation with the examiners if required.

## 11.6 Outcome of the examination

- 11.6.1 The outcome of the examination will be given to PGRs as follows:
- Oral examination: the examiners will give the PGR verbal notification of their recommendation after the oral examination and must do so within 24 hours. Formal written confirmation of the outcome will be sent by the PGR School to the PGR.
  - Examiner assessment of the thesis (Masters' by Research candidates only): the recommendation will be sent to the PGR by the PGR School once approved by RDEP.
- 11.6.2 Where appropriate, information about the [Appeals Procedure](#) will be provided to the PGR.
- 11.6.3 An examination report containing a recommendation for the outcome in accordance with stipulated YSJU criteria will be completed following the examination. In all cases the examiners' recommendation is subject to final approval by the Progress and Award Examination Panel.
- 11.6.4 PGRs who have passed subject to amendments being made to the thesis should begin making the amendments **as soon as they receive the amendments** and submit the amended thesis by the deadline date.
- 11.6.5 PGRs who have not been awarded the degree but who are permitted to re-submit their thesis will receive 'recommendations for re-submission' to aid them in preparing for re-submission. These recommendations require the approval of RDEP before they can be released to the PGR. The maximum deadline for re-submission will be calculated from the date that the recommendations are released to the PGR.

## 11.7 Release of the Examiners' Report

- 11.7.1 The Examiners' Report requires approval by RDEP and will be automatically released to the PGR and the supervisory team.

## 11.8 Deposit of the final eThesis

- 11.8.1 The final version of the eThesis (including any approved required corrections) should be deposited by no later than one month after the examiner has approved the amendments made to the thesis.

## 11.9 Award of the degree

- 11.9.1 Once the award has been approved by the Progress and Award Examination Panel, Registry will send an award letter to the PGR.

## 11.10 Graduation

- 11.10.1 PGRs are eligible to graduate *in absentia* or at a degree ceremony and must inform Registry of their preference.

## **Section 12 Student Representation and Feedback**

- 12.1.1 PGRs will be represented on RDC and Research Committee. PGR representatives will not be involved in the consideration of matters relating to individual PGR cases.
- 12.1.2 PGR representatives are recruited into the role by the PGR School.
- 12.1.3 YSJU periodically surveys PGRs about their experience and satisfaction with arrangements and facilities for research degrees. Feedback in all forms is welcomed at any time to relevant Heads of Service, Directors and Schools.

## Section 13 Complaints and Appeals

### 13.1 Complaints

- 13.1.1 YSJU is committed to giving its PGRs the best learning experience it can. It prides itself on being a responsive and supportive organisation and in listening to its PGRs, but recognises that they may sometimes encounter problems. If a PGR is dissatisfied with any aspect of YSJU's provision, they should first try to deal with the problem by discussing it with the member of staff most immediately concerned. Many problems can be speedily resolved by a direct approach.
- 13.1.2 In cases where PGRs do not feel that they have received a satisfactory response to a direct approach, or feel unable to raise the problem locally, advice may be sought from supervisors, the Postgraduate Research Tutor, SPGRL, Academic Registrar or YSJU Students' Union. Where appropriate, an informal resolution may be sought.
- 13.1.3 If an informal resolution is not appropriate, or is regarded as unsatisfactory, PGRs should refer to the University's [Complaints Procedure](#).
- 13.1.4 The Student Casework Manager ([casework@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:casework@yorks.ac.uk)) can answer general questions about the complaints process. YSJ Students' Union can provide independent advice and support to PGRs who wish to make a complaint.
- 13.1.5 If the PGR remains dissatisfied once YSJU's procedures have been exhausted, a review of the decision may be sought from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). More information can be found on the OIA website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

### 13.2 Appeals

- 13.2.1 PGRs may appeal decisions relating to their registration status, progression or award. Full details are set out in the [Appeals Procedure](#).

