

**Title:** QAA B11 Research Degrees: Implementation Report  
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### **Issue**

This report provides an update on implementation of Chapter B11: Research Degrees of the UK Quality Code (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/quality-code-B11.pdf>). This document comprises a self-evaluation report for B11 organised by Indicator.

The current (January 2015) version of the Chapter B11 mapping document was also provided as part of the paperwork for the 13 January 2015 Postgraduate Research Executive meeting and is provided for the 28 January 2015 Learning and Teaching Committee.

### **Recommendations**

The Learning and Teaching Committee is asked to note this report.

### **Resource Implications**

Resource implications are considered as part of all policy and process changes and reviewed by the PGR Executive.

### **Risk Implications**

No risk implications.

### **Equality and Diversity**

Implications are considered as part of all policy and process changes and reviewed by the PGR Executive.

### **Timing of decisions**

This paper relates to items that are current in January 2015.

### **Further Information**

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## Self-Evaluation Report - Chapter B11

### Expectation B11 - Research degrees

*Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.*

The University of East Anglia has an established governance structure that ensures the assurance and enhancement of the academic quality with regards to each of our research degree awards. The following sections, informed by the University's Chapter B11 Mapping Document<sup>1</sup>, detail the University's management of standards of its research degree awards and the quality of the learning opportunities in relation to the particular expectations of Chapter B11 of the QAA Quality Code<sup>2</sup>.

### Higher education provider arrangements

#### Indicator 1

*Higher education providers that are research degree awarding bodies have regulations for research degrees that are clear and readily available to research students and staff, including examiners. Where appropriate, regulations are supplemented by similarly accessible, subject-specific guidance at the level of the faculty, school, department, research centre or research institute.*

The University's regulatory frameworks for postgraduate research provision are set out in the University Calendar, which is updated annually and is available on the University website<sup>3</sup>. There are also links to the Calendar in student handbooks and on the PGR Service web pages. The regulatory framework includes regulations for the individual research degree and higher degree awards, for dealing with Extenuating Circumstances, and Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees, for the Form of Theses and Dissertations, and for the Consultation and Borrowing of Theses. The degree award Regulations include the admissions requirements for research degrees and details of progress and monitoring, the transfer from MPhil to PhD (or from MEd to EdD), probationary period (from 1 October 2015), assessment and timescales for completion. The Award Regulations are accompanied by associated Instructions to Examiners (see the Assessment section below), which were revised following review during 2013-14<sup>4</sup>. Any proposed changes to research degree Regulations due to internal or external developments require consideration by the PGR Executive and are consulted upon where necessary at Faculty Graduate School Executives.

<sup>1</sup> PGR Executive 13 January 2015 Minute A11 (Doc. PGR14D036)

<sup>2</sup> QAA Quality Code Chapter B11

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs\(awards\)](http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs(awards))

<sup>4</sup> PGR Executive 15 May 2014 Minute A4 (Doc. PGR13D037)

The Regulations relating to Research Degrees are reviewed on a five yearly systematic review cycle, with the last review as part of the reviews of viva assessment and probationary periods in 2013-14<sup>5</sup>. Significant revisions have also been made during 2013-14 to the ClinPsyD regulations in relation to the changes made to the programme as part of the 2013-14 internal review. The Rules relating to thesis submission and consultation are also reviewed and updated regularly, in relation to other regulatory changes, for example the requirement to submit an electronic copy of the thesis alongside a hard copy from January 2013.<sup>6</sup>

Many of the University's General Regulations apply to research students including the Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research, Disciplinary Procedures, University Policy on Plagiarism and Collusion (for the taught elements of professional doctorates) and the Appeals and Complaints Procedures.

In addition to the Regulations the University has in place admissions requirements (as set out in the PGR Admissions web pages<sup>7</sup>, the PGR Admissions Framework<sup>8</sup> and in the Postgraduate Prospectus, University studentship terms and conditions<sup>9</sup>, Faculty, School, Programme, and DTP handbooks, a Concessions Guide<sup>10</sup> and a number of guidance notes available on the PGR Service, Graduate School and DTP websites. Policies and guidance notes are reviewed on an annual basis with a systematic review every five years.

The main policies relating to research degrees are set out in the Research Degree Policy Documents which can be found on the PGR Service web pages. These are associated with the Code of Practice (CoP) for Research Degrees and discussed in that section.

Each School or Institute has a Director of Postgraduate Research who is responsible for the academic management of research degree programmes in their School and is available as a source of support and guidance to research students and supervisors. Their role is set out in the role descriptor agreed by the PGR Executive.<sup>11</sup> The ClinPsyD programme<sup>12</sup> has a dedicated website and handbooks for students and clinical supervisors.

Each Faculty now has a Graduate School<sup>13</sup> which has its own dedicated website and handbooks. The Faculty Graduate Schools focus on improving the PGR student experience and instilling a sense of graduate identity amongst the PGR community. Each Faculty also now has a PGR Training Coordinator. The Faculty Graduate Schools are led by the Faculty Associate Dean for Postgraduate Research who has specific responsibility for PGR matters. Associate Deans (PGR) chair the Faculty Graduate School Executives (GSEs) and are members of the PGR Executive, reinforcing the cross-flow of information and accountability, and dissemination of good practice.

