



**THE CODE OF PRACTICE  
FOR  
RESEARCH DEGREES  
  
2018–19**

**Approved by Senate August 2008**

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Aim of the Code of Practice

This Code of Practice provides a framework of procedures and practices to support research degree candidates and their supervisors, and to assist UEA in achieving its strategic commitments. Application of the key principles ([see section 4](#)) is mandatory. The Code is accompanied by a series of [Research Degree Policy Documents](#), which set out in greater detail some of the policies and procedures referred to in this document ([see Appendix B](#)).

### 2. Framework for Quality Assurance of Research Degrees at UEA

The University's [Learning and Teaching Committee \(LTC\)](#) is responsible to the Senate for ensuring and enhancing the quality of UEA's research degree provision. It does so within a formal framework in which the Postgraduate Research Executive makes decisions relating to postgraduate research programmes and then reports to the LTC.

The Postgraduate Research Executive is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and involves the [Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes](#) (Vice-Chair) and [Faculty Associate Deans for Postgraduate Research](#). Professional support is provided by the [Postgraduate Research Service](#). Considerable authority and responsibility for the management of research degrees is delegated to Faculties, Affiliated Graduate Schools<sup>1</sup>, Schools and Institutes<sup>2</sup>.

Policies and procedures relating to research degrees at UEA are also set out in the [Regulations](#) for research degrees and [Instructions to Examiners](#). Additional information and guidance regarding policy and procedure in relation to research degrees at UEA is available from [the Postgraduate Research Service](#) and on the UEA website at: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/pgresearch>.

### 3. Research Degrees

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) defines a research degree as follows:

*A research-based higher degree is a postgraduate programme comprising a research component (including a requirement to produce original work) that is larger than any accompanying taught component when measured by student effort.*

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<sup>1</sup> Graduate Schools that are currently affiliated are the Norwich Bioscience Institutes (NBI) Graduate School and the University of Suffolk Graduate School.

<sup>2</sup> The use of the term Institutes in this document refers to the John Innes Centre, The Sainsbury Laboratory, the Earlham Institute and the Quadram Institute Bioscience

All research degrees must follow this pattern and abide by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter B11 Research Degrees. In addition, the taught components of professional doctorates ([ClinPsyD](#), [EdPsyD](#), [ProfD](#) and [EdD](#)) are managed and reviewed in accordance with management of and reviews for similar provision for postgraduate taught students.

The various degrees of '[Masters by Research](#)' (LLM, MA, and MSc by Research) are research degrees, assessed by an oral examination of the thesis.

From 2017/18, the Master of Research (MRes) degree also meets the HESA definition for a research degree (with 80 credits of taught element and 100 credits of research dissertation element). The MRes is governed by the [Common Masters Framework Regulations](#) and is administered by the University's [Learning and Teaching Service](#), with admissions supported by the Postgraduate Taught Admissions team in the Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing Division.

#### **4. Key Principles for Research Degree Supervision**

The following principles **must** be followed:

Schools and Institutes should:

- ensure that the admissions process is handled in a fair and consistent manner, in line with equal opportunities, University policies and the PGR Admissions Framework, and that there is sufficient evidence of an applicant's ability to undertake a research degree, including [English language proficiency](#), before any offer is made.
- ensure that students (hereafter referred to as research degree candidates) know where to find the [Regulations](#) and procedures for the research degree for which they are registered as well as more general student regulations and procedures.
- provide research degree candidates with clear and accurate information about their entitlements, and what is required and expected of them, as well as appropriate information about the academic and social environment of the University.
- provide research degree candidates with information about assessment processes and procedures.
- ensure that each research degree candidate has a supervisory team comprising a minimum of two research active teachers, one of whom is designated the primary supervisor.
- ensure continuity of supervision and for making appropriate arrangements to provide supervisory cover in the event of staff absence.
- monitor the quality of supervision and ensure that any problems that are identified are dealt with in a timely manner.

- designate a senior member of staff who is responsible, in the first instance, for helping to resolve conflicts around supervision.
- collect research degree candidate feedback on the quality of supervision and learning resources and use it to evaluate the School/Institutes' research degree provision, for monitoring and consideration by the Faculty.
- ensure that formal reviews of student progress take place, including a formal report by the supervisory team and the research degree candidate completed on an annual basis.

Supervisors should:

- take responsibility for ensuring that they receive appropriate training in relation to their supervisory role and attend continuing professional development sessions every three years in order to continue supervising.
- respond to the research degree candidate's written work in a timely manner.

Research degree candidates should:

- **either** undertake 10 [Personal and Professional Development \(PPD\)](#) training credits per year (pro rata for part-time candidates) **or** comply with a [Training Pathway](#), as specified by their Faculty, Graduate School or Institute. Compliance with a Training Pathway is required for candidates registering on or after 1 October 2017.
- familiarise themselves with the [Regulations](#) and procedures for the research degree for which they are registered as well as more general student regulations and procedures.
- keep a record of supervisory meetings and the advice of their supervisors.
- be aware that they have the right, if necessary, to request a change to their primary supervisor or any other member of their supervisory team. Such a request will normally be met (insofar as it is practicable and any contracted terms and conditions allow).

Research degree candidates and supervisors should:

- treat supervision as a professional relationship, guided by principles of intellectual and interpersonal integrity, fairness, respect, clarity about roles and responsibilities, student autonomy and working in the best interests of the research degree candidate.
- maintain sufficient regular contact to inform and monitor the progress of the research. For full-time candidates this should include a minimum of eight supervisory meetings per year (including three formal progress review meetings). For part-time candidates this should include a minimum of four supervisory meetings per year (including two progress review meetings).

- carry out formal reviews of student progress, including a formal report by the supervisory team and the research degree candidate on an annual basis.
- be aware that they are jointly responsible for addressing potential conflicts of interest - or any breakdown in the supervisory relationship - in a reasonable and polite manner.

## CODE OF PRACTICE

### 1. Admissions

#### a) Pre-admission and Promotional Materials

Faculties, Schools and Institutes should ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place for monitoring the accuracy of information in pre-admission and promotional materials.

#### b) Requirements for Admission

The [Regulations](#) for research degrees set out the admissions requirements for candidates.

Admission of candidates who are members of staff or candidates who are relatives of members of staff must be approved by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes on the recommendation of the Head of the School of Study or Chair of the NBI Graduate School Executive (see [Section 6/Appendix A](#)).

#### c) Admission Processes

Each Faculty must have approved admission procedures which:

- ensure that only appropriately qualified and/or prepared candidates are admitted onto research programmes;
- include, where appropriate, mechanisms for assessing candidate qualifications and preparedness including professional or other work experience where a prospective candidate lacks a first degree and/or a taught postgraduate award;
- ensure that applicants with disabilities are not disadvantaged nor debarred by the criteria and procedures used for selecting research degree candidates, that appropriate support is offered and available at any interview and that, for applicants with disabilities who are offered a place, any support needs are identified in a timely and effective way;
- ensure that the topic identified is appropriate for a research degree, that a sufficient level and volume of expertise is available (both internal and external to the University) to support and assess the candidate, and that sufficient facilities and resources are available to ensure the project can be completed in a timely fashion;
- beyond the basic screening of applications, involve the judgement of more than one member of research-active academic staff with relevant expertise in making admissions decisions;
- ensure that references are taken up and used in the admissions decision.

#### d) English Language Requirements and Equivalency of Qualifications

Schools and Institutes are responsible for ensuring that candidates are admitted with an appropriate level of English Language competency in line with the [University English Language Requirements](#) set out in the University prospectus and the

Calendar. Those in Schools and Institutes with responsibility for research degree admissions must satisfy themselves that the English language attainment of candidates is such that they can be expected to cope with all aspects of their programme, including examination and any health and safety requirements.