## Section 14 Minimum Standards of Facilities Provision

- 14.1.1 RDC has specified that access to facilities such as printing, photocopying and common room facilities for full-time PGRs should be commensurate with the requirements for the research being conducted by the PGR. At YSJU these facilities are mainly provided in the Graduate Centre in Holgate Building.
- 14.1.2 Specialist equipment and computer software/hardware resourcing issues are the responsibility of the Schools, and PGRs' requirements must be considered prior to accepting any PGR.
- 14.1.3 The University provides comprehensive library services for PGRs, however, no single library can satisfy a researchers' entire information needs. It may be possible for the library to support PGRs through additional services such as interlibrary loans or SCONUL access, but access to resources cannot be guaranteed through these routes. PGRs should give careful consideration to the requirements that their research project is likely to need for information resources and discuss these with their supervisory team. These considerations require particular attention where relevant resources may be held by other institutions (e.g. specialist archives, reference only resources, items only held in print, etc.), outside York or the UK, as the only access option may require travel to those institutions.
- 14.1.4 PGRs should consider the requirements and demands that their research project is likely to need for IT hardware/software and internet access and discuss these with their supervisory team, particularly where there may be difficulties in accessing suitable resources. It may be possible for the University to provide additional support where specific needs are identified, but that is not guaranteed, and students should expect to provide their own IT equipment and internet access.

## Section 15 Practice-led Research Degrees

### 15.1 Introduction

- 15.1.1 This supplementary protocol outlines specific arrangements for PhD, MPhil and MA practice-led PGRs and **must** be read in conjunction with the University's 'Code of Practice for Research Degrees'. Practice-led research degrees are currently only available in the following Schools:

School	PhD Practice-led	MPhil Practice-led	MA Practice-led
Arts	Yes	Yes	Yes
Humanities	Yes	Yes	No
York Business School	Yes	Yes	No

### 15.2 Admission

- 15.2.1 PGRs registered for practice-led research degrees will be recorded as such under specified codes set up on the student records system. Applicants for practice-led research degrees are identified from the point that they enter the YSJU admissions system.

### 15.3 Training

- 15.3.1 Practice-led PGRs in the School of the Arts, School of Humanities and School of Science, Technology & Health will be provided with access to practice-led research methodology.
- 15.3.2 PGRs should work with supervisors to identify if an appropriate taught MA level module would support them in the development and understanding of practice-led research methodologies, particularly in terms of concepts of knowledge and the relationship between practice and theory; practice and experience; practice and knowledge.
- 15.3.3 PGRs will be invited to attend regular talks by artists/practitioners that have a particular focus on practice-led research which are to be hosted by the relevant School.

### 15.4 Engagement with research seminars

- 15.4.1 Schools organise a wide range of research seminars, including from staff and visiting researchers, and PGRs will be invited. Research seminars explore methodological questions and issues, including practice-led research; engagement with epistemologies of knowing; documentation and representation of practice-led research; research into, about and through the arts; ethics and participation in practice-led research; the relationship between theory and practice.
- 15.4.2 The seminar series would also provide opportunities for PGRs to present their own research in progress, both in the form of papers and practice-led workshops.

### 15.5 Practice-led Documentation Online/Social Media

- 15.5.1 All practice-led PGRs should be encouraged to actively maintain online documentation of their practice (eg. via platforms such as Axis Web, Instagram, or their own website or blog. This would overarch the above two activities – in terms of providing a site to record documentation, papers, reading lists etc.
- 15.5.2 This online presence would be particularly useful in supporting part-time PGRs.

### 15.6 Practice-led transfer assessment

- 15.6.1 The PGR and School should clarify at the transfer stage if a doctoral research project is still defined as practice-led. It is not possible to change to a practice-led research degree after transfer.
- 15.6.2 If a PGR is pursuing a practice-led research project then the transfer submission must include evidence of creative practice which, depending upon the nature of the practice, might be a creative writing component, the staging of an exhibition of visual work, a live performance, or the documentation of creative practice/performance in a retainable form. This should be accompanied by a written piece of at least 5,000 words that critically reviews, analyses and/or contextualises the practice. The PGR must be required to demonstrate the ability to link practice with the written analysis.
- 15.6.3 In addition to the usual requirements for transfer, a practice-led PGR must set out what they expect to include for assessment as the final submission. This must meet the regulations for alternative submissions as set out below.

15.6.4 It is important to identify at transfer stage if the PGR intends to include live performance or practice as part of the final submission and, if this will take place prior to submission of the written element, to facilitate arrangements for the early appointment of examiners (an Application for Assessment must therefore be filled in 3 months prior to the date of the first live practice).

15.6.5 An intention stated at the transfer stage to include live performance or practice in the final examination will not be binding. If research determines that a live element is no longer required (or dates change), this should be reported as soon as possible and will not have any adverse consequences for the PGR. However, PGRs who do not declare an intention to include live practice at transfer stage will not be permitted to include live practice as part of the submission.