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<sup>5</sup> PGR Executive 15 May 2014 Minutes A4 (PGR13D037) and A5 (PGR13D038)

<sup>6</sup> PRPPG 23 November 2012 Minute A4

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.uea.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research-degrees>

<sup>8</sup> PGR Admissions and Recruitment Framework 2014–15 guidelines

<sup>9</sup> Terms and conditions for UEA Studentships 2014-15

<sup>10</sup> <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/postgraduate-research/pgr-regulations-and-forms/concessions-and-other-forms>

<sup>11</sup> Role descriptor for School Postgraduate Research Director

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.uea.ac.uk/medicine-health-sciences/graduate-school/prospective-students/types-of-research-degrees/clinical-psychology>

<sup>13</sup> <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/postgraduate-research/graduate-schools>

In relation to research degree provision at the Norwich Biosciences Institutes (NBI), the two existing Graduate Studies Committees, one for the Institute of Food Research (IFR) and one covering the John Innes Centre (JIC), The Sainsbury Laboratory (TSL) and The Genome Analysis Centre (TGAC), were reconstituted into a new NBI Graduate School Executive, which mirrors Faculty GSEs as much as possible in structure, with effect from 2014/15.<sup>14</sup> The NBI also has its own dedicated Training Coordinator for research students and staff.

The University is currently a partner in three Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) – the EnvEast NERC DTP, Norwich Research Park Biosciences BBSRC DTP and CHASE AHRC DTP. Each of these DTPs has its own dedicated website.<sup>15</sup> The Postgraduate Research Service coordinates a DTP Management Board for each of the first two DTPs, which meets at least three times per year; University staff also attend the CHASE Strategy Board and other CHASE management and delivery committees. The DTPs provide a complementary cross-institution support structure through their cohort activities and training pathways.

At University level, Regulations, policy, strategy and procedures are considered by the PGR Executive which merged with the Postgraduate Research Programmes Policy Group with effect from November 2013 as approved by University Senate. The PGR Executive continues to include student representation.

From August 1 2011, professional academic administrative support for research students and supervisors has been provided by a dedicated ‘Hub’, the Postgraduate Research Service. The PGR Service has two offices, one on the main campus (the Postgraduate Research Office) and one at the John Innes Centre (the NBI Graduate Studies Office).

## **Indicator 2**

*Higher education providers develop, implement and keep under review codes of practice for research degrees, which are widely applicable and help enable the higher education provider meet the Expectation of this Chapter. The codes are readily available to all students and staff involved in research degrees, and written in clear language understood by all users.*

The University’s means of assuring the quality and maintaining the academic standards of its research degrees are set out in the CoP for Research Degrees (revised September 2014<sup>16</sup>) and in the Research Degree Policy Documents. These include documents on extensions and continuation fees, thesis submission guidelines, a Guide to Good Practice in Research, procedures for dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research, Intellectual Property Regulations, a Guide to Good Supervisory Practice and the Approval of New Research Degree Awards. They also include the Code of Practice for the External Examiners’ System for Research awards at UEA and a new guide to the role of the Independent Chair.

The Code of Practice is updated annually, with a full systematic review of the Code of Practice normally taking place every five years. The last full review took place in 2006-7 and the next full

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<sup>14</sup> PGR Executive 13 June 2014 Minute A10 (Doc. PGR13D043)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.biodtp.norwichresearchpark.ac.uk/> <http://www.enveast.ac.uk/> <http://www.chase.ac.uk/>

<sup>16</sup> Agreed by the Academic Director and reported to the PGR Executive on 7 October 2014

review will take place in 2014-15 (the review due in 2011-12 being rescheduled as a result of changes to administrative structures at the University). The Research Degree Policy documents that accompany the Code of Practice are updated annually and also in response to any changes to the Regulations or policy.

The CoP: Research Degrees has been developed as a central source for policy and practice in research degree programmes and has been informed by the relevant sections of the QAA Code, the Researcher Development Statement and guidance from Vitae, RCUK and UKRIO. We have compared our PGR provision to doctoral and research masters' degree characteristics and the FHEQ in developing the CoP and as part of the development of our Research Degree Education Strategy (see below).

The CoP is a key source of information and is brought to the attention of students at induction and via student handbooks and to staff through supervisor training. The Code is available via the PGR Service website, and staff and students are notified of the release of any revised version.

### **Indicator 3**

*Higher education providers monitor their research degree provision against internal and external indicators and targets that reflect the context in which research degrees are being offered.*

The quality of UEA's research degree programmes is monitored against internal and external indicators through a number of processes which also serve to identify areas which require further attention or which might be improved. The processes cover: analysis of student and admissions data; submission and completion rates; external examiners' reports; PRES analysis; annual review of progress; reviews of professional doctorates; complaints and appeals; and evaluation of PPD training. Students participate in these monitoring processes through representation on the relevant executives, except in the case of reserved agenda items.

Each School and Faculty is provided with Management Information reports by the Postgraduate Research Service on a twice yearly basis (usually in October and April), and these reports are considered by the Faculty GSEs and PGR Executive. The reports include data on numbers of new and current students and submission/withdrawal rates for both part-time and full-time students. We have also reviewed Athena SWAN data relating to PGR provision<sup>17</sup>.

We monitor our completion rates against the HEFCE research degree qualification rates<sup>18</sup> figures and are pleased to note that our projected completion rates for full-time EU-domiciled PGR students starting in 2010-11 are consistently above national averages<sup>19</sup>.

Course reviews of the ClinPsyD<sup>20</sup> and EdD<sup>21</sup> consider internal and external benchmarks, and feedback from students and other stakeholders. Completion rates within 3 years (including viva

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<sup>17</sup> PGR Executive 13 June 2014 Minute A9 (Doc. PGR13D053)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2013/201317/#d.en.82794>

<sup>19</sup> Internal communication dated 23/08/13 to PVC(R), Academic Director, Director of Research and Enterprise

<sup>20</sup> PGR Executive 22 November 2013 Minute 6 (Doc. PGR13D003)

<sup>21</sup> PGR Executive 13 January 2015 Minute A4 (Doc. PGR14D029)

examination and corrections completed) are monitored annually for the ClinPsyD as this is a requirement of the commissioning body, Health Education, East of England. The programme has put measures in place to address the lower than average completion rate with the effect that this has increased to 70% this year meriting a 'Green' status from the commissioners.