#### e) Offers of Admission

Schools and Institutes must ensure that the information provided to the Postgraduate Research Service for the offer letter to research degree candidates is accurate. Offers of admission should set out, in writing, the following terms for admission:

- the programme of study, the normal duration of study, and total fees, including any other charges to be levied;
- a summary of the resources, including initial facilities and training, that it is anticipated will be provided for the candidate;
- supervisory arrangements and the name of the primary supervisor;
- requirements and conditions of any sponsor;
- an overview of the research degree candidate's responsibilities regarding academic performance, attendance, formal course-based training, progress, contact, registration, and any other matters;
- clarification of where and when further information will be provided concerning University regulations and procedures, health and safety and induction.

The applicant's agreement should be sought to the terms set out in the offer of admission prior to registration. The research degree candidate and Faculty, School or Institute each have a responsibility to adhere to the original intent of the agreed offer of admission.

## 2. Approval of Research Projects

#### a) Prior to Admission

A sufficiently clear outline of the proposal should be agreed with the research degree candidate prior to admission to ensure that the School or Institute can satisfy itself that:

- there is appropriate expertise available to the School or Institute to supervise and assess the candidate;
- there are appropriate facilities and sufficient resources available to enable the candidate to carry out their work;
- there will be sufficient related research activity in the School or Institute to provide a demonstrably research-active environment for the candidate; and
- the proposal is a suitable basis for embarking on a research degree project.

#### b) Following Registration

As part of the induction process, there will be an Initial Meeting between the research degree candidate and the primary supervisor within three weeks of registration at which the proposed Probationary Review panel and meeting date should be



identified. The role of the supervisory team members and their percentage weighting should be clarified at this meeting.

It is the joint responsibility of the candidate and the supervisory team to agree at the Initial Meeting the research topic, a provisional working title that is appropriate to the degree, the working objectives of the project and a timetable of activity over the Period of Study. The candidate and supervisory team should also discuss any ethical approval requirements for the research project at the Initial Meeting.

A training needs analysis meeting should be held within 8 weeks of initial registration and should involve the candidate and at least two members of their supervisory team. Where a candidate intends to comply with a [Training Pathway](#), the results of this analysis, along with the relevant Training Pathway documentation, should be used to prepare an initial [Personal Development Plan](#) following this template which will be reviewed throughout the candidate's registration period, including at every [Annual Progress Review meeting](#). The first Annual Progress Review meeting normally occurs in the eighth month after initial registration for full-time students or the twentieth month for part-time students.

### **3. Research Degree Candidate Information and Induction**

Each School or Institute is responsible for arranging induction and orientation for new research degree candidates.

Induction programmes will reflect the local research environment of the subject area, but Schools and Institutes should ensure that research degree candidates are informed about:

- the nature of the postgraduate research degree, issues that research degree candidates typically face during the course of their studies, and sources of guidance in the event of difficulties;
- clear guidance on what is acceptable and not acceptable research conduct, in line with the [UEA Guidelines on Good Practice in Research](#) and those of funders and other relevant professional bodies;
- UEA's registration, enrolment, [appeals and complaints procedures](#), assessment requirements, plagiarism and [research misconduct procedures](#), and [research degree Regulations](#);
- detailed information on the level of facilities which are available to the candidate, e.g. photocopying, access to IT, library resources, funding to attend conferences and how to access it, individual or shared workspace and consumables;
- relevant health and safety and other legislative information;
- University information on student welfare and UEA's learning support infrastructure;
- supervision arrangements, including evaluation, monitoring and review procedures;
- relevant skills training programmes (both those available at UEA and the Norwich Bioscience Institutes and those that may be required);

- opportunities that exist for meeting other research degree candidates and staff and to broaden knowledge through seminars, conferences, forums, etc., both within and outside the candidates' immediate study area;
- School or Institute working accommodation, [the Student Support Service](#) and the facilities of [the UEA Students' Union](#);
- opportunities to discuss progress outside the supervisory team;
- for research degree candidates who registered prior to 30 September 2015, if the School has adopted the transfer process, normal arrangements for transfer panels within the School;
- for research degree candidates registering on or after 1 October 2015, the arrangements for [Probationary Review Meetings](#) for candidates enrolled on the MPhil, PhD, Doctor of Medicine (MD), and Masters by Research (MA(R), MSc(R) and LLM(R)) programmes;
- opportunities for student representation (an ongoing activity).

#### **4. Health and Safety Information**

Where advanced study and research involves the research degree candidate in potentially hazardous environments within the University and/or the Institutes, such as a laboratory, the School or Institute must ensure that the candidate receives formal instruction about health and safety implications, rules and requirements before the candidate starts work in that environment.

The School or Institute must record that health and safety training has been provided in the annual report on the candidate's progress. In subject areas where fieldwork or placements are undertaken, a risk assessment must be carried out and the School or Institute must arrange for appropriate training and advice to be provided on the potential problems and dangers of such work. The responsibility for giving training and advice to the research degree candidate may be delegated by the School or Institute to the supervisory team.

#### **5. Ethics and Research Integrity**

All staff and students have a responsibility to observe the highest standards of conduct in their research and research degree candidates should discuss research integrity and practice with their supervisory team in the first instance.

Further information is available in Research Degree Policy Document 11 '[Research Ethical Approval Framework](#)' and on the University's [Research Integrity web pages](#), including the following key documents:

The University's 'Guidelines for Good Practice in Research' outline what is expected of all its researchers. This includes guidance and policy relating to professional standards, data management (including storage and disposal), publication of results and the exploitation and protection of Intellectual property. The University's Research Ethics Policy expands upon the 'Guidelines for Good Practice in Research' with respect to Research Ethics.

The 'Ethics Review Appeal Procedures' allow the University's staff and students proposing projects or revisions to on-going projects to formally raise concerns about the results of the ethical review process or circumstances relating to this.

Any proposed research and innovation activity and acceptance of any associated external funding must be consistent with the University's 'Policy for Approving the Integrity of UEA Research and Enterprise Related Activities and Funding'.

The University takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct, and will investigate any such allegation sensitively and in confidence, in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Good Practice in Research' and the University's [Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct Made Against Students](#).

**6. Category A and Staff Candidates for Research Degrees**

Candidates for research degrees will be designated as Category A (including members of the University's academic staff or a staff member at an affiliated Graduate School and such other candidates as Senate shall determine) or Category B. This classification will be made at the point of admission, before any transfer panel or examination and reviewed at each annual review of progress.

The admission, registration, annual review and examination of candidates who are members of the University's academic staff or research staff at an affiliated Graduate School are governed by special regulations ([see Appendix A](#)).

**7. Registration of Research Degree Candidates**

a) Periods of Study and Periods of Registration

The Regulations for research degrees divide the total Period of Registration for the degree into two parts. The first (the 'Period of Study') is the period of advanced study and research and thesis preparation and submission under the supervision of a team of academic staff. The second (the 'Registration-Only Period') is the time which remains between the end of the Period of Study (by which time research must have been **completed**) and the final deadline by which the thesis must be submitted, during which period supervision related to thesis preparation and submission will be provided. The **Period of Study** together with the **Registration-Only Period** is called the **Period of Registration**.

