



**THE CODE OF PRACTICE  
FOR  
RESEARCH DEGREES  
  
2013–14**

**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 students and their supervisors, and to assist UEA in achieving its strategic commitments. Application of the key principles of the Code of Practice is mandatory.

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

The Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) of the University is responsible to the Senate for ensuring and enhancing the quality of the 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 LTC. The Postgraduate Research Executive is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research), involves the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes and Faculty Associate Deans for Postgraduate Research. It is serviced by the Postgraduate Research Service. Considerable authority and responsibility for research degrees is delegated to Faculties, Schools and Institutes<sup>1</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 guidance regarding policy and procedure is available from the Postgraduate Research Service and on the UEA website at: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/pgresearch>

### **3. Research Degrees**

The definition of a research degree as set out by HEFCE is that:

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.

All research degrees must follow this pattern and are governed by the QAA Quality Code: Chapter B11 Research degrees. In addition, the taught components of professional doctorates are managed and reviewed in accordance with the UEA Code of Practice: Assuring and Enhancing Teaching Quality. This applies to professional doctorates (ClinPsyD and EdD) and the PhD with Integrated Studies.

The various degrees of 'Masters by Research' (LLM, MA, MMus, MSc by Research) are research degrees. The Master of Research (MRes) is a taught degree offered under the Common Masters Framework Regulations.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the term Institutes in this document refers to the John Innes Centre, The Sainsbury Laboratory, The Genome Analysis Centre and Institute of Food Research

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

- Students should be directed to and notified about (and then 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.
- Students should receive information about assessment processes and procedures.
- All students will undertake 10 Personal and Professional Development (PPD) training credits per year (5 PPD credits per year for part-time students) as specified by their Faculty, Graduate School or Institute.
- Student feedback on the quality of supervision and learning resources should be collected and used to evaluate research degree provision by the School and this should be monitored and considered by the Faculty.
- The admissions process should be handled in a fair and consistent manner, in line with equal opportunities and university policies. Consideration must be given to ensuring that there is sufficient evidence of an applicant's ability to undertake a research degree, including English language proficiency.
- Students should receive clear and accurate information about entitlements, requirements and expectations as well as appropriate information about the academic and social environment of the University.
- Students should be supervised by a team comprising a minimum of two research active teachers, one of whom is designated the primary supervisor and is a member of academic staff.
- Supervisors should receive appropriate training in relation to their supervisory role and are expected to attend continuing professional development sessions every three years in order to continue supervising.
- Supervision is a professional relationship. It should be guided by principles of intellectual and inter-personal integrity, fairness, respect, clarity about roles and responsibilities, student autonomy and working in the best interests of the student.
- Supervisors and students are responsible for addressing potential conflicts of interest or any breakdown in the supervisory relationship in a reasonable and polite manner. Schools should have an identified senior member of staff who is responsible, in the first instance, for helping to resolve conflicts around supervision.
- Students have the right, should it need to be invoked, to request a change to their primary supervisor or any other member of their supervisory team.

- Students and supervisors should maintain regular contact sufficient to inform and monitor the progress of the research. For full-time students this should include a minimum of eight supervisory meetings per year (including three formal progress review meetings). For part-time students this should include a minimum of four supervisory meetings per year (including two progress review meetings).
- Students should keep a record of supervisory meetings and the advice of their supervisors.
- Supervisors should respond to written work in a timely manner.
- Student progress should be formally reviewed by students, supervisors and Schools. This must include a formal report by the supervisory team and the student on an annual basis.
- Schools are responsible for ensuring continuity of supervision and for making appropriate arrangements to provide supervisory cover in the event of staff absence.
- Schools should monitor the quality of supervision. Problems that are identified should be dealt with in a timely manner.

## CODE OF PRACTICE

### 1. Admissions

#### i) 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.

#### ii) 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 Institute (see Section 5/Appendix A).

#### iii) Admission Processes

Each Faculty must have approved admission procedures which:

- ensure that only appropriately qualified and/or prepared students are admitted onto research programmes;
- include, where appropriate, mechanisms for assessing student qualifications and preparedness including professional or other work experience where a prospective student 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 students, 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 student, 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.