The PGR Service monitor concessions requested for intercalations and extensions, the numbers and type of appeals and complaints, and of Misconduct in Research cases. These are discussed at monthly Quality Assurance, Appeals, Complaints and Concessions (QUACC) meetings, with anonymised notes circulated to the Academic Director and Associate Deans PGR.

Admissions numbers and targets are monitored during the year at Faculty and University level and regular admissions reports are produced for the University's PGR Executive and Faculty GSEs. Targets were set in the Corporate Plan 2012-2016 to increase the ratio of students to research-active staff from ~1.5:1 to ~1.75:1 over the duration of the Corporate Plan, and good progress is being made on this. The PGR Executive disseminates an annual strategic overview of progress against this and other strategic targets at the PGR Directors Conference.<sup>22</sup>

External examiners' reports are reviewed on receipt for issues of immediate concern and are also considered by the PGR Service and Academic Director on an annual basis with general themes reported to PGR Executive. The report includes details of the numbers of research degree awarded each year by School and degree type.

Other mechanisms for evaluating postgraduate research provision include the consideration by the PGR Executive of feedback from both successful and unsuccessful bids to external funders, review of PPD training session feedback by Faculty GSEs and the comparison of UEA PRES results against national and group benchmarks. PRES is considered further in this document under Evaluation mechanisms.

Student progress is monitored via the annual review of progress, which also affords students and supervisory teams the opportunity to comment on the quality of supervision, training, research climate, library and IT facilities and pastoral support. All reports are considered by the appropriate School or Institute Director of Postgraduate Research with summary reports considered by the Faculty Graduate School Executive and subsequently the PGR Executive.

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<sup>22</sup> Slides from PGR Directors Conference Agenda 17 September 2014

## The research environment

### Indicator 4

*Higher education providers accept research students only into an environment that provides support for doing and learning about research, and where excellent research, recognised by the relevant subject community, is occurring.*

Research students are an integral part of our research environment and are encouraged, as early career researchers, to take an active part in the research culture of their Schools and Faculties. The contribution made by research students to the University's mission is emphasised in the 'Research with impact' section of the University's Corporate Plan for 2012-16.<sup>23</sup> The priorities in relation to postgraduate research degree provision are to secure Research Council and other funded postgraduate research centres and partnerships, increase both home and international postgraduate research student quality and numbers and support research students with an exemplary training programme.

The UEA Research Degree Education Strategy is being developed in parallel with the University's Learning & Teaching Strategy 2014-2019 to reflect the University's commitment to high quality doctoral education as articulated in the Corporate Plan. The Research Degree Education Strategy is supported by an implementation plan, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which incorporates actions from plans developed by the institution as part of its ongoing implementation of the UK Quality Code. Our PGR Education Strategy consists of the Attributes of UEA Doctoral Candidates, 15 Strategic Aims and a Framework for Training Doctoral Students Registered on Doctoral Programmes at UEA.

The RAE and REF provide an institution-wide indication of the strength of the University's research environment. The 2014 REF results published in December 2014 show that the University has steadily improved its international research reputation as well as its scale and impact since the 2008 RAE.<sup>24</sup> In the 2014 REF over 82% of the University's research activity was deemed to be world leading or internationally excellent compared to over 50% in 2008; we are ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the UK for the quality of our research output and 21<sup>st</sup> overall among all mainstream British institutions. Eight UEA subjects were ranked in the UK top 10 for their Unit of Assessment.

The University's participation in three Research Council Doctoral Training Partnerships<sup>25</sup> and the development of a strategic alliance between the Universities of Essex and Kent - the Eastern Academic Research Consortium – also provides an indicator of the excellence of the research environment at UEA. Formal partnership agreements<sup>26</sup> have been signed for each of these partnerships and Memoranda of Understanding where there are external supervisors.

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<sup>23</sup> University Corporate Plan 2012-2016

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.uea.ac.uk/research/ref>

<sup>25</sup> Doctoral Training Partnerships: Management Board minutes, bid narratives and websites

<sup>26</sup> CHASE and EnvEast agreements.

The University has formal arrangements with the Norwich Biosciences Institutes<sup>27</sup> that allow UEA PGR students to be supervised by Institute researchers. As evidence of the success and confidence in these arrangements, this year the BBSRC awarded a further Doctoral Training Partnership grant to the partnership led by the John Innes Centre on the basis of the excellence of both their research environment and their PGR training arrangements.

In order to ensure that the research environment is appropriate for a particular PGR student, the UEA CoP states that, prior to admission, a sufficiently clear outline of the proposal should be agreed with the student to ensure that the School or Institute can satisfy itself regarding the availability of necessary resources and an appropriate research-active environment. This is particularly important where a student will not be based at the University, for example periods of time spent at CASE partners<sup>28</sup> or on fieldwork where contractual agreements may be required.<sup>29</sup> The continued availability of supervision, facilities and resources is monitored through the annual reporting process. The research environment is now formally considered in the sign off process for new delivery modes or sites for PGR programmes<sup>30</sup> and in the proposal forms for submitting new research programmes to LTC.<sup>31</sup>

PGR provision at University Campus Suffolk is subject to a validation arrangement and is monitored by having representation at UCS on key research committees<sup>32</sup>. The University does not at present award joint research degrees with any other institution. There are however a number of co-tutelle arrangements with EU institutions, which are considered carefully by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes to ensure that there is an appropriate research environment, before co-tutelle agreements<sup>33</sup> are signed by the student and parties at both institutions. Co-tutelle arrangements are reviewed regularly throughout the student's period of registration and there is a University template that is used for the basis of discussions.