For full-time candidates these periods are as follows:

	Period of Study	Registration Only Period	Total Period of Registration
<a href="#">Doctor of Philosophy</a>	3 years	1 year	4 years
<a href="#">Doctor of Philosophy (with rotation year)</a>	4 years	-	4 years

<a href="#">Doctorate in Clinical Psychology</a>	3 years	-	3 years
<a href="#">Doctorate in Educational Psychology</a> <sup>3</sup>	3 years	-	3 years
<a href="#">Doctor of Medicine</a> <sup>4</sup>	2 years	1 year	3 years
<a href="#">Master of Philosophy</a>	2 years	1 year	3 years
<a href="#">Masters degrees by research</a>	1 year	1 year	2 years

For part-time candidates these periods are as follows:

	Period of Study	Registration Only Period	Total Period of Registration
<a href="#">Doctor of Philosophy</a>	6 years	1 year	7 years
<a href="#">Doctor of Philosophy by Publication</a>	6 – 12 months	-	6 – 12 months
<a href="#">Doctor of Education</a>	5 years	1 year <sup>5</sup>	6 years
<a href="#">Master of Education</a>	2 years 6 months	1 year <sup>5</sup>	3 years 6 months
<a href="#">Doctor of Medicine</a> <sup>6</sup>	2 years	-	2 years
<a href="#">Professional Doctorate</a> <sup>7</sup>	5 years	1 year	6 years
<a href="#">Master of Philosophy</a>	4 years	1 year	5 years
<a href="#">Masters degrees by research</a>	2 years	1 year	3 years

<sup>3</sup> An exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Theoretical Educational Psychology will be available for those candidates successfully completing 120 credits of taught modules.

<sup>4</sup> Full-time route available to Doctor of Medicine candidates registering from 1 January 2018 onwards.

<sup>5</sup> For Master of Education (MEd) and Doctor of Education (EdD) candidates registered before 30 September 2014 part-time study will be at 0.5 FTE and there will be a total Period of Study and Registration of 2 years for the MEd and 4 years for the EdD. For candidates registered after 1 October 2014 and before 30 September 2016 part-time study will be at 0.5 FTE. There will be a Registration-Only Period of 1 year and a total Period of Registration of 3 years for the MEd and 5 years for the EdD. For MEd and EdD candidates registering on or after 1 October 2016 part-time study will be at 0.4 FTE and Periods of Study and Registration as in the table above.

<sup>6</sup> For MD candidates registering from 1 January 2018 onwards part-time study will be at 0.5 FTE. There will be a Period of Study of 4 years and Registration-Only Period of 1 year; a total Period of Registration of 5 years.

<sup>7</sup> Part-time study for the Professional Doctorate (ProfD) will be at 0.4 FTE. An exit award of Professional Masters (ProfM) will be available for those candidates successfully completing 180 credits of taught modules in Year 1 and Year 2.

## Period of Study

The Period of Study is the time in which the research work for the degree is undertaken and in which it is desirable that the thesis be submitted. The degree and the mode of study determine the length of the Period of Study. Tuition fees are payable for each year of the Period of Study at the [Home](#) or [International](#) rate.

Where a research degree candidate's sponsorship provides for a longer Period of Study (for example some Research Council doctoral training partnerships) this can be applied for by the standard [research student concession procedure](#). In such cases the Total Period of Registration will not normally be changed and the candidate will therefore either have no Registration-Only Period or a reduced Registration-Only Period.

## Registration-Only Period

Research should have been completed by the end of the Period of Study. If the thesis has not been submitted by the end of the Period of Study the regulations for **some** research degrees permit one more year within which to complete and submit, as set out in the table above. [Continuation fees](#) are payable for this 'Registration-Only' year, and any subsequent years of Registration-Only, in accordance with the policy set out in Research Degree Policy Document 2 '[Continuation Fees](#)'. During the Registration-Only Period, supervision related to thesis preparation and submission will be provided and should be agreed by the candidate and supervisor.

## Changes in Registration

Any proposed change or interruption to registration requires prior approval by the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, acting on behalf of the Head of School or the Chair of the NBI Graduate School Executive, or by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes, acting on behalf of the Postgraduate Research Executive.

### b) Transfers from MPhil to PhD

***For research degree candidates registering prior to 30 September 2015 only, where the School of registration operates the transfer process i.e. all Schools in the Faculties of Social Sciences (SSF), Arts and Humanities (HUM) and Medicine and Health Sciences (FMH), and the Schools of Mathematics (MTH) and Computing (CMP).***

Where candidates register for an MPhil but wish to transfer to a PhD, approval will be given only after the candidate has provided evidence of being able to perform at the higher level and of being able to complete the PhD within the required period. The transfer procedure involves withdrawal from registration from the original degree and re-admission as a PhD candidate.

The transfer involves the preparation of a written progress report from the research degree candidate (including an up-to-date completion schedule, together with whatever additional documentation the Faculty may require) and a meeting to assess PhD potential. A specially constituted transfer panel, approved by the School or Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, will then assess the recommendation for re-admission as a PhD candidate on the basis of the written report from the

candidate and an interview with, or presentation from, the candidate. The panel will consider any relevant issues regarding facilities or resources. It should be noted that a panel decision to re-admit as a PhD candidate cannot be interpreted as an indication of the likelihood of success at the final examination stage.

The transfer panel will have a membership of at least two teachers<sup>8</sup> in the University. No more than one member of the candidate's supervisory team may be a member of that candidate's transfer panel, and where practical that should not be the primary supervisor. The transfer panel will make a recommendation to the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research regarding the transfer of the candidate to the PhD registration. If a panel cannot agree a recommendation, or for any other reason a further opinion is required, the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research may approve the appointment of additional members to the panel.

If the recommendation is not to transfer the candidate, the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, on the advice of the supervisory team, may permit a second attempt to transfer. In exceptional cases, more than two attempts to transfer, or an attempt to transfer a candidate during their Registration-Only Period, may be permitted with the prior approval of the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes through the [research student concessions process](#). Ordinarily, it is the University's expectation that the first attempt at transfer will be made, irrespective of standing, at least six months prior to the end of the MPhil Period of Study.

Decisions or judgements of Schools or Institutes regarding transfer from MPhil to PhD are subject to appeal under the [Academic Appeals and Complaints Procedure](#).

c) Probationary period and review

**For research degree candidates registering on or after 1 October 2015 only**

Probationary periods have been introduced for all research degree candidates registering from 1 October 2015 onwards on the following programmes: Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Medicine (MD), Master of Arts by Research (MA(R)), Master of Science by Research (MSc(R)) and Master of Laws by Research (LLM(R)).

During their first year of registration (first two years for part-time students), the status of PhD students as doctoral candidates is probationary and the annual review meeting normally held in month 8 for full-time candidates (or month 20 for part-time candidates), includes a [Probationary Review Meeting](#) to review their status. The Probationary Review Meeting will involve the preparation of a Research Report and a Training Record (as specified by the Faculty) and a presentation from the candidate. The meeting will consist of the candidate, the supervisory team and either one or two Internal Assessors, including the panel's chair, as appointed by the Head of School/Chair of NBI Graduate School Executive (or their nominee) in conjunction

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<sup>8</sup> For this purpose, a teacher in the University will include all Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors, UEA-based externally funded Research Fellows, senior contract research staff on indefinite contracts and, subject to certain conditions (see 8 b) below), holders of current Honorary appointments at the University who are actively engaged in the profession of their discipline.

with the supervisory team. The Internal Assessor(s) will be independent of the supervisory team.

As part of the [Probationary Review Meeting](#), the Internal Assessor(s) should agree a joint recommendation with the supervisory team on the candidate's probationary status. Where progress is not judged to be satisfactory or the Internal Assessor and the supervisory team do not agree in their recommendations, the candidate will be warned promptly in a formal letter from the Head of School (or nominee) that they may be asked to withdraw from the University. The letter will include an action plan setting out measurable goals to be achieved and the timescale for achieving these will be agreed and a Second Probationary Review Meeting will be scheduled.