#### iv) 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. The English Language Requirements (as described in the Undergraduate Admission Requirements section of the Calendar) were adopted by Senate in June

2000 as a minimum for postgraduate study. 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.

v) Offers of Admission

Schools and Institutes must ensure that the information provided to the Postgraduate Research Service for the offer letter to students 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 student;
- supervisory arrangements and the name of the primary supervisor;
- requirements and conditions of any sponsor;
- an overview of the student'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 student 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**

i) Prior to Admission

A sufficiently clear outline of the proposal should usually be agreed with the student 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 student;
- there are appropriate facilities and sufficient resources available to enable the student 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 student; and
- the proposal is a suitable basis for embarking on a research degree project.

ii) Following Registration

As part of the induction process, there will be a meeting between the student and the primary supervisor within three weeks of registration at which initial training needs associated with the research should be identified. The role of the supervisory team members should be clarified at this meeting.

It is the joint responsibility of the student and the supervisory team to agree the research topic and a provisional working title that is appropriate to the degree.

Within three months of registration (six months for part-time students) the supervisory team and student should normally agree a provisional working title, the working objectives of the project and a timetable of activity over the period of study.

### **3. Student Information and Induction**

Each School or Institute is responsible for arranging induction and orientation for new postgraduate research students.

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

- the nature of the postgraduate research degree, issues that research students 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 student, 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 BioSciences Institutes and those that may be required);
- opportunities that exist for meeting other research students and staff and to broaden knowledge through seminars, conferences, forums, etc., both within and outside the students' immediate study area;
- School or Institute working accommodation, the Dean of Students' Office and the facilities of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and Union of UEA Students;
- opportunities to discuss progress outside the supervisory team;
- if the School has adopted the transfer process, normal arrangements for transfer panels within the School;
- opportunities for student representation (an ongoing activity).

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

Where advanced study and research involves the student in potentially hazardous environments within the University and/or the Institutes, such as a laboratory, the School or Institute must ensure that the student receives formal instruction about health and safety implications, rules and requirements before the student 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 student's progress. In subject areas where fieldwork is 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 student may be delegated by the School or Institute to the supervisory team.

#### **5. 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 of an Institute 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 Category A candidates are governed by special regulations (see Appendix A.)

#### **6. Registration of Research Students**

##### i) 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
Doctor of Philosophy	3 years	1 year	4 years

Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated studies)	4 years	1 year	5 years
Doctor of Philosophy (with rotational year)	4 years	-	4 years
Doctor of Clinical Psychology	3 years	-	3 years
Master of Philosophy	2 years	1 year	3 years
Masters degrees by research (MA, MSc, LLM, MMus)	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
Doctor of Philosophy	6 years	1 year	7 years
Doctor of Philosophy by Publication	6 – 12 months	-	6 – 12 months
Doctor of Clinical Psychology	5 years	-	5 years
Doctor of Education	4 years	-	4 years
Doctor of Medicine	2 years	-	2 years
Master of Philosophy	4 years	1 year	5 years
Masters degree by research	2 years	1 year	3 years

### **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.

Where a student'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 student 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 the 'Continuation Fees' section of the Research Degrees Policy Documents (see page 4, point 2). During the Registration-Only period, supervision related to thesis preparation and submission will be provided and should be agreed by the student 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 Board of the School or the Institute's Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), or by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes, acting on behalf of the Postgraduate Research Executive.

#### ii) Transfers from MPhil to PhD

Where students 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 student.

The transfer involves the preparation of a written progress report from the student (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 student and an interview with, or presentation from, the student. 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 in the University<sup>2</sup>. No more than one member of the students' supervisory team may be a member of that student'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 student to the PhD registration. If a panel cannot agree a recommendation, or for any other reason the School Board or Institute GSC requires a further opinion, the School/Institute Director

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<sup>2</sup> For this purpose, a teacher in the University will include all Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors, UEA-based externally funded Research Fellows (such as Wellcome Trust Career Development, Royal Society and Research Council Advanced Fellows), senior contract research staff on indefinite contracts and, subject to certain conditions (see below), holders of current Honorary appointments at the University who are actively engaged in the profession of their discipline.

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 student 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 Procedure.

### iii) Extensions, Intercalations 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 intercalations, 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 the 'Extensions to Registration-only Periods for Research Degrees' section of the Research Degrees Policy Documents, available from the Postgraduate Research Service and on the PGR website.