## 15.7 Deferral of transfer assessment

15.7.1 In accordance with procedures for transfer, PGRs could be offered more time to rethink or redo the practice elements. A case for deferral of the transfer decision would have to be made by the SPGRL, on academic grounds, to the RDC.

## 15.8 Application for assessment

15.8.1 PGRs on practice-led research degrees must submit their *Application for Assessment* a minimum of 3 months prior to the date of the first live practice (where examiners are required to view live practice). Where there is no examined live practice event, then the application must be returned a minimum of 3 months prior to the expected submission date of the thesis.

## 15.9 Assessment of Live Practice/Early Appointment of Examiners

15.9.1 Where it is considered to be part of the final submission, examiners are normally expected to view live practice. However, all practice for assessment must be recorded in an appropriate format as a permanent record (see below).

15.9.2 PGRs should indicate at the transfer stage the intention for live practice to be included in the final assessment and as soon as possible provide details of date, venue and time. As this will need to be negotiated and agreed with potential examiners, it may therefore be necessary to identify and appoint examiners at an early stage. The letter of appointment to examiners will include details of any live practice indicated by the School on the Application for Assessment which will form part of the submission.

15.9.3 Once examiners have been appointed, the SPGRL is responsible for ensuring examiners receive detailed information of date, venue and time of any live practice to be assessed. Please note in some instances this may include more than one event, as outlined and agreed at transfer. It is recommended that the School (and PGR) consider examiners' availability when arranging live practice. Further guidance on the recording and assessment of live practice is provided below.

## 15.10 Alternative Submission

15.10.1 PGRs on an approved practice-led route must submit a substantial body of creative practice together with a related written submission as detailed below. PGRs undertaking practice-led research may be granted permission by RDEP to present for examination an alternative form of thesis.

## 15.11 Format Regulations

15.11.1 All practice for assessment must be recorded in an appropriate format as a permanent record, which complies with requirements specified by the University (including any live practice that has been assessed). PGRs must obtain the appropriate permissions from other people involved in the performance and recording of live practice and they must comply with the University's ethical procedures and legal requirements of the Data Protection Act.

## 15.12 Thesis length

15.12.1 The minimum and maximum word limits for all practice-led research degrees are as follows:

Degree	Minimum word limit	Maximum word limit
PhD	25,000	50,000
MPhil	20,000	30,000
MA by Research	5,000	10,000

## 15.13 Submission for examination

15.13.1 Where the final submission comprises practice for assessment, in addition to the written thesis, the assessed (and associated) documentation must be submitted to the Research Degree Submission system on Moodle prior to examination:

- Electronic version of the thesis (PDF format), presented in accordance with the 'Guide to the examination process for research degrees', and all other submitted material (in an appropriate file format).
- A record of the practice for assessment, and associated documentation, should be presented in an appropriate format for archiving purposes.

15.13.2 Examiners will also be given the option of receiving a hard copy (soft bound) in addition to the electronic version. Once the examiners have been appointed candidates will be notified as to whether any soft bound copies of the thesis will be required. If one or more soft bound copies of the thesis are required the appropriate number of CDs, DVDs or other approved media for submission should also be submitted in standard slipcases which should be clearly labelled with detailed contents.

## 15.14 Submission of the final eThesis

15.14.1 All final documentation submitted after a successful examination must be submitted to the Research Degree Submission system in Moodle in appropriate electronic files (for example pdf, jpeg, mp3), presented in accordance with the instructions given in the 'Guide to the examination process for research degrees' for retention in the University's Digital Repository (RaY).

15.14.2 Options for the format of storing live practice should be discussed with the supervisor who will liaise as appropriate with Library & Learning Services and with the PGR School.

## 15.15 Advice for examiners

15.15.1 Practice must be integral within the methodology and dissemination of a practice-led research degree and the final assessment should consider the submission as a whole (practice and written element). In reaching a decision upon the quality of a practice-led submission it is important that examiners do not assess practice and written elements separately.

15.15.2 There must be no formative feedback by examiners prior to the examination (for example, after an assessment of live practice); feedback should only be given after the examination has concluded. Any notes taken at a live practice/performance must not be disclosed and must be retained by the examiner until included in the preliminary report, immediately prior to the final examination.

15.15.3 As noted above, examiners should consider the submission as a whole. Where live practice is held on the same day as an oral examination, examiners may wish to add notes to the end of the preliminary report prior to the oral examination.