Schools run a variety of research activities including seminar series<sup>34</sup>, symposia and conferences, which students are encouraged to attend and to organise<sup>35</sup> and for which they receive training credits. Students' workspaces are located within their Schools or Faculties of study, close to where wider research is taking place, and all have access to IT facilities and equipment. There is now a dedicated space within the University Library for PGR students including large secure storage lockers, as a result of feedback received from PRES and other routes.

Guidance on research conduct is provided by supervisory teams but also through PPD sessions on areas such as research ethics, dissemination of work, public engagement, intellectual property rights and academic writing. Careers Central, the University's careers service, has advisers for each Faculty dedicated to providing advice for PGR students. The University provides

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<sup>27</sup> NRP UEA agreement; also [https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs\(awards\)/doctor-of-philosophy](https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs(awards)/doctor-of-philosophy)

<sup>28</sup> REN template for CASE agreement.

<sup>29</sup> REN contracts and partnership agreements

<sup>30</sup> PGR Executive 18 November 2014 Minute A7

<sup>31</sup> PGR Executive 22 November 2013 Minute 14 (Doc. PGR13D010)

<sup>32</sup> UCS governance structure and representation

<sup>33</sup> University co-tutelle template

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. <https://www.uea.ac.uk/political-social-international-studies/research-degrees>

<sup>35</sup> See e.g. <https://www.uea.ac.uk/arts-humanities/graduate-school/news-and-events/pgr-student-conferences>

a wide variety of Student Services to support all students at UEA and provides support through the Learning Enhancement Team<sup>36</sup> for those needing extra help with study skills or academic writing.

The University has detailed policies regarding research integrity and ethics<sup>37</sup>, including avoiding plagiarism, and intellectual property rights and responsibilities. The University's procedures for dealing with allegations of Misconduct in Research were reviewed by Research and Enterprise Services over summer 2012<sup>38</sup> in consultation with the Postgraduate Research Service and the Chair and Secretary of the Senate Student Disciplinary Committee. The overarching principles apply to all present or past staff and students, with the detailed procedures for students forming a revised Section 5 of the Research Degree Policy Documents<sup>39</sup>.

## Selection, admission and induction of students

### Indicator 5

*Higher education providers' admissions procedures for research degrees are clear, consistently applied and demonstrate equality of opportunity.*

The University's admissions procedures are described in Section 1 of the CoP: Research Degrees including ensuring that applicants are suitably qualified and prepared, that expertise and facilities are available to support them and that the admissions decision made is fair and in accordance with equal opportunities policies. The University has an admissions complaints procedure.<sup>40</sup>

The University's admissions requirements for research students are set out in the PGR Admissions web pages<sup>41</sup>, in the Faculty Postgraduate Prospectuses<sup>42</sup> and on the web pages for the University's Graduate Schools and DTPs. The University has formalised its requirements for admissions and recruitment further, with the production of a guidance note on research-led and applicant-led applications<sup>43</sup> which is reviewed annually and circulated to academic staff in Schools.

All enquiries relating to PGR programmes are dealt with by the PGR Service. Applicants with disabilities are able to discuss any particular requirements regarding support needed and additional funding available with the Dean of Students' Office.

The University has reviewed and clarified a number of admissions procedures in the light of the opportunities for greater efficiency and consistency of approach that the establishment of a

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<sup>36</sup> <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/dos/learning-enhancement>

<sup>37</sup> <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/postgraduate-research/pgr-regulations-and-forms/research-conduct-and-ethics>

<sup>38</sup> Research Executive 8 November 2012

<sup>39</sup> PGR Policy Group 23 November 2012 Minute A1

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.uea.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/apply/our-admissions-policy>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.uea.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research-degrees>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.uea.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/prospectus>

<sup>43</sup> PGR Admissions Framework 2014-15 guidelines

unified PGR Service has offered. A new University system for managing postgraduate admissions (Hobsons ApplyYourself / Connect)<sup>44</sup> has been introduced which offers greater transparency for users. The 'front end' of the system - for receipt of applications - is now in operation; the system for dealing with review and selection (AppReview) is in the process of being built. Processes for visiting research student admissions were reviewed in 2012-13<sup>45</sup> and guidelines produced.

Admissions procedures for students not based at UEA are regularly monitored and reviewed, to ensure that only high quality applicants are admitted. Admissions procedures for London Academy of Diplomacy students (route since closed) were reviewed in 2013-14<sup>46</sup> and the procedures for University Campus Suffolk students are being reviewed during 2014-15.<sup>47</sup>

#### **Indicator 6**

*Only appropriately qualified and prepared applicants are admitted to research degree programmes. Admissions decisions involve at least two members of the higher education provider's staff who have received training and guidance for the selection and admission of research degree students. The decision-making process enables the higher education provider to assure itself that balanced and independent admissions decisions have been made in accordance with its admissions policy.*

The University seeks to ensure through the admissions procedures set out in Section 1 of the CoP for Research Degrees that only those applicants who are suitably qualified and able to benefit from the research degree programmes are admitted. The University's admissions requirements for each degree and clear guidance about funding available to students are provided in the PG Prospectus and on the University<sup>48</sup> and Faculty Graduate School web pages.

The University has reviewed English language requirements across Schools/Faculties<sup>49</sup> and a schedule setting out minimum English Language requirements across all four Faculties has been published on the PGR Admissions website. The minimum English language requirement for all research degrees is IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) with scores in each element of at least 6.0. Where there are differences in the minimum requirement, these have a clear academic rationale. The PGR Executive is responsible for reviewing these requirements with the next review being due in 2014-15.<sup>50</sup>

In the circumstances where students have not met the English language requirements by the time they register a programme of support and activities to improve their English is put in place, with a timescale for achievement and detailed in the offer letter to the student.