The Second Probationary Review Meeting must involve the research degree candidate and should, where possible, involve all members of the candidate's supervisory team and the Internal Assessor. As a minimum the meeting must involve the candidate, at least one member of the candidate's supervisory team and a senior member of University academic staff agreed by the Head of School (or their nominee), which may be the Internal Assessor. Where the candidate is unable or refuses to be present then this will be taken as an indication that [Fitness for Study](#) or Discipline procedures, as appropriate, should be considered as alternatives.

The Internal Assessor and supervisory team should reconsider the candidate's progress and agree a joint recommendation on the candidate's probationary status. If progress is also not satisfactory at the Second Probationary Review Meeting the candidate will normally be required to withdraw from the programme.

If the Internal Assessor and the supervisory team do not agree in their recommendations following the Second Probationary Review Meeting and consensus cannot be established by the Head of School (or nominee), the Head of School (or nominee) shall consider the evidence provided through the probationary review process and form a view as to whether there is sufficient evidence on which to base a decision regarding the candidate's probationary status.

Where there is insufficient evidence or if for any other reason the Head of School (or nominee) needs a further opinion they shall recommend to the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes the appointment of an additional Internal Assessor who shall review the available evidence, meeting with the candidate where necessary, in order to make a recommendation to the Head of School (or nominee).

The Head of School (or nominee) shall act at all times in accordance with Research Degree Policy Document 12 '[Guidelines for Probationary Review](#)'.

Decisions or judgements of Schools or Institutes regarding research degree candidates' probationary status are subject to appeal under the University's [Academic Appeals and Complaints Procedure](#).

The procedure and criteria for Probationary Review Meetings are explained further in Research Degree Policy Document 12 '[Guidelines for Probationary Review](#)', available from the Postgraduate Research Service and on the PGR website.

d) Extensions and Interruptions

The Regulations for research degrees may permit Schools/Institutes to approve adjustments to the Period of Study for individual candidates, for example through interruptions, extensions or reductions. Exceptionally, the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes acting on behalf of the Postgraduate Research Executive may approve other amendments.

The procedure and criteria for such concessions are explained in Research Degree Policy Document 1 '[Extensions to Period of Study and Registration-Only Period for Research Degrees](#)', available from the Postgraduate Research Service and on the PGR website.

e) Communications from the University

You are deemed to have received all communications sent by the University within 48 hours of the communication being sent, whether that is by email or by post. We will primarily use your University email address to contact you, but may additionally use any other email addresses that you provide to us or a contact postal address depending on the circumstances. For students in the NBI or Suffolk Graduate Schools we may, in addition, use your NBI or University of Suffolk email address.

Where we have it clearly on record that you are on an approved period of annual leave or other authorised absence we will make appropriate allowance for this in expecting any response from you. Failing to read emails will not be considered an acceptable explanation for failure to respond to communications, unless there is evidence of valid extenuating circumstances.

f) Full-time research degree candidates and paid employment

Full-time registered research degree candidates are not normally expected to undertake more than an average of 6 hours paid employment per week, up to a maximum of 180 hours per academic year. Candidates should seek the approval of their supervisory team for any paid work undertaken.

g) Monitoring a research degree candidate's timetable for completion

Supervisors and research degree candidates are responsible for ensuring that there is a regular review of progress and plans for completion. A formal report on research and training progress must be made to School/Institute Directors of Postgraduate Research as part of the annual monitoring report.

Supervisors should inform School/Institute Directors at the earliest opportunity should concerns about a candidate's timetable for completion arise.

h) Progression and Completion Rates

School and Institute Directors of Postgraduate Research, Graduate School Executives and the NBI Graduate School Executive should consider progress and



completion rates, on an annual basis as a minimum, and as part of the monitoring of the annual review of students' progress.

## **8. Supervision**

### a) The Student-Supervisor Relationship

The relationship between a research degree candidate and their supervisory team, and in particular their primary supervisor, is important to the successful and satisfactory progress of a candidate. It is important that the relationship allows supervisors and candidates to be able to criticise each other's work constructively.

A summary of advice of good practice for research degree candidates and their supervisors is contained in Research Degree Policy Document 7 '[Guide to Good Supervisory Practice](#)'.

### b) Appointment of Supervisory Teams

The Head of the School or the Chair of the NBI Graduate School Executive is responsible for the appointment of supervisors. Each research degree candidate must have a nominated supervisory team of at least two research-active<sup>9</sup> teachers in the University (see footnote 8 in [Section 7](#) for the definition of 'teacher'). The membership of supervisory teams of those who are not defined as a teacher in the University will only be with the approval of the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes.

Primary supervisors will normally have gained a doctoral degree, or have equivalent experience of research, and must be active researchers.

There may be an existing agreement at institutional level between UEA and the proposed supervisor's home institution regarding supervision of UEA research degree candidates. Where this is not the case, if a School or Institute seeks to appoint an external supervisor, including holders of honorary appointments, who has not acted previously in this capacity at the University, a form (covering issues such as the supervisory experience and training of the proposed supervisor) must be submitted to the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes. If the proposal is accepted, a memorandum of understanding detailing the level and nature of supervision which the supervisor is expected to contribute (and any associated payment) must then be signed by the appointee on taking up the position. Wherever such arrangements constitute part of the formal supervision of the research degree candidate, they should be contractually enforceable.

External supervisors, including holders of Honorary appointments, may only be appointed as primary supervisors with the prior permission of the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes.

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<sup>9</sup> The decision as to whether a member of staff is 'research-active' will be made by the Head of School / Chair of the NBI Graduate School Executive, and will reflect the relative workload allocation of activities related to research. This decision is independent from UEA academic staff contractual status as Academic, Teaching and Scholarship (ATS) or Academic, Teaching and Research (ATR).

The role of the supervisory team is, collectively, to provide candidates for research degrees with academic and pastoral guidance as they pursue advanced study and research. The potential for conflict of interest, either between members of the supervisory team or between the team and the candidate, should be considered before appointments are made.

Fixed-term contract research staff may be members of supervisory teams but they may not be primary supervisors without the prior permission of the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes.

c) Role of primary supervisor

The primary supervisor is responsible for the overall management and direction of the research degree candidate's degree in addition to issues relating to the candidate's registration and progress.

The primary supervisor will normally have a contracted period of service at least as long as the expected Period of Registration of the candidate. The primary supervisor will be the line of communication with the University.

The primary supervisor's name must be notified in writing to the research degree candidate in the offer letter for the degree in question.

d) Roles of other supervisory team members

The second supervisor (and in some cases additional supervisory team members) will be appointed to contribute their specific expertise in assisting the primary supervisor throughout the development of the research degree candidate's research degree. The second supervisor may be required to offer specialist advice, but whilst they should be knowledgeable in the area of research study, they are not required to have the specialist subject expertise of the primary supervisor.

Membership of a supervisory team may change depending on the direction taken by the research project. When creating a new team or considering any changes to a supervisory team, it may be helpful to consider the gender balance of the team. Requests to add a team member where existing research degree candidates or supervisors wish to create a more diverse team should be supported where appropriate. This is in line with the University's commitment to promoting equality and diversity and membership of the [Athena SWAN Charter](#).

Members of a supervisory team are not expected to meet a candidate with the same frequency as the primary supervisor, nor are they expected to read all of the candidate's work, but the team should meet with the candidate a minimum of three times per year.

The balance of responsibility for the candidate's day-to-day supervision should be negotiated between supervisors, in consultation with the candidate, as the research progresses. The School/Institute should ensure that the roles of the supervisors are clear to supervisors and research degree candidates.

e) External supervisors / collaborating supervisors

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to appoint an external supervisor, for example, for collaborations within [Doctoral Training Partnerships](#) or with industry partners, or where a current supervisor has left the University. The primary supervisor should however be based at the University; exceptions to this will require the approval of the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes. External supervisors are expected to have comparable research experience and should fulfil the same selection criteria that are applied to the appointment of supervisors at the University.