15.15.4 The structure of an oral examination itself may vary depending on circumstances. For instance, the examiners could ask a candidate to reproduce a live performance or a similar task to demonstrate any aspect of practice, or give a short presentation at the start of the examination. The candidate should be given at least 2 weeks' notice if this is required and the arrangements must be made through the PGR School.

## 15.16 Award

15.16.1 Successful candidates will be awarded Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Philosophy or Master of Arts by Research as appropriate.

## Section 16 Professional Doctorate/Doctor of Education

### 16.1 Introduction

- 16.1.1 This supplementary protocol outlines specific arrangements for PGRs on Professional Doctorate/Doctor of Education programmes and **must** be read in conjunction with the University's '*Code of Practice for Research Degrees*'. The following programmes are available:

School	Professional doctorate/ Doctor of Education
Education, Language & Psychology	Education
Education, Language & Psychology	Applied Linguistics <sup>9</sup>
Humanities	Ministry <sup>10</sup>

### 16.2 Admission

- 16.2.1 Admission to the programme will be decided by an interview panel, and no candidates will be admitted solely based on previous awards or professional experience. The normal minimum entrance qualifications will be an upper second-class honours degree in a related subject area (or equivalent) and at least three years of relevant professional experience.
- 16.2.2 All candidates must also currently be in a professional role that is relevant to the intended award. The relevance of past and current experience to a particular award will be judged at interview. Candidates with eligible professional experience may be admitted to the programme without the required academic qualifications provided they can demonstrate through other means that they have the necessary skills to study and research at doctoral level. This will usually be through the production of a piece of written work specified by the relevant course leader prior to interview.
- 16.2.3 PGRs registered for professional doctorates will be recorded as such under specified codes set up on the student records system. Applicants will complete an application form specific to professional doctorate programmes and provide a letter of application in place of a PhD proposal.

### 16.3 Programme Structure

- 16.3.1 Professional doctorate/Doctor of Education programmes are delivered part-time over a period of 4-6 years in two stages.

### 16.4 Part 1 – taught component

- 16.4.1 Stage 1 (years 1 and 2) will require PGRs to attend two residentials a year for two years and pass four 45-credit modules (two in each year). PGRs who fail will be allowed to resubmit according to University regulations, but will not be able to commence Stage 2 until all four modules are passed and they have successfully completed the transfer process.
- 16.4.2 The compulsory modules will be as follows:
- Module DOC8005M: Identifying and articulating issues in professional practice
  - Module DOC8006M: Contextualising issues in professional practice
  - Module DOC8007M: Researching issues in professional practice
  - Module DOC8008M: Interpreting and impacting on issues in professional practice
- 16.4.3 Each module will be delivered by a mixture of on-campus and online learning. The modules will be common to all awards and will include teaching sessions dedicated to PGRs on particular awards as well as sessions where all PGRs are taught together.
- 16.4.4 Alongside the requirements of the four modules, PGRs will be assigned supervisors for their research thesis. The process will start in Year 1 and must be completed by the first residential of Year 2. During Year 2 PGRs will work with their supervisors to produce a research proposal required for progression to Stage 2 of the programme (Year 3 onwards). The research proposal will be informed by the work done by the PGR for modules, but independent of it. The proposal must be ready for the PGR's transfer panel, which will normally be held towards the end of Year 2.

<sup>9</sup> Existing PGRs only, no new entrants

<sup>10</sup> Existing PGRs only, no new entrants



## 16.5 Transfer process

- 16.5.1 The process of transfer will be analogous to both the admissions and transfer processes of the PhD award. At this stage PGRs will need to have produced a research proposal, and this will be reviewed for its viability within the allowed timeframe (2-4 years) and potential originality. PGRs will be deemed to have produced evidence of critical ability and the ability to write at doctoral level by virtue of having passed their taught modules. However, at the transfer interview they will need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the literature related to their chosen research topic, and the relevant research methods. They will also need to demonstrate that the research topic is aligned with the subject area of their intended award.