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<sup>44</sup> PGR Service internal guidelines on Hobsons procedures and ARM recipe cards

<sup>45</sup> PGR Executive 17 June 2013 Minute 8 and 27 Nov 2013 Minute 4

<sup>46</sup> PGR Executive 22 November 2013 Minute 5 (Doc. PGR13D002) and 15 May 2014 Minute A9 (Doc. PGR13D042)

<sup>47</sup> PGR Executive 7 October 2014 Minute A9 (Doc. PGR14D007)

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.uea.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research-degrees/entry-requirements>

<sup>49</sup> PRPPG 5 December 2011 Minute 7

<sup>50</sup> PGR Executive, expected 2 June 2015

The minimum requirement for all research degrees is an undergraduate degree at class 2:1 or equivalent, and/or a relevant Master's qualification. Equivalent professional experience is also be taken into account in determining an applicant's eligibility (i.e. through recognition of prior learning gained through professional practice or work experience). The University has reviewed the entry qualifications of those PGR students admitted against the University's regulations for Master's by Research, Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy, and found that there was adherence to the University's admissions criteria.<sup>51</sup>

Checks are made by the PGR Service prior to the issue of offers on English language and academic qualifications, and to ensure that admissions procedures have been followed correctly and that Faculty documentation has been completed.

Staff making admissions decisions receive training on admissions processes as part of the supervisor development activities run within each Faculty, with further guidance provided by experienced and trained staff in the PGR Service. All staff at the University are required to undertake Equality and Diversity training. Training has also been reviewed for staff who were involved in admissions decisions at LAD and are currently involved at UCS.<sup>52</sup>

#### **Indicator 7**

*Higher education providers define and communicate clearly the responsibilities and entitlements of students undertaking research degree programmes.*

The responsibilities and entitlements of students undertaking research degrees are set out in the Regulations, Code of Practice and Research Degree Policy Documents. These are communicated to students in the offer letter and any accompanying guidance. The offer letter includes details of the supervisory team, the fees for the first year of study (and expected increases), bench fees (if applicable), the length of the period of study, training requirements, details of funding and any sponsor requirements. Further information is supplied to students once they have accepted the offer and includes details of registration and induction arrangements, the PPD programme, accommodation and other practical information. The content of offer letters is reviewed regularly by the PGR Service.

The information provided at the offer stage is supplemented by student handbooks, Graduate School, DTP and PGR Service web pages, and induction programmes (both at Faculty level and DTP and individual School events). These are reviewed annually by the PGR Service, in conjunction with Faculty Associate Deans and Programme Directors, and updated on a regular basis.

The PGR Executive is currently reviewing postgraduate research programme continuation and other fees<sup>53</sup> and a review is currently being undertaken of bench fees<sup>54</sup>, ensuring that students

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<sup>51</sup> PRPPG 19 June 2013 Minute A1

<sup>52</sup> PGR Exec 22 November 2013 Minute 5 (Doc. PGR13D002)

<sup>53</sup> PGR Exec 13 June 2014 Minute B1 (Doc. PGR13D056)

<sup>54</sup> PGR Executive 13 June 2014 Minute A6 (Doc. PGR13D050)

are made aware of the full costs of study. The PGR Service review annually the terms and conditions for UEA studentships<sup>55</sup>, taking into account internal and external developments, and have reviewed the mechanisms for the payment of studentship stipends.

We ensure that students registering at partner institutions or away from Norwich receive equivalent information to those on the UEA campus. For example we clarified what information LAD PGR students receive at induction while this route was active.<sup>56</sup>

#### **Indicator 8**

*Research students are provided with sufficient information to enable them to begin their studies with an understanding of the environment in which they will be working.*

The University's PGR Admissions web pages and the web pages for the Faculty Graduate Schools provide applicants with detailed information about the research programmes offered by Schools and the space and facilities available. Information applicable to all research students can be found on the PGR Service web pages. Each of the DTPs also has its own dedicated website providing information for prospective and current students.

All research students are required to attend a Faculty induction programme on registering. Each Faculty is responsible for arranging induction and orientation for new PGR students, and these are supplemented by individual School events. DTP students will also attend cohort induction programmes as specified in the proposals made to the Research Councils. There is also a University-wide programme for new international students.

Induction programmes reflect the local research environment but within the framework set out by the Research Degree Education Strategy and the Code of Practice. They include sessions on what to expect at various stages in the programme, University support services and facilities, the research environment, research conduct and PPD. Officers of the Union of UEA Students and the GSA contribute to the induction process. All new students are provided at induction with a copy of the relevant Faculty handbook and there are also handbooks for each of the DTPs and the ClinPsyD. Faculties and Schools review their induction activities each year and explore improvements, for example, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences has introduced a buddy system to help new students settle in.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to formal induction programmes the University recognises the importance, in the Code of Practice, of the supervisory team in ensuring a student's successful transition to postgraduate research at UEA. The University requires that the primary supervisor arranges a formal meeting with the student within three weeks of initial registration to establish their working relationship and training needs (see section on skills development below). This is monitored by the PGR Service.

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<sup>55</sup> Terms and conditions for UEA studentships 2014-15

<sup>56</sup> PGR Executive 22 November 2013 Minute 5 (Doc. PGR13D002)

<sup>57</sup> FMH PGR Student Buddy System Evaluation – Final Report (Dr Jenny Moore)

## Supervision

### Indicator 9

*Higher education providers appoint supervisors with the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support and encourage research students, and to monitor their progress effectively.*

The University's policy and procedures regarding supervision, including the criteria for appointing supervisors, are set out in Section 7 of the Code of Practice for Research Degrees. Guidance for staff and students on supervisory issues, including definition of key responsibilities, is available in summary form in the Guide to Good Supervisory Practice. Role descriptors have been reviewed and updated for School PGR Directors and Associate Deans for Postgraduate Research<sup>58</sup> which are included in the 5 yearly review schedule. The School PGR Director is responsible for appointing and monitoring supervisory teams. Head of Schools are required to ensure that new supervisors are provided with appropriate support and that through workload allocation systems that supervisors are able to devote sufficient time to their supervisory duties.