Where a formal collaborative research degree arrangement has been approved between the University and an external institution, supervisors must be appointed at both institutions. The collaborating supervisor should take responsibility for the day-to-day supervision of the research degree candidate and their research programme whilst they are in attendance at the external organisation.

f) Mentoring and Support for Supervisors

Members of staff in their probationary period of appointment will not normally be appointed as a primary supervisor. The Head of the School or Chair of the NBI Graduate School Executive may permit staff with at least one year's experience of supervision prior to appointment to supervise in their first year of appointment.

It is expected that members of staff new to doctoral supervision will first engage in supervision as a second supervisor or a member of a supervisory team, before moving on after a sufficient period of experience to primary supervision.

A member of staff should not normally act as primary supervisor to more than six research degree candidate at the same time, and never more than ten without the prior permission of their Faculty Associate Dean. Any member of staff wishing to act as primary supervisor to more than six research degree candidates (up to the maximum of ten), must have the written permission of their Head of School or Director of the Institute who is responsible for making sure that the member of staff concerned is not overburdened by other duties.

The Head of the School or Director of the Institute is responsible for ensuring that new members of staff who are members of supervisory teams are identified for support and, that existing members of staff who are in need of support, or whose supervisory load needs to be adjusted, are identified through the annual review of students' progress ([see Section 9](#)).

g) Supervisor training

All newly-appointed members of staff with responsibility for supervision, and existing members of staff taking on their first supervisory role, are required to attend the appropriate programme of development for new supervisors.

In order to continue supervising research degree candidates, experienced supervisors are expected to attend continuing professional development sessions in relation to their supervisory role every three years.

#### h) Absence and Departure of Supervisors

Any absence of the primary supervisor longer than eight weeks, or any case of a shorter absence where the ready availability of supervision could be in doubt, must be dealt with by the School or Institute in a timely manner.

The School or Institute must establish whether or not the supervisor will be able to communicate effectively and appropriately with the research degree candidate during the period of any absence. If this cannot be guaranteed, a temporary or new primary supervisor will be appointed, such appointment to be formally approved and recorded via the School's and Institute's usual mechanisms, and the candidate should be notified in writing of the name of the person appointed. In the case of a primary supervisor being on study leave and unavailable to continue supervision, a temporary or new primary supervisor should always be appointed. The candidate will be informed and notified in writing by their School or Institute prior to the absence of the primary supervisor.

If a primary supervisor leaves the University, a new primary supervisor will normally be appointed. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. where a research degree candidate is near the end of their Period of Study or there is not a suitably qualified primary supervisor available) when the Head of the School or Chair of NBI Graduate School Executive decides that it is in the best interests of all involved for the departing primary supervisor to remain on the supervisory team, the composition of the supervisory team should be reviewed in accordance with the policies set out above for the composition of supervisory teams, and for appointment and contracting of external supervisors.

In instances where there is to be a change in primary supervisor, whatever the time period involved, proper handover arrangements should be in place.

#### i) Extent of Supervision

A distinction should be made between informal contact and supervisory meetings. Informal contact may include emails, impromptu discussions or brief telephone conversations about specific issues. Whilst invaluable in maintaining contact with a research degree candidate these do not constitute formal supervision. Supervisory meetings should be scheduled, uninterrupted time in an appropriate environment.

The frequency, purpose and method of arranging supervisory meetings and other communications should be agreed by the supervisory team and research degree candidate, and these arrangements should be kept under review.

Notes of actions agreed between the supervisory team and candidate must be kept to inform the annual review of students' progress ([see also Section 9](#)). The dates of supervisory meetings should be recorded on the annual review of progress forms.

j) Frequency of Supervision

The frequency of supervisory meetings will be determined by the nature of the research that is undertaken and the stage of development of the research degree candidate's research but a normal expectation would be for such meetings to take place every month for full-time candidates. All disciplines should, however, expect full-time candidates to meet with their supervisors at least eight times per year - including formal progress review meetings ([see Section 9](#)).

The meeting schedule for part time candidates should be agreed at the beginning of the degree, but candidates registered on a part time basis are expected to meet with their supervisor at least four times per year, including formal progress review meetings.

There will be an annual review of progress and two other formal progress meetings included in the minimum of eight formal supervisory meetings. Formal progress review meetings for full-time candidates will take place at a minimum frequency of once every four months and for part-time candidates once every six months during the entire Period of Registration, including both the Period of Study and the Registration-Only Period. (This applies to the period of the research project for professional doctorates.)

The intent is that most of these meetings will be held 'in person', though, with the agreement of all parties, use may be made of other effective forms of communication, such as telephone or video conferencing, internet telephony and other meeting software. A record will be kept of the outcomes of all progress review meetings.

Failure to attend the initial or other supervisory team meetings without good reason constitutes a breach of [General Regulation 13 'Attendance, engagement and progress'](#) and may lead to action under the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

k) Guidance and Feedback

The primary supervisor should arrange a meeting with the research degree candidate to establish the working relationship within three weeks of registration. This should include agreeing responsibilities and expectations as well as clarifying critical activities and dates. The candidate is the person responsible for conducting the research and writing the thesis.

The primary supervisor and other members of the supervisory team are expected to offer advice and guidance regularly, and to discuss the skills and employability training courses that the candidate should attend. The role of the supervisory team members should also be clarified at this meeting.

Formal feedback from candidates on the supervisory process and other aspects of the degree programme is incorporated within the Annual Review of Research Students' Progress. Comments from candidates on feedback will be monitored by the School and Faculty Graduate School Executive (or Institute and NBI Graduate School Executive) as part of the annual review of monitoring reports.

l) Registration-Only Period

The research degree candidate and supervisory team should meet within one month of entering the Registration-Only Period, to discuss resource requirements, a meeting schedule and other relevant arrangements. This discussion should be guided by the need to complete the study programme in a timely fashion. This meeting will update the schedule for the production of the constituent chapters of the thesis and review by the supervisory team, and set out any additional resources or facilities that may be required.

m) Post-viva period

The research degree candidate and supervisory team should meet shortly after the viva examination, to discuss any corrections or revisions requested by the examiners. Where the examiners have recommended that the candidate submits a revised thesis a meeting schedule and other relevant arrangements should be agreed to facilitate the completion of the corrections or revised thesis by the deadline specified. Formal progress review meetings for full-time candidates will take place at a minimum frequency of once every four months and for part-time candidates once every six months during the resubmission period.

n) Resolving Problems affecting Supervision

At any time in their research degree registration, a research degree candidate may request a change of a member of the supervisory team, including the primary supervisor. Such a request will normally be met (insofar as it is practicable and any contracted terms and conditions allow), though the decision to make such a change should not be taken lightly. Informal means of resolving problems ([see Section 14](#)) must have been exhausted and possible effects on study should be considered. If a change is to be requested, the candidate should inform the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research of the School/Institute in which they are registered, which will start the process.

While a candidate will be asked to indicate why they wish to make such a change, they will not be required to put the reason on the record (the reason can be supplied confidentially to the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes) and no formal record will be made of the reasons why such a change is requested. Procedures for lodging a formal complaint regarding supervisory arrangements can be found on the [PGR Service webpages](#) ([see also Section 14](#)).

## **9. Annual Review of Postgraduate Research Students' Progress**

a) Procedure for Reviewing Research Degree Candidate Progress

Each supervisory team is required by University regulations to complete the online [annual review process](#) each year including during any research degree candidate's Registration-Only Period (for some professional doctorates this requirement commences with the research project).