### iv) Full-time students and paid employment

Full-time registered students 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. Students should seek the approval of their supervisory team for any paid work undertaken.

### v) Monitoring a Student's Timetable for Completion

Supervisors and students are responsible for ensuring that there is a regular review of progress and plans for completion. A formal report on 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 student's timetable for completion arise.

### vi) Progression and Completion Rates

Boards of Schools and Graduate Studies Committees of Institutes 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.

## 7. Supervision

### i) The Student-Supervisor Relationship

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

A summary of advice of good practice for postgraduate research students and their supervisors is contained in section 7 of the Research Degrees Policy Documents.

### ii) Appointment of Supervisory Teams

The Head of the School or the Institute Director is responsible for the appointment of supervisors. Each student must have a nominated supervisory team of at least two research-active teachers in the University (see Section 6 for definition). 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.

If a School or Institute seeks to appoint as a supervisor a holder of an Honorary appointment who has not acted previously in this capacity at the University and supervision of UEA students is not covered by an existing agreement at institutional level between UEA and the proposed supervisor's home institution, a form (covering issues such as supervisory experience and the training in supervisory matters that the proposed supervisor has had) must be submitted to the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes. If the proposal is accepted, a memorandum of understanding must then be signed by the appointee on taking up the position. Holders of Honorary appointments may only be appointed as primary supervisors with the prior permission of the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes.

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 student, should be considered before appointments are made.

Fixed-term contract research staff and University or Institute research officers 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.

Where Schools wish to appoint a further external supervisor or supervisors, a formal contractual arrangement must be reached with each additional external supervisor, detailing the level and nature of supervision which they are expected to contribute

(and any associated payment). Wherever such arrangements constitute part of the formal supervision of the student, they should be contractually enforceable.

### iii) Role of primary supervisor

The primary supervisor is responsible for the overall management and direction of the student's research degree in addition to issues relating to the student'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 student. The primary supervisor will be the line of communication with the University.

The primary supervisor's name must be notified in writing to the student no later than when the student is formally approved as a candidate for the degree in question.

### iv) 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 student'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.

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

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

### v) External supervisors / collaborating supervisors

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to appoint an external supervisor, for example, for collaborations with industry 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 student and their research degree whilst they are in attendance at the external organisation.

vi) 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 Graduate Studies Committee of an Institute 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 students 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 students (up to the maximum of ten), must have the written permission of their Head of School or Institute Director 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 8).

vii) 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 students, experienced supervisors are expected to attend continuing professional development sessions in relation to their supervisory role every three years.

viii) 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 student 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 student 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 student 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 student 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 Graduate Studies Committee of the Institute 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.

#### ix) Extent of Supervision

A distinction should be made between informal and supervisory meetings. Informal contact may include emails, impromptu discussions or brief telephone conversations about specific issues. Whilst invaluable in maintaining contact with a student 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 student, and these arrangements should be kept under review.

Notes of actions agreed between the supervisory team and student must be kept to inform the annual review of students' progress (see also Section 8). The dates of supervisory meetings should be recorded on the annual review of progress forms.

#### x) 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 student's research but a normal expectation would be for such meetings to take place every month for full-time students. All disciplines should, however, expect full-time students to meet with their supervisors at least eight times per year - including formal progress review meetings (see Section 8).

The meeting schedule for part time students should be agreed at the beginning of the degree, but students 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 (see Section 8) and two other formal progress meetings included in the minimum of eight formal supervisory meetings. Formal progress review meetings for full-time students will take place at a minimum frequency of once every four months and for part-time students 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 constitutes a breach of General Regulation 13(3) 'Attendance, Engagement and Progress' and may lead to action under the University's disciplinary procedures.

xi) Guidance and Feedback

The primary supervisor should arrange a meeting with the student 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 student 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 student should attend. The role of the supervisory team members should also be clarified at this meeting.