Supervisory arrangements are checked by the PGR Service at the point of offer, with studentship offers requiring sign-off by the relevant Associate Dean. The composition of the supervisory team and is finalised at the initial review meeting and discussed at each annual review of progress; these arrangements are monitored by School PGR Directors.

All supervisors, including those external to UEA, are required to attend supervisor training sessions, organised at Faculty level, at least every three years. All Faculties have reviewed their supervisor training and developed new formats to encourage supervisors to share best practice and innovation, including online and face-to-face sessions. In addition training sessions for new and for experienced supervisors are used as an opportunity for supervisors to seek advice and guidance on common supervisory issues. Feedback on the training is sought after each session. Attendance records are kept, and monitored by School PGR Directors and Associate Deans.<sup>59</sup> The University ensures that external supervisors participate in UEA (or equivalent) supervisor training and keeps records of this.

In addition to being required to attend supervisor training external supervisors are required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out their roles and responsibilities.<sup>60</sup> The criteria for the appointment of external supervisors are the same as for internal supervisors. Where external supervisors act as primary supervisors Schools are required to ensure that honorary appointments are made. There are additional criteria for DTP supervisors, as agreed by the relevant DTP Management Board, and detailed in funding proposals.

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<sup>58</sup> PGR Executive 26 February 2014 Minute B1 (Doc. PGR13D032)

<sup>59</sup> Faculty GSE minutes, e.g. HUM GSE January 2014

<sup>60</sup> Template for Memorandum of Understanding for external supervisors

There is also provision within the MA in Higher Education Practice professional development programme (which forms part of the probation process for newly-appointed lecturers<sup>61</sup>) to reflect upon supervising research students as part of the activities which count towards Module 2 Evaluating Teaching. Those who are new to supervision will normally be appointed as a second supervisor or a member of a supervisory team in the first instance so that they can be mentored by more experienced colleagues acting in the primary supervisor role.

There will be a review of procedures for ensuring high quality of supervision, including supervisory training in 2014-15; student feedback from PRES is taken into account in this review.

#### **Indicator 10**

*Each research student has a supervisory team containing a main supervisor who is the clearly identified point of contact.*

The University requires, as set out in the Code of Practice, that all research students have an approved supervisory team, ordinarily comprising at least two research-active University teachers. The role of the supervisory team is to provide candidates for research degrees with academic and pastoral guidance as they pursue advanced study and research. One member of the supervisory team is designated as the primary supervisor.

In appointing supervisory teams Schools will take into account subject expertise and knowledge. The primary supervisor however 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. Where students are based at or have a primary supervisor at another location they will also have a UEA supervisor to provide guidance on University procedures.

Offer letters to students will include the name of the primary supervisor for the research project and will include the names of the supervisory team where agreed. The composition and relative weighting of the supervisory team will be finalised at the initial meeting with the student, which should be held within three weeks of the student starting. The PGR Service regularly monitors the SITS record to ensure that at least two supervisors are recorded for all research students and the supervisory composition is confirmed as part of the annual review process.

Where a primary supervisor is unable to continue in the role, either temporarily or on a permanent basis, alternative supervision will be put in place. In the event of difficulties with the supervisory process, students are able to access independent and confidential advice from within the School (for example, the School PGR Director), from Associate Deans or other sources (Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes, PGR Service, Dean of Students, the Advice Centre of the Union of UEA Students and the GSA). Students can request a change of supervisor and where possible the School will accommodate this. If concerns are not satisfactorily resolved, students may pursue the formal complaints procedures.

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<sup>61</sup> <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/csed/qualifications/mahep>

**Indicator 11**

*Higher education providers ensure that the responsibilities of research student supervisors are readily available and clearly communicated to supervisors and students.*

The role and responsibilities of supervisors are detailed within the Code of Practice for Research Degrees and in the Research Degree Policy Documents. The supervisor training provided within the Faculties reiterates these responsibilities and provides a platform for the discussion of common problems and solutions others have found helpful. School PGR Directors provide the academic lead within their Schools in relation to postgraduate research (as set out in the current role descriptors) and act as a source of support and guidance to less experienced colleagues. Faculty PGR handbooks also make students and supervisors' responsibilities clear to students. External supervisors are required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding which sets out their responsibilities for supervision, training and monitoring, and the support available to them.

The frequency and method of contact will be agreed by the student and supervisory team at the start of the programme. Supervisors are however required to meet with full-time students at least eight times per year including three formal progress meetings and with part-time students at least four times per year, including progress meetings. This is monitored by School PGR Directors as part of the annual review of progress. Where students are away from the University, for example, on fieldwork supervisors are required to put in place plans for how they will maintain contact whilst away.

The Regulations for research degrees permit Schools to consider student requests for suspension of their studies (intercalation) or extensions within a set limit, with requests over this being considered by the Academic Director. The processes for this are set out in the Concessions Guide and forms for this purpose are available on the PGR Service. Supervisors and students have access to advice and guidance on this from their School PGR Director, the Faculty Associate Dean or the PGR Service.

The University provides a wide range of support services for all students and these are brought to the attention of supervisors during supervisor training. The University's Support Services also provide extensive guidance notes for staff and students on a broad range of issues.