## 16.6 Stage 2 – research component

- 16.6.1 Stage 2 will involve a mixture of both expert and collegial supervision. PGRs will be encouraged to attend three research writing days (April, July and October) and monthly group development drop-ins (held in the evening) and will have a minimum of six supervision sessions that may be conducted face-to-face or via electronic media.
- 16.6.2 At this stage supervision and reviews will proceed according to the same rules and guidelines as for PhDs. There will be annual reviews held until the PGR submits the thesis, and opportunities for them to attend relevant University training sessions. Reviews will consider training requirements.
- 16.6.3 The annual residential for Stage 2 will be driven less by tutor input and more by the content and stage of PGR research. PGRs will present to peer-groups their progress, engage in seminars, and discuss theoretical and practical issues linked to the research being undertaken. Some professional development or training may also be offered where common needs have been identified that could best be met at residential. PGRs will have individual face-to-face supervision at residential, and this would also be a suitable time to hold annual reviews. Outside residential PGRs will have at least six supervision meetings and will also be able to interact with the programme VLE as they did in Stage 1.

## 16.7 Residential

- 16.7.1 Residential will be held twice a year and will run over four days. Contact time during the residential will be approximately 30 hours, split between formal teaching and informal meetings. Taught sessions will include lectures, seminars and times of open discussion, split between plenaries and collegial sessions.
- 16.7.2 Between residential PGRs will have access to tutors (mainly via email, telephone or online media) and to material on the University VLE. PGRs will be encouraged to use social media to interact between residential, either on the University VLE or on other widely available platforms. Material on the VLE may include videos produced by tutors, as well as the usual links to resources or (where necessary) specific digitised material loaded through the University scanning service. Contact with tutors and peers between residential will be through a range of different platforms and events.

## 16.8 Assessment – Stage 1

- 16.8.1 PGRs will be required to attend two residential a year for two years and pass four 45-credit modules, each assessed by the equivalent of an 8000-word written assignment. Each module will be assessed on a pass-fail basis, and each must be passed to enable PGRs to progress to Stage 2. PGRs who fail will be allowed to resubmit according to University regulations, but will not be able to commence Stage 2 until all four modules are passed and they have successfully completed the transfer process.
- 16.8.2 Assessments will be aligned with the particular contexts and interests of PGRs on each award, and will reflect the way that the module subject area is understood and applied in educational and/or faith-based contexts.

## 16.9 Assessment – Transfer stage

- 16.9.1 Transfers panels will be constituted as for PhD transfers (see [section 9](#)) and will follow an analogous procedure, though the main evidence presented by candidates will be the research proposal. The transfer panel will be responsible for ensuring that the subject area of research could enable PGRs to achieve the learning outcomes of their chosen award.

## 16.10 Assessment – Stage 2

- 16.10.1 Stage 2 (normally years 3-4) of the programme will involve independent research leading to the production of a research thesis (approximately 50,000 words), a 4-day residential element held once a year and individual supervision.
- 16.10.2 Assessment of the thesis will follow the regulations and procedures laid out for YSJU Research Degrees (see 'Guide to the examination process for research degrees'), using the specific learning outcomes and thesis requirements for this programme as the criteria against which the work will be judged. Examination will be by oral examination, which the PGR must attend in person, and will be conducted by external and internal examiners.

## 16.11 Award

16.11.1 Successful candidates will be awarded one of the following degrees, according to their programme of study:

- Professional Doctorate Education
- Professional Doctorate Applied Linguistics
- Professional Doctorate Ministry
- Doctor of Education

## Section 17 PhD by Distance Learning

### 17.1 Introduction

- 17.1.1 This supplementary protocol outlines specific arrangements for PhD by Distance Learning programmes and **must** be read in conjunction with the University's '*Code of Practice for Research Degrees*'.
- 17.1.2 The PhD by distance learning is a variant of the normal University PhD offering and is available on either a full-time or part-time basis. Fees, supervision, assessment requirements and milestones are identical to PhDs undertaken on-campus, as are the expectations of time commitment and supervisory meetings. This protocol sets out additional requirements in respect of the distance learning option only.

### 17.2 Admission

- 17.2.1 Whilst entry requirements and admission processes for the PhD by Distance Learning are as set out in Section 3 for on-campus programmes, in respect of those candidates who will be working off- campus they must also be able to demonstrate that they:
- Can successfully conduct their research with the resources available to them at their off-campus study site.
  - Have access to appropriate IT facilities, in order to engage in supervision and training.
  - Have the necessary time, commitment and appropriate attitude towards studying off-campus.
  - Have access to support for disabilities, where appropriate.
- 17.2.2 A commitment statement should be agreed with the candidate to confirm these requirements prior to enrolment.
- 17.2.3 There will be three intakes per year, in February, June and October.