The core elements of the procedure for the management of progress of a research degree candidate are as follows:

- the process will involve a dialogue between the supervisory team and candidate and the report should be discussed between them before submission. The notes of action agreed between the supervisory team and candidate should be available to the candidate and team to inform the annual review;
- the dialogue between the candidate and supervisory team will focus upon specific as well as general questions to be answered in relation to the year's activity in an effort to pinpoint weaknesses and deal with potential problems before they become intractable;
- the process will include the candidate completing an online submission. This candidate's *submission* will take the form of a self-evaluation of work undertaken, training undertaken, the development of intellectual skills, progress towards meeting research goals and the success of the supervisory arrangements during the previous year;
- the supervisory team will, having considered the candidate's submission, address the same matters in its own written submission;
- the progress report is to include, in addition to the two written *submissions*, a schedule for completion of the thesis agreed by the candidate and supervisory team (and for candidates registering prior to 30 September 2015 if appropriate the timing of the transfer panel meeting);
- research degree candidates should be informed of their right to discuss their progress with the School or Institute designated responsible academic (such as a School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research) in a private meeting.

During their first year of registration (or equivalent for part-time candidates), the status of PhD, MPhil, MD and Masters by Research candidates is probationary and the first annual review (or equivalent for part-time candidates) includes the [Probationary Review Meeting](#) to consider their status.

#### b) Process for the Annual Review of Research Student Progress

The review of research degree candidates' progress will be monitored annually on a timetable approved by the Postgraduate Research Executive. The process for monitoring is as follows:

- Individual research degree candidate reports will be considered by the appropriate School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research or, in the case of staff candidates, Faculty / NBI Graduate School Executive, action determined, and a timetable for completion of action confirmed;
- The School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research will provide a summary report of the outcome of the Annual Review process to the Faculty / NBI Graduate School Executive for consideration;
- The summary report should include confirmation that the process has been completed for all candidates, including any action agreed where progress is not being maintained, a summary of issues arising from the Annual Review process (this may be appropriate minutes of committees and commentary on themes or specific issues), and a non-confidential statistical section indicating progress;

- Faculty / NBI Graduate School Executives will monitor and refer back to the School/Institute any issues of concern arising from the Annual Review process and any subsequent reports that the Review requires;
- Faculty / NBI Graduate School Executives will confirm completion of the process to the Postgraduate Research Executive (on behalf of LTC) and report on any issues or trends that might need to be considered by the University arising from the Annual Review process.

## **10. Skills and Employability Training**

The University is committed to the provision of skills and employability training for all research degree candidates, taking into account national standards including the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#) and the expectations of the Research Councils. All research degree candidates are expected to actively participate in the [training pathway programmes](#) as specified by their Faculties, Graduate Schools or Institutes, and supervisors are expected to support their candidates in developing their personal skills and employability.

Failure to engage with the training programmes provided and/or to accumulate the required [PPD credit](#) per year or to comply with Training Pathway requirements constitutes a breach of [General Regulation 13 'Attendance, engagement and progress'](#) and may lead to action under the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

## **11. Preparation and Submission of a Thesis**

### **a) Before Submitting the Thesis**

Candidates for research degrees should always consult their supervisory team before submitting a thesis for examination. However, within the limits to the timing of submissions set out in the [Regulations for their degree](#), the decision about precisely when to submit rests with the candidate.

The thesis title should normally be approved and the examiners appointed at least three months before the thesis is submitted. The thesis title is approved by the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, and examiners are appointed by either the Faculty Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research) or equivalent, or the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes. Appointment of examiners ([Section 12](#)) can be a lengthy process and delay in requesting the appointment of examiners may lead to delay in examination of the thesis.

### **b) Rules for the Form and Submission of Work**

There is no single definition that can adequately define the structure and content of a good thesis and general approval of the thesis by a supervisory team or primary supervisor should not be taken as a guarantee of its acceptability to the examiners. There are, however, rules about the form and submission of the thesis, including the use of work within the thesis which has formed part of solely and jointly authored



publications. These are set out in Research Degree Policy Document 3 '[Research Degrees: Submission, Presentation, Consultation and Borrowing of Theses](#)'.

There are also [Regulations](#) detailing the requirements for assessment attaching to particular postgraduate research awards. Research degree candidates should consult the appropriate [Regulations](#) prior to preparation of their thesis.

Specified word-limits exist for theses. These are published in the [Regulations](#) for each degree and candidates should consult these to ensure that their thesis is not too long.

Specific [Regulations](#), published in the Calendar, apply to the submission of theses for some research degrees submitted by candidates in the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing (Creative and Critical Writing; Literary Translation) and the School of Art, Media and American Studies (Professional Practice). Candidates should refer any queries regarding these specific Regulations to their School in the first instance.

Candidates should initially submit their thesis in electronic format and also submit two copies of the thesis in a secure soft binding sufficiently durable for the assessment process. The examiners will be sent the thesis in soft-bound format as standard but will be asked at appointment to notify the University if they would prefer to receive a hard copy of the thesis in electronic format. The candidate should also bring a soft-bound copy of the thesis to the oral examination for reference during the discussions.

No Pass List will be issued after successful assessment until the thesis has been resubmitted in the form outlined in Research Degree Policy Document 3 '[Research Degrees: Submission, Presentation, Consultation and Borrowing of Theses](#)' and the candidate has confirmed that no changes, other than any required by the examiners, have been made to any part of the thesis from that previously assessed. Where redaction of material from the thesis has been approved by the University, a copy of the redacted version of the thesis must also be submitted at the same time.

Two copies of the thesis are required of the candidate, one in electronic format and one in hard-bound format. The Pass List will not be issued until both the print version and electronic version of the thesis have been deposited with the University.

### c) Submission of the Thesis

The thesis should be submitted no later than the end of the Period of Registration as set out previously. If it appears likely that a deadline will not be met the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research should be consulted immediately. Submission of the thesis means submission of the finished thesis to the University and not a final draft to a supervisor for approval. Theses should be submitted to the [Postgraduate Research Service](#). Changes to the thesis after submission will only be approved in extremely limited circumstances and may be subject to a fee.

d) Confidentiality Restrictions and Restricted Access to the thesis (embargo)

The thesis is submitted to the examiners on the basis that they will treat the contents, and any issues relating to the candidature, as strictly confidential in the periods before, during and following the examination, until such stage as the work may be published in accordance with normal academic custom.

A thesis may be subject to a period of specific confidentiality restrictions because of industrial support for the research project, proprietary materials supplied under a Material Transfer Agreement, possible patents which may arise from research degree candidates' work, or for other reasons. The UEA policy on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) can be found at:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/7465906/Section+3+Intellectual+Property+Regulations.pdf>

A thesis may also need to have access restrictions (embargo) due to it containing third party copyright material, for the data protection of research subjects or because the candidate is in negotiations with a publisher regarding the commercial publication of (parts of) the thesis.

The default option following final submission of the thesis is that a thesis will be 'open access'. This means that an e-thesis will automatically be in the public domain via the University E-Theses Repository and the British Library's UK Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS), unless a candidate requests that a thesis is temporarily embargoed ('opt-out'). The decision whether to embargo the thesis should be made by the candidate themselves, following full discussion with their supervisory team and consideration of any external requirements. Partial embargoes are permitted within the Regulations, whereby the majority of full text is openly available and sections are embargoed (redacted) where necessary. Further guidance for candidates and supervisors is provided in the '[Guidance notes on Research Degree Thesis Deposit and Access](#)' available on [the PGR website](#).