**Indicator 12**

*Higher education providers ensure that individual supervisors have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities effectively.*

The University has had in place for a number of years the requirement that supervisors should not provide primary supervision to more than six PGR students, unless a concession was approved by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes. This requirement has been reviewed by the PGR Executive in 2013-14<sup>62</sup> recognising that there are a number of factors that affect the ability of an individual member of academic staff to supervise, not just the number of

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<sup>62</sup> PGR Exec 17 January 2014 Minute 7 (Document PGR13D023)

supervisees alone. The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that supervisory duties are properly taken into account in workload allocation models alongside teaching, research and administrative duties. The Code of Practice has been revised to specify that where supervisors will be supervising six to ten PGR students this now requires the approval of the Head of School and where supervisors will be supervising eleven or more students this requires the approval of the Associate Dean PGR as the authorised representative of the Dean of Faculty. Checks are made by the PGR Service on both Schools and Institutes, and on partner institutions to ensure that these limits are adhered to or agreed arrangements put in place.

The responsibility for appointing supervisors and monitoring quality of supervision lies with School PGR Directors, with delegated authority from the Head of School. Each School and Faculty conducts regular workload surveys. Supervisor workloads are monitored by the School PGR Director with account being taken of any comments regarding supervision made by students in the annual review. School PGR Directors also consider supervisory load when monitoring completion rates.

## Progress and review

### Indicator 13

*Higher education providers put in place clearly defined mechanisms for monitoring and supporting research student progress, including formal and explicit reviews of progress at different stages. Research students, supervisors and other relevant staff are made aware of progress monitoring mechanisms, including the importance of keeping appropriate records of the outcomes of meetings and related activities.*

Schools and Institutes are required to monitor student progress regularly throughout students' full period of registration. Following the initial meeting between the student and the primary supervisor, within three months of registration, the supervisory team and student meet to agree a provisional working title for the thesis, the working objectives of the project, and a timetable of activities and achievement targets over the period of study, highlighting deadlines for successive stages of research and other milestones. The plan of activities and achievements, which is regularly updated, provides the basis of progress monitoring. It is also an effective means of ensuring that students are aware of expectations with regard to their progress.

As detailed above, meetings of the student and the supervisory team will take place at least eight times a year during the period of registration, including three formal progress review meetings (one annual, two interim). Informal contact takes place more frequently. It is the student's responsibility to take and circulate notes to the supervisory team, to inform the annual review of progress.

Each supervisory team is required by University regulations to review and report student progress not less than once each year, through the Annual Review of Students' Progress. Since April 2013 the annual review of progress has moved from a paper-based process to an online process using the e:Vision web-based application with a standardised report form. There are also

plans for the interim progress review forms to be replaced by online versions. The online report form includes the student's own assessment of their progress, research and training plans for the next 12 months, and comments on supervision, PPD and facilities.

Students' first reviews take place between six and nine months after initial registration, then every twelve months thereafter. The student and supervisory team complete their respective parts of the online report form, which are used to inform discussions at the annual review meeting, and the primary supervisor will make their recommendation regarding progress (satisfactory, satisfactory with reservations or unsatisfactory). Once the student and supervisory team have signed off on the form, it goes to the School PGR Director for review and final sign-off. (Faculty Associate Deans (PGR) review staff candidates' progress.) If a supervisory team concludes that a student's progress is not wholly satisfactory, follow-up actions to be taken are specified and reviewed by the PGR Director.

The process of reviewing students' progress is monitored on an annual basis. Monitoring involves a review by the Faculty GSE of general issues raised and has proved to be a useful means of sharing experience and identifying issues common to Schools and remedying measures put in place. The Faculties are required to confirm to the PGR Executive<sup>63</sup> (reported at LTC) that the process has been completed and to draw attention to any issues of principle or policy or aspects worthy of wider dissemination.

The requirements for transfer from MPhil to PhD and from Med to EdD are set out in the Regulations for those degrees, in the Code of Practice and in individual School/Faculty guidelines. At the time of writing the MPhil to PhD transfer process was in place in all Schools except BIO, CHE, PHA and ENV. Transfer panels may include one supervisor but also have panel members external to the supervisory team in order to provide an independent review of students' progress and ability to complete a PhD within a reasonable time frame. School and Faculty guidelines are available for students and staff in handbooks and on Faculty Graduate School web pages.

From 1 October 2015<sup>64</sup> there will be direct PhD registration and the introduction of a probationary status for all research degree students enrolled on the MPhil, PhD, MD and Masters by Research programmes. The probationary period has been introduced to provide a structured and consistent approach to academic progress monitoring and to ensure that students who proceed beyond the first year of registration are of sufficient quality and are suitably motivated to succeed in their research degree programme, minimising financial and time costs for both students and supervisors.

A review of probationary status will be undertaken at an annual review meeting within the first year of full-time study (or equivalent). If progress is not judged to be satisfactory, an action plan with a clear list of measurable goals to be achieved and the timescale for achieving these will be agreed and a Continuation Review meeting scheduled to review again the student's probationary status. A student not making satisfactory progress at a Continuation Review Meeting will normally be required to withdraw from the degree.

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<sup>63</sup> PGR Executive 13 January 2015 Minute B4 (Doc. PGR14D040) and PGR Executive 3 March 2015

<sup>64</sup> PGR Executive 15 May 2014 Minute A5 (Doc. PGR13D038)

Each student registering for the degrees above from 1 October 2015 onwards will be assigned an Internal Assessor by the School, who will normally be appointed by or at the start of the student's programme and who will not be a member of the supervisory team. The Internal Assessor will attend all progress review meetings for that student which contain the element of probationary review and will, wherever possible, attend any Continuation Review meetings.

The professional doctorates (EdD, ClinPsyD) have a structured programme of taught elements and the requirements for progression are set out in the Regulations for those degree and in student and supervisors' handbooks and guidelines.