### 17.3 Engagement requirements

- 17.3.1 Distance learning PGRs are not normally required to attend the University, except for induction and oral examination where attendance is expected. However, an exception to attendance in person at induction and oral examination may be requested where individuals are unable to do so. PGRs on distance learning programmes are expected to demonstrate engagement through participation in all designated academic engagements, including scheduled supervisory sessions.

### 17.4 Supervision arrangements

- 17.4.1 Supervision should take place regularly through electronic means (e.g. MS Teams, Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, telephone). The commitment statement agreed with the PGR should set out the expectations for the frequency and mode of contact for supervision, along with the extent of face-to-face contact envisaged and arrangements for written reports on research progress.

### 17.5 Library Resources

- 17.5.1 PGRs can access electronic library resources through the University but a means of accessing any hard copy materials which are unavailable electronically would need to be established.

## Section 18 PhD by Published Work

### 18.1 Introduction

- 18.1.1 This supplementary protocol outlines specific arrangements for PhD by Published Work programmes and **must** be read in conjunction with the University's '*Code of Practice for Research Degrees*'.
- 18.1.2 The PhD by Published Work is available to active postgraduate researchers in their field of expertise as a part-time programme. It is intended for candidates who already have a substantial body of published works that are equivalent to the traditional PhD by thesis. The published work must not have been published more than ten years prior to the date of registration.

### 18.2 Definition of 'Published Work'

- 18.2.1 The Research Excellence Framework defines research as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared, and this is the definition adopted here, to encompass all disciplines. The term 'Published Work' has been used to reflect a variety of research outputs, including:
- Substantial or sole contributor to a book.
  - Chapters in books.
  - Papers/articles in refereed journals.
  - Papers presented to conferences which are available in the published proceedings of the conference or are otherwise published (proceedings which are published with an ISSN).
  - Patent applications or granted patents.
  - Exhibitions or performances of which a permanent record has been made (for example, photographs, DVD or other medium).
- 18.2.2 Written published work submitted for this degree must be available in the English language.

### 18.3 Candidate's Eligibility

- 18.3.1 Candidates who meet the following criteria may, at the discretion of the University, be allowed to apply for the award of the degree of PhD (by Published Work). Candidates must be:
- a. Active researchers in their field of expertise before seeking permission to register for this degree; AND
  - b. Must not submit material published more than ten years prior to the date when they are given permission to register for the degree; AND
  - c. Have a significant and coherent body of published work; AND
  - d. Must not be registered on a PhD elsewhere or be in a position to submit for a PhD by Research or other professional doctorate; AND
  - e. Must not already possess a PhD.
- 18.3.2 Candidates must not submit any published work that, in whole or in part, has been submitted in either published or unpublished form for another award, either at the University or at another institution.
- 18.3.3 100 per cent of the published work the candidate wishes to submit as part of the PhD should normally have been published prior to the submission of the application. This includes advanced online publication. Candidates may include publications which have not yet been published as long as all publications are at least in press at the point of application and appropriate evidence is submitted, but this can only make up 20 per cent of the published work.

### 18.4 Application Process

- 18.4.1 Applicants must apply for candidature on the appropriate form through YSJU Admissions.
- 18.4.2 The applicant should initially submit the following:
- a. Application Form
  - b. CV
  - c. Published Outputs to be assessed
  - d. A 500-word abstract.

- 18.4.3 The relevant School will appoint an internal assessor to provide an initial assessment on the appropriateness of the submission. The assessor may be the Dean/Head of School, the School PGR Lead or the most appropriate subject specialist.
- 18.4.4 The internal assessor is not expected to read or examine the submission in full, but is asked to assess whether or not the submission appears to meet the criteria for the award of the degree, as specified in the 'Code of Practice for Research Degrees' and 'Regulations for Research Degree Awards', and is therefore, *prima facie* worthy of examination. The internal assessor should review it considering, as a minimum, the following criteria:
- i. Does the submission form a coherent body of work from academically connected publications/research outputs as outlined above?
  - ii. Does the submission show a sound command of established knowledge in the field and make a significant contribution to the field?
  - iii. Does it appear to have taken the same amount of time and research effort as a PhD by Research?
  - iv. Does it meet the criteria in the 'Code of Practice for Research Degrees'?
  - v. Does the submission appear appropriate, based on points i. to iv. above? Can a case of examination be made?
- 18.4.5 If the candidate's submission is supported by the internal assessor, the SPGRL will consider the merits of the application based on the list of works submitted for examination and the internal assessor's report. The PGR School should be advised of approved candidates by sending a completed admission approval form along with the internal assessor's report.
- 18.4.6 If the applicant's candidature is approved, the SPGRL will appoint a supervisor to assist the candidate with the format of their submission and the nature of the accompanying statement. This person may or may not be the original internal assessor.
- 18.4.7 Applicants will be required to pay the relevant fees following approval of their candidature. Fees will be set at half the annual tuition fee for UK entrants to a PhD programme for a total of two years, with the full fee charged during the first year of study. Or at the full annual tuition fee for non UK nationals for a total of two years, the full fee charged during the first year of study.