Candidates must notify the [Postgraduate Research Service](#) of any confidentiality restrictions and/or if they wish to temporarily embargo the thesis on the [Research Degree Entry Form](#) when submitting their thesis.

Changes to the thesis after final submission of the electronic and hard-bound copies of the thesis will only be approved in very limited circumstances and may be subject to payment of a fee.

If a candidate's agreement with a sponsor or anyone else has specified that the examiners must undertake to keep confidential the work submitted to them for examination, the examiners should be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement regarding the contents of the thesis for the period of the examination and for any period thereafter for which restricted access may be granted. Candidates are asked to apply for this to be arranged when the appointment of examiners is requested.

The University is a designated public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act gives a general right of access to all information held by the University, including information held in the e-theses repository. As a matter of

normal practice we will only make thesis material available in accordance with the restrictions placed upon it. However, if someone specifically asks to see it, we must give them access unless the thesis qualifies for an exemption under the Act.

#### e) Plagiarism and the Certificate of Originality

It is the responsibility of the School or Institute to make the research degree candidate aware of the legal and ethical principles of originality and copyright.

To avoid charges of plagiarism or copyright infringement, the candidate must acknowledge clearly the use of a secondary source at the point it is used and obtain and acknowledge permission to reproduce published work.

Reference also needs to be made to contributions from other sources if the research has involved working with others in any way. When the thesis is submitted for examination, the candidate is required to complete a Certificate of Originality to cover these areas.

Plagiarism, intentional or not, may give rise to a charge of Misconduct in Research. Any such allegations will be handled in accordance with the [Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct Made Against Students](#).

## **12. Appointment of Examiners**

The procedures for the nomination and appointment of examiners are contained in Research Degree Policy Document 8 '[Code of Practice for the Examination of Research Degree Awards at UEA](#)':

- internal and external examiners are appointed by Faculty Associate Deans (Postgraduate Research) or equivalent, on behalf of the Postgraduate Research Executive, on the recommendation of the Head of School (or Chair of NBI Graduate School Executive). There shall be at least one external examiner. Members of a research degree candidate's supervisory team will not be appointed as an examiner;
- for Category A candidates (see [Section 6](#) and [Appendix A](#)), examiners are appointed by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes, on behalf of the Postgraduate Research Executive on the recommendation of the Head of School (or Chair of NBI Graduate School Executive). The examiners will be exclusively external and an Independent Chair will be appointed.

While a candidate cannot influence the choice of examiners, it is good practice to share freely with a candidate the information concerning the recommendation of examiners and to inform them on ratification of their appointment.

Once the thesis is submitted, the timing of the oral examination will depend on the availability of the examiners but should take place within three months. Exceptions and extension to this require approval by the Head of the Postgraduate Research Service (or nominee) for vivas taking place within four months or by the Academic

Director of Research Degree Programmes, on behalf of the Postgraduate Research Executive, for all other requests.

In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research) or equivalent may agree to an oral examination (viva) by video-conference. Video-conferencing should not be viewed as a routine alternative to a face-to-face viva and should only be arranged where there is no suitable alternative, for example where the candidate is unable to attend a viva at the University for health or visa reasons. Where an oral examination is held via video-conference an Independent Chair will be appointed, who will be responsible for ensuring that the candidate is not disadvantaged in any way compared to the standard face-to-face oral examination and that the '[Guidance on the use of videoconferencing or Skype \(or equivalent\) for an oral examination](#)' is followed.

Candidates should be assessed solely on the basis of the thesis and oral examination and are not permitted to make a formal presentation (e.g. by PowerPoint) prior to or as part of the oral examination, unless this is a reasonable adjustment that has been approved by the Academic Director for Research Degree Programmes for a candidate with disabilities, or a physical or mental health condition.

Members of the supervisory team are not permitted to be present at the oral examination, but it is good practice to invite the primary supervisor to attend at the end of the oral examination when the examiners communicate their recommendation to the candidate.

### **13. Assessment of a Thesis**

#### **a) Regulations relating to Assessment and Examination**

Regulations relating to the assessment and examination of research degrees are set out in the degree [Regulations](#). The [Regulations](#) detail the requirements for assessment attaching to particular postgraduate research awards. Research degree candidates are strongly advised to consult the appropriate regulations prior to their oral examination.

Some regulations are common to all Schools and Institutes, for example, PhD, MPhil. Some regulations are applicable to one School or a group of Schools - MEd, LLM by Research, ClinPsyD, EdPsy, ProfD, MD and EdD.

Additional guidance for examiners for individual research degrees is approved by the Postgraduate Research Executive and provided in [Instructions to Examiners](#).

#### **b) Communication of Assessment Outcomes**

Each Examiner for a research degree is required to submit an independent preliminary report prior to the oral examination, which details their preliminary view of the candidate's performance in the submitted work. The preliminary reports will not be automatically released to the candidate and the supervisory team, but will be made available if requested once the examination process has been completed.

Immediately following the oral examination the examiners are required to submit a joint final report and recommendation to the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research. The School/Institute Director having considered the reports and recommendations shall make recommendations in line with the [Regulations](#) for the degree and provide these to the [Postgraduate Research Service](#) for appropriate action.

After the oral examination and private discussion of the examiners, if the examiners agree on their recommendation, they may communicate this to the candidate (and primary supervisor if present), although making it clear that it is subject to confirmation by the University.

If the examiners' recommendation is either that the candidate be asked to submit a revised thesis or be given the option of submitting a revised thesis, the examiners are requested to compile a jointly agreed report indicating how the thesis might be revised and submit this to the [Postgraduate Research Service](#).

Examiners should note that their final report will be seen by the candidate and supervisory team.

The Postgraduate Research Service will write to each candidate to notify them formally of the outcome of the examination.

#### c) Review of External Examiners' Reports

Examiners' reports for research degrees are reviewed annually by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes and a summary report on issues arising is recommended to Postgraduate Research Executive, LTC and Senate. The Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes will request action by the School or Institute on issues requiring urgent attention as they arise.

## 14. Resolving Problems

The School or Institute should ensure that problems or grievances are dealt with promptly, either through **informal** mechanisms involving, as appropriate, the primary supervisor/supervisory team or designated School/Institute officer or other responsible person, or through **formal** procedures (appeals and complaints – see below) involving the School or the Director of the Institute.

Research degree candidates may, at any time, raise concerns regarding their supervision or other matters in strict confidence with the Head of School or Chair of the NBI Graduate School Executive or with a nominated representative of the School or Institute (such as the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research).

Candidates may seek advice on administrative matters from [the Postgraduate Research Service](#) or on academic matters from the appropriate [Faculty Associate Dean](#) and/or nominee.

Sources of information and advice outside the Faculty and School of Study/Institute include [the Student Support Service](#), [the UEA Students' Union Advice Service](#) and the [UEA Students' Union Postgraduate Education Officer](#).

In seeking to achieve the University's commitment to maintain the high quality of its academic programmes, Senate has approved an [Academic Appeals and Complaints Procedure](#). The Academic Appeals Procedure is intended to allow the formal raising of concerns by UEA students undertaking taught or research programmes regarding their academic results or circumstances relating to them. The Academic Complaints Procedure is intended to allow the formal raising of concerns by UEA students undertaking taught or research courses regarding academic matters not relating to academic results.

The [Academic Appeals and Complaints Procedure](#) for students is published, along with the [Non-Academic Complaint Procedure](#), in the University Calendar and on the intranet. The Non-Academic Complaint procedure enables students to raise concerns formally about matters which are the responsibility of the University, but which do not directly relate to their programme of study, its associated academic facilities nor to an academic result, such as marks.