Formal feedback from students on the supervisory process and other aspects of the degree programme is incorporated within the Annual Review of Research Students' Progress. Comments from students on feedback will be monitored by the School as part of the annual review of monitoring reports.

xii) Registration-Only Period

Within one month of entering the registration-only period, the student and supervisory team will meet 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. A form will be provided by the Postgraduate Research Service, to be filled out at this meeting, where student and supervisors indicate actions agreed and have the opportunity to clarify for the Faculty any additional resources or facilities that may be required. This form will be placed on the student's file and acted upon as appropriate by Faculty staff.

xiii) Resolving Problems affecting Supervision

At any time in his or her research degree registration, a student 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 13) must have been exhausted and possible effects on study should be considered. If a change is to be requested, the student should inform the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate

Research of the School/Institute in which he or she is registered, which will start the process.

While a student 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 are contained in the University Calendar and on the intranet (see Section 13).

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

### **i) Procedure for Reviewing Student Progress**

Each supervisory team is required by University regulations to report student progress to the Board of the School or Graduate Studies Committee of the Institute not less than once each year including during any student'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 student are as follows:

- the process will involve a dialogue between the supervisory team and student and the report should be discussed between them before submission. The notes of action agreed between the supervisory team and student should be available to the student and team to inform the annual review;
- the dialogue between the student 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 student preparing a written submission. This *student 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 student 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 student and supervisory team, and if appropriate the timing of the transfer panel meeting.
- students should be informed of their right to discuss their progress with the School or Institute designated responsible academic (such as a School Director of Postgraduate Research) in a private meeting.

### **ii) Process for the Annual Review of Research Student Progress**

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

- Individual student reports will be considered by the appropriate School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research or, in the case of staff candidates, Faculty 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 Graduate School Executive for consideration;
- The summary report should include confirmation that the process has been completed for all students, 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 Graduate School Executives will monitor and refer back to the School any issues of concern arising from the Annual Review process and any subsequent reports that the Review requires;
- Faculty 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.

## **9. Skills and Employability Training**

The University is committed to the provision of skills and employability training for all postgraduate research students, taking into account national standards including the Roberts 'SET for Success' report, VITAE Researcher Development Framework and the expectations of Research Councils UK. All students are expected to actively participate in the training programmes as specified by their Faculties, Graduate Schools or Institutes, and supervisors are expected to support their students 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 constitutes a breach of General Regulation 13(1) 'Attendance, Engagement and Progress' and may lead to action under the University's disciplinary procedures.

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

### **i) 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 student.

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 11) can be a lengthy process and delay in requesting the appointment of examiners may lead to delay in examination of the thesis.

## ii) 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 Section 3 of the Research Degrees Policy Documents: 'Regulations for Theses'.

There are also Regulations detailing the requirements for assessment attaching to particular postgraduate research awards. Students are strongly advised to 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; Translation Studies) the School of World Art Studies and Museology (Professional Practice), Film, Television and Media Studies (Professional Practice) and the School of Music (Musical Composition). Candidates should refer any queries regarding these specific Regulations to their School in the first instance.

Candidates may initially submit a thesis in a secure soft binding sufficiently durable for the assessment process. No Pass List will be issued after successful assessment until a previously soft-bound thesis has been resubmitted in the form outlined in rules Section 3 of the Research Degrees Policy Documents: 'Regulations for 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.

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.

## iii) Submission of the Thesis

The thesis should be submitted not 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 primary supervisor 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.

#### iv) Confidentiality Restrictions

A thesis may be subject to a period of confidentiality restrictions because of industrial support for the research project, because of proprietary materials supplied under a Material Transfer Agreement, possible patents which may arise from the students' work, or for other reasons. The UEA policy on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) is given in the Research Degrees Policy Documents.

Students must notify the Postgraduate Research Service of any confidentiality restrictions on the Research Degree Entry Form when submitting their thesis.

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.

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

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

To avoid charges of plagiarism or copyright infringement, the student 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 student 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.

## **11. Appointment of Examiners**

The procedures for the nomination and appointment of examiners are contained in the 'Code of Practice for the External Examiner System for Research Awards at UEA' section of the Research Degrees Policy Documents :

- 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 Board of the School (or Institute's Graduate Studies Committee). There shall be at least one external examiner. Members of a student's supervisory team will not be appointed as an examiner;
- for Category A candidates (see Section 5 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 Board of the School (or Institute's Graduate Studies Committee). The examiners will be exclusively external and an internal adviser will be appointed;

While a candidate cannot influence the choice of examiners, it is good practice to share freely with a student the information concerning the recommendation of examiners and to inform him or her 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 Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes, on behalf of the Postgraduate Research Executive.