## 18.5 Supervisory arrangements

- 18.5.1 The aim of supervision is to:
- a. give guidance on the selection, coherence and quality of the work to be submitted for examination;
  - b. enable the development of the critical review of the work being submitted; and
  - c. to prepare the candidate for the oral examination.
- 18.5.2 It is expected that a minimum of two supervision meetings will be held to assist the candidate with the format of their submission and the nature of the accompanying statement.

## 18.6 Assessment

- 18.6.1 The applicant should submit an online Application for Assessment via e:Vision at least three months (and not less than two months) prior to submitting their critical review (in lieu of thesis). Examiners will be appointed in accordance with the 'Criteria for the appointment of examiners and independent chairs' and will be subject to approval by RDEP.
- 18.6.2 The candidate must submit to Moodle their (a) abstract, (b) a critical review of their submitted work, and (c) portfolio of published work normally within 3 to 12 months of registration. These documents should meet the following requirements:
- (a) The abstract may be the same, or based upon, the synopsis provided at the initial assessment phase, and should fit onto one page of A4 (500 words maximum).
  - (b) The critical review will be at least 10,000 words in length, but not more than 20,000 words in length, and comprise the following chapters:
    - i. Chapter 1: summarise the aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions covered by all the published work in the portfolio;
    - ii. Chapter 2: indicate how the published work forms a coherent body of work
    - iii. Chapter 3: indicate what contribution the candidate has made to this work
    - iv. Chapter 4: indicate how the work contributes significantly to the expansion of knowledge.
  - (c) The submitted portfolio of published work must add up to a substantial and coherent body of work which would have taken the equivalent of three years of full-time study to accomplish. It

must consist of work which is already in the public domain. Where publications are in press, appropriate evidence must be provided.

- (d) Each piece of published work should be original, significant, and rigorous and there should be evidence of appropriate peer-review processes in place for each piece of published work.
- (e) The structure and the format of the submission may vary and include original material and a range of media. See 18.2.1.
- (f) The candidate should not submit material published more than ten years prior to the date when they registered for the degree.
- (g) The candidate must either be the sole author of the portfolio of published work or must be able to demonstrate in the critical review of the submitted work that they have made a major contribution to all of the work that has been produced by more than one author. It is expected that the candidate will be first author of all co-authored works.
- (h) Where co-authored works are submitted, the candidate must provide a written statement, signed by the candidate and by all of the major contributory co-authors, specifying the candidate's individual contribution and the conditions and circumstances in which the work was carried out.
- (i) The candidate should have made a substantial direct academic contribution (i.e. intellectual responsibility and substantive work) and should also be able to defend the output as a whole.

18.6.3 On receiving the Application for Assessment, RDEP will appoint examiners in accordance with the processes for other research degrees, as outlined in the 'Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees'. Members of staff on a fixed term or permanent contract, at grade 7 or above for a combined total of twelve months during any point in the candidature, will require two external examiners.

18.6.4 Candidates will be required to submit themselves for an oral examination as specified in the 'Guide to the Examination Process for Research Degrees'.

## Section 19 Collaborative Provision

### 19.1 Introduction

- 19.1.1 Collaborative provision for research degrees will be subject to the policies and procedures outlined in this Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

### 19.2 Management

- 19.2.1 Research Degrees Committee is responsible for the overall management of collaborative provision for research degrees.
- 19.2.2 Academic oversight will be carried out by the associated academic school.
- 19.2.3 Each partnership will have nominated partnership leads for both YSJU and the collaborating partner.
- 19.2.4 RDC will receive an annual report on the partnership arrangement. A representative from the partner will be invited to the RDC meeting at which the report is received.