[The Postgraduate Research Service](#) or [the Student Support Service](#) can provide assistance in respect of making an Academic Appeal or Academic Complaint. Any student considering making an Academic Appeal or Academic Complaint is strongly advised to seek independent advice from [the Students' Union Advice Service](#). Refer to [Appendix C](#) for contact details.

Those determining appeals or complaints are asked to ensure that issues of general practice or policy arising from individual cases are addressed (or referred to appropriate bodies in the School, Institute or Faculty or Postgraduate Research Executive) as soon as possible. An annual audit and analysis of Academic Appeals and Complaints, and of any resulting quality assurance or enhancement matters, is overseen by the Postgraduate Research Service.

## APPENDIX A

### Category A and Staff Candidates

Candidates for research degrees will be designated as Category A (including faculty of Schools and such other candidates as Senate shall determine) or Category B. The classification of research degree candidates as Category A or Category B should be made at the point of admission, before any examination (taken as the date of submission of the [Application for Approval of Thesis Title and Examiners form](#)) and reviewed at each annual review of progress.

If registered for a research degree, the following groups of staff will always be considered as Category A:

- All UEA academic staff;
- Research Associates or Technical Staff based in the School of Study or associated UEA Research Centre;
- Research staff at an affiliated Graduate School<sup>10</sup> **and** based as a research degree candidate at that affiliated Graduate School.

Further information can be found in Research Degree Policy Document 6 '[Classification of Students as Category A and Staff Candidates](#)'.

a) Admission of Category A research degree candidates and Staff Candidates and their near relatives<sup>11</sup>

The Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes is responsible for the approval of Category A candidates and admittance to the degree on recommendation from the Head of the School or Chair of the NBI Graduate School Executive.

Admission as a Category A candidate requires completion of the appropriate application form with endorsement by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes. All staff candidates, whether or not they are classified as Category A, and their near relatives must also complete this application form.

b) Registration of Category A Candidates

The Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes is responsible for the following, on recommendation from the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research:

- formal appointment of the supervisory team and approval of the candidate's field of study and research;
- approval of changes to registration delegated in the Regulations to the Head of School (including reduction and extensions to the Periods of Study and Registration).

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<sup>10</sup> This includes academic staff and Research Associates.

<sup>11</sup> The University considers that spouses, partners, children, parents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, those considered next of kin, and grandchildren of members of staff may be regarded as near relatives.

c) Annual Progress Review and Probationary Review of Category A research degree candidates

The responsibility for conducting the review of the annual report of student's progress for Category A candidates rests with the Faculty Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research), not the School's review body. The Associate Dean will conduct the review along the same guidelines and will refer any issues arising back both to the supervisor and candidate. The chair of the Probationary Review Panel and any other internal assessor will be appointed by the Faculty Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research) in conjunction with the supervisory team.

The Associate Dean will confirm to the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research where the candidate is registered that the process has been completed. Where any significant areas of concern about progress are identified, this will be communicated to those responsible at School/Institute level for the candidate's studies.

d) Examination of Category A research degree candidates

The following candidates should also be considered as Category A for the purposes of examination:

- The following candidates who have left the University in the 12 months preceding the date of submission of [the Application for Approval of Thesis Title and Examiners form](#):
  - UEA members of academic staff;
  - Research Associates or Technical staff based in the School of Study or associated UEA Research Centre;
  - Research staff at an affiliated Graduate School, who were based as a research degree candidate at that affiliated Graduate School.
- Candidates who will be appointed as members of UEA academic staff within six months of the viva.

The following candidates may be considered as Category A in certain circumstances:

- Near relatives of UEA staff members;
- Any other candidates who were classified during their studies as Category A but who left the University in the last 12 months.

The examination of any Category A candidate shall be conducted exclusively by external examiners appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes.

An Independent Chair who is not a member of the candidate's supervisory team will be appointed to provide support to the external examiners and to ensure that the oral examination has been conducted fairly and according to University procedures. The role of the Independent Chair is set out in the [Instructions to Examiners](#) and in Research Degree Policy Document 9 '[The Role of the Independent Chair](#)'.



e) Admission, Registration, Annual Review and Examination of Category B research degree candidates

The admission, registration, annual review and examination of Category B candidates follows the normal policies and procedures for research degree candidates, as set out in this Code, the [Regulations](#) for the degree, the [Instructions to Examiners](#) and other documentation.

## APPENDIX B

### Research Degree Policy Documents

The Code of Practice for Research Degrees is accompanied by a series of [Research Degree Policy Documents](#), which set out in more detail a number of the policies and procedures described in the Code of Practice. The status of these documents in relation to compliance with the principles contained within is as follows:

Document	Title	Status
1	<a href="#">Extensions to Period of Study and Registration-Only Period for Research Degrees</a>	Guidance
2	<a href="#">Continuation Fees</a>	Mandatory
3	<a href="#">Research Degrees: Submission, Presentation, Consultation and Borrowing of Theses</a>	Mandatory
4	<a href="#">RESEARCH@UEA: A Guide to Good Practice</a>	Guidance
5	No current document 5 – <a href="#">the Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct Made Against Students</a> are now a standalone document in the University Calendar	
6	<a href="#">Classification of Students as Category A and Staff Candidates</a>	Mandatory
7	<a href="#">Guide to Good Supervisory Practice</a>	Guidance
8	<a href="#">Code of Practice for the Examination of Research Degree awards at UEA</a>	Mandatory
9	<a href="#">The Role of the Independent Chair</a>	Mandatory
10	<a href="#">Approval of New Research Degree Awards or Changes to Research Degree Programmes</a>	Guidance
11	<a href="#">Research Ethical Approval Framework</a>	Guidance
12	<a href="#">Guidelines for Probationary Review</a>	Guidance
13	<a href="#">Policy on Split-Site PhD Partnerships</a>	Mandatory
14	<a href="#">Policy on PGR Student Employment in Teaching at UEA</a>	Mandatory

## APPENDIX C

### 1. Further Information

- This Code of Practice can be found electronically on the UEA Intranet – on the Postgraduate Research Service pages:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/postgraduate-research/pgr-regulations-and-forms>

- The Research Degree Policy Documents referred to in this Code of Practice can also be found on the Postgraduate Research Service pages:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/postgraduate-research/pgr-regulations-and-forms>

Hard copies of both can be obtained from the Postgraduate Research Service.

### 2. Contacts

The following offices can be contacted with regard to research degree programmes:

#### Postgraduate Research Service

**HUM** email: [humgrad.school@uea.ac.uk](mailto:humgrad.school@uea.ac.uk) tel: 01603 593771

**SCI** email: [scigrad.school@uea.ac.uk](mailto:scigrad.school@uea.ac.uk) tel: 01603 592625

**SSH** email: [ssh.pgroffice@uea.ac.uk](mailto:ssh.pgroffice@uea.ac.uk) tel: 01603 597231

(All SSF PGR degrees except EdD and EdPsyD, and HSC PGR degrees (except ProfD HASC))

**MAP** email: [map.pgroffice@uea.ac.uk](mailto:map.pgroffice@uea.ac.uk) tel: 01603 593076

(All MED PGR degrees including MD, plus the professional doctorates EdD, EdPsyD and ProfD HASC)

**ClinPsyD** email : [clinpsyd@uea.ac.uk](mailto:clinpsyd@uea.ac.uk) tel : 01603 593076

**NBI** email: [graduates.nrp@nbi.ac.uk](mailto:graduates.nrp@nbi.ac.uk) tel: 01603 450768

#### UEA Students' Union Advice Service

email: [advicecentre@uea.ac.uk](mailto:advicecentre@uea.ac.uk) tel: 01603 593463

#### Student Support Service

email: [studentsupport@uea.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@uea.ac.uk) tel: 01603 592761