Members of the supervisory team are not permitted to be present at the oral examination.

## **12. Assessment of a Thesis**

### **i) 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. Students 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, for example, MEd, MMus by Research, LLM by Research; ClinPsyD, MD and EdD.

Additional guidance for examiners for individual research degrees is approved by LTC and provided in Instructions to Examiners.

### **ii) Communication of Assessment Outcomes**

Each Examiner for a research degree is required to submit a written 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 student, 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 reports 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.

### iii) Review of External Examiners' Reports

Examiners' reports for research degrees are reviewed annually by the Academic Director of Research 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.

## **13. 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 officer or other responsible person, or through **formal** procedures (appeals and complaints – see below) involving the School or the Director of the Institute.

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

Students may seek advice on administrative matters from the Postgraduate Research Service or on academic matters from the appropriate Faculty Associate Dean and/or delegate.

Sources of information and advice outside the Faculty and School of Study include the Dean of Students' Office, the Student Union Advice Centre and the Graduate Students Association.

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 formally raise concerns 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 Dean of Students' Office 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 Student Union Advice Centre. Refer to Appendix B 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 LTC) as soon as possible. An annual audit and analysis of appeals and complaints, and of any resulting quality assurance or enhancement matters, will be 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 students as Category A or Category B should be made at the point of admission, before any transfer panel or examination and reviewed at each annual review of progress.

The following groups of staff will always be considered as Category A:

- All academic staff
- Honorary teaching and research appointments.
- Research staff at affiliated Institutes<sup>3</sup>.

Further information can be found in the 'Guidance note on the definition of Category A and staff candidates' at <https://www.uea.ac.uk/pgresearch/regsandforms>

i) Admission of Category A students and Staff Candidates and their near relatives<sup>4</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 Director of the Institute.

Admission as a Category A student 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.

ii) Registration of Category A Students

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 of the Board of the School (including transfer from MPhil to PhD, reduction and extensions to the periods of study and registration).

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<sup>3</sup> Details of the Affiliated Institutes and UEA Research Centres can be found in the University Calendar.

<sup>4</sup> A Senate resolution (4.2.1970, Minute 91) defines near relatives as "husbands or wives or children of members of staff", however the University also considers that parents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and grandchildren of members of staff may also be regarded as near relatives.

iii) Annual Review of Category A Students

The responsibility for conducting the review of the annual report of student's progress for Category A candidates rests with the Faculty Graduate School Executive, not the School's review body. The Graduate School Executive will conduct the review along the same guidelines and will refer any issues arising back both to the supervisor and student. The Graduate School Executive 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 level for the student's studies.

iv) Examination of Category A Students

The following students are also considered as Category A for the purposes of examination:

- Candidates who were UEA members of academic staff but left the University in the three years preceding the date of submission of the Application for Approval of Thesis Title and Examiners form
- Candidates who will be appointed as members of UEA academic staff within six months of the viva

The examination of any Category A student shall be conducted exclusively by external examiners appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the Learning and Teaching Committee (or the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes acting on behalf of the Postgraduate Research Executive/LTC).

An internal adviser who is not a member of the student's supervisory team will be appointed to provide support to the external examiners and explanation of the University's procedures. The role of the internal adviser is set out in the Instructions to Examiners.

v) Admission, Registration, Annual Review and Examination of Category B Students

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

## APPENDIX B

### 1. Further Information

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

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/pgresearch>

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

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/pgresearch>

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

SSF email: [ssfpgroffice@uea.ac.uk](mailto:ssfpgroffice@uea.ac.uk) tel: 01603 597231

FMH email: [fmh.pgr@uea.ac.uk](mailto:fmh.pgr@uea.ac.uk) tel: 01603 593076

JIC/IFR email: [graduates.nrp@nbi.ac.uk](mailto:graduates.nrp@nbi.ac.uk) tel: 01603 450768/9

Graduate Students' Association

email: [gsa@uea.ac.uk](mailto:gsa@uea.ac.uk) Further information : <http://gsa.uea.ac.uk>

Students Union Advice Centre

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

Dean of Students

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