### 19.3 Supervisor eligibility

- 19.3.1 Research degree supervisors for collaborative provision will need to meet the criteria set out in the YSJU 'Eligibility Criteria for Research Degree Supervision and Supervisory Teams'.
- 19.3.2 Applications to be a supervisor will be considered by the RDC sub group, and once approved, individuals will need to complete the mandatory training to be added to the list.



## Section 20 Record of updates to the Code of Practice

Section	Changes made	Date approved by RDC or QSC	Notes
Various	Change in terminology from Tier 4 Visa to Student Visa		
4.4.2-3	Addition of a section on arrangements for when a supervisor leaves the University	12/05/21 RDC	
6	Attendance Monitoring for PGRs – incorporation of previous stand-alone document into the CoP		
8	Annual reviews post-transfer period may be done as a paper-based review rather than review meeting	12/05/21 RDC	
10	Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure – incorporation of previous stand-alone document into the CoP		
11	Changes to examination arrangements for Masters by Research candidates (for those starting from 2021/22 academic year onwards)	02/06/21 QSC	
4.1	Removal of senior supervisor status	01/12/21 QSC	
7.3.3	Suspension of study for maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave does not count towards maximum period of study.	29/06/22 AB	
9.4.2	Chair of transfer panel required to have either successful supervision of a doctoral PGR to completion or research degree examination experience.	01/12/21 QSC	
Various	New role of School PGR Lead		
4.6	Annual tutorial meeting replaces pastoral meeting	1/2/23 RDC	
8.2.4-5	Revised list of documentation for review meeting submission	15/02/23 QSC	
9.3.2-3	Revised list of documentation for transfer meeting submission	15/02/23 QSC	
15.5.1-2	Practice-led Documentation Online/Social Media updated	15/02/23 QSC	
Various	Members of staff who require two external examiners amended to those on a fixed term or permanent contract, at grade 7 or above for a combined total of twelve months.	15/02/23 QSC	
Various	Pastoral Meeting changed to Annual Tutorial Meeting	17/5/23 RDC	
3.4	Policy for Transfer of a PGR from another University to YSJU – incorporation of previous stand-alone document into the CoP	17/5/23 RDC	
4.4	Clarification of responsibilities and process for change of supervisor	17/5/23 RDC	
7.11	Addition of section to set out process for returning from suspension of study	17/5/23 RDC	
8.1 & 9.2	Intervention in the event of overdue review/transfer meetings	17/5/23 RDC	
7	Addition of leave of absence for maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave	28/6/23 AB	
8.2.5	PGR's written work for first progress review meeting to be submitted through Turnitin	7/2/24 RDC	
Various	Incorporation of new PGR School into processes etc.	15/5/24 RDC	
4.1.4, 8.2.4 & 9.4.3	Review and transfer chairs to be on supervisor register and have completed mandatory training for PGR assessors. Training to be completed every three years if not carried out PGR assessment.	15/5/24 RDC	

Various	Wording of 'termination' changed to 'enforced withdrawal'.	15/5/24 RDC	
4	Addition of supervision by collaborative partners	15/5/24 RDC	
6	Change of terminology from attendance monitoring to engagement	17/9/24 QSC Chair's Action	
19	Addition of section on Collaborative Provision	17/9/24 QSC Chair's Action	
18	Amendments to requirements for PhD by Published Work	18/9/24 RDC	
Various	Change in process from Registry to PGR School as appropriate	September 2024	
3.4	Removal of option to transfer study without a supervisor and addition of expectation that the PGR will continue new research at YSJU.	5/2/25 RDC	
Various	Updated links, terminology and structures, including introduction of the Student Hub	August 2025	
Various	Introduction of MRes programmes	August 2025	
Various	No AI notetaking software to be used during meetings for supervision, tutorial, review, transfer, UAPP or examination. No audio/video recordings to be made of meetings other than under the Policy for Recording of Oral Examinations.	August 2025	
3.3	Change to Bench Fee levels	7/5/25 RDC	
4.3.1	Addition of Student Charter	7/5/25 RDC	
4.4	Updated process and reasons for Change in Supervisor	7/5/25 RDC	
8	Review process refined and clarified particularly in relation to potential outcomes	7/5/25 RDC	
10	Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure refined and clarified	7/5/25 RDC	
18.2	Published work to be available in the English language	7/5/25 RDC	
18.3	PhD by Published Work not eligible to those already registered elsewhere for a PhD or professional doctorate degree, or already in possession of a PhD	7/5/25 RDC	