## Development of research and other skills

### Indicator 14

*Research students have appropriate opportunities for developing research, personal and professional skills. Each research student's development needs are identified and agreed jointly by the student and appropriate staff at the start of the degree; these are regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate.*

The University is committed to the provision of skills and employability training for all PGR students in order to equip them with the research and transferable skills for all stages of their postgraduate research and beyond. This commitment is reflected in the development of the UEA Research Degree Education Strategy, which includes The Framework for Training Doctoral Students Registered on Doctoral Programmes.<sup>65</sup> The Framework takes eight different elements of our current PPD provision and maps them against the requirements of the RCUK Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training (2013). These are: the Research Environment, Training Needs Assessment, Professional and Transferable Skills for Researchers, Discipline Specific Research Methodology and Advanced Skills Training, Cohort Training and peer to peer learning, Public Engagement, Placements and Exchange Visits, and Academic Practice.

Over the past five years existing provision in the area of professional skills training has been extended and enlarged in the form of the Faculty Personal and Professional Development (PPD) programmes and there has been a move away from centralised training. In developing PPD programmes there has been a strong focus on aligning professional skills training to balance the needs of students, their PhD research projects and employers.

The development of DTPs and other partnerships has provided opportunities for associated students to participate in training at partner institutions, providing a greater variety of opportunities and contact with a wider network of researchers. This allows us to draw upon best practice in the wider research sector in developing training provision for all research students. Each Doctoral Training Partnership has detailed requirements as agreed by its Management Board and any associated training subgroups.

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<sup>65</sup> PGR Executive 15 May 2014 Minute A6 (Doc. PGR13D039), 13 June 2014 Minute A7 (Doc. PGR13D051), 13 January 2015 Minute A6 and Minute A7 (Doc. PGR14D030/031)

There is flexibility in the PPD programme, based on the formal assessment of training needs, and an exemption procedure for those with equivalent prior training. The Faculty PPD programmes are reviewed on an annual basis by Faculty training coordinators and Associate Deans.<sup>66</sup>

Research students meet with their supervisors within three weeks of registration to discuss their initial training needs as mapped against the Researcher Development Framework and to draw up a plan to meet these. The initial training needs assessment is reviewed at regular intervals through interim and annual progress reviews and is updated throughout the period of study. Research students have full access to the wide range of PPD modules set out in the online directory and are able to self-enrol on most modules with a record being kept on SITS which is available to students and their supervisory teams.

In addition to training offered from supervisors and through the PPD programmes the Learning Enhancement Team in the Dean of Students Office provide paper and web-based resources and offer individual tutorials to PGR students wishing to develop their research skills.

Students are encouraged to take part in teaching, outreach and other activities within their Schools or Institutes, provided this does not adversely affect the completion of their research degree. Opportunities to teach are available for research students who have had the necessary training. The University's guidelines regarding teaching undertaken by PGR students<sup>67</sup> require that students who teach have undertaken training offered by the University or can demonstrate evidence of equivalent training.

The University offers PGR students various routes to preparation for teaching<sup>68</sup>: the CSED Developing Teaching Skills Programme, a HUM course 'Preparing to Teach in the Arts and Humanities', a SSF course 'An Introduction to Teaching in the Social Sciences' and sessions in SCI which are mandatory for those students wanting to work as demonstrators supporting teaching. These are supplemented by Faculty PPD sessions aimed at those PGR students who are currently teaching or considering doing so on areas such as marking and assessment, and preparation, organisation and delivery. All the above training provides training credits and is captured within students' PPD records.

The CSED/EDU Developing Teaching Skills Programme is a stand-alone 20 credit Masters module, accredited by the Higher Education Academy, designed around the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (UKPSF). Participants who subsequently go on to become members of academic staff may carry 20 M credits over to the MA-HEP. The Teaching Skills training is included in the annual report to LTC from CSED. An alternative for those students registered in HUM who wish to take up teaching opportunities in the Faculty is the 'Preparing to Teach in the Arts and Humanities' course which consists of five two hour sessions run over five weeks. The seminar topics include and innovation, organisation and delivery of seminars and classroom learning, marking and assessment, and University

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<sup>66</sup> Faculty GSE minutes

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/learningteaching>: Teaching Undertaken by Postgraduate Research Student (Guidelines), currently under review

<sup>68</sup> PRPPG report to LTC 17 March 2011 Minute 51 LTC10D057

support services available to students. Students are expected to undertake the HUM Preparing to Teach course before commencing a teaching role in the University.

The PGR Executive has commenced a review of processes and practices relating to postgraduate students who teach at UEA<sup>69</sup>. This review will be conducted in conjunction with the UUEAS and will take into account the 2013 National Union of Students report 'Postgraduates who Teach'. The review will involve obtaining feedback from School Managers and School Directors of Teaching as well as from research students and undergraduates. This review will report back to the Postgraduate Research Executive in 2014–15.

## Evaluation mechanisms

### Indicator 15

*Higher education providers put in place mechanisms to collect, review and respond as appropriate to evaluations from those concerned with research degrees, including individual research students and groups of research students or their representatives. Evaluations are considered openly and constructively and the results are communicated appropriately.*

Formal feedback from each student on their experience is incorporated within the annual review of students' progress. In addition to recording and monitoring progress made during the year the report form also requests feedback on supervision, training and facilities. Supervisors are also able to comment on these areas through this process. Comments from students and supervisors are monitored and followed up as appropriate by the School as part of the annual review process. Students and supervisors are also able to contact the School PGR Director in confidence regarding any concerns they may have.

More general feedback is obtained through Research Student Forums, and by PGR students' membership of School Boards, DTP Management Boards, Faculty GSEs, PGR Executive and LTC (the latter two through the UEA SU and previously also the GSA<sup>70</sup>). The University now has Research Student Forums in three Faculties, in addition to the Student Voice Committee at the NBI, with a fourth in development. The Research Student Forums are supported by links with the new UUEAS Postgraduate Education Officer. The involvement of student representatives in these groups and in implementation of B11: Research Degrees has proved an invaluable means of assisting the effective development of PGR policy and practice.

Consultations on specific issues, which may involve changes to existing policy or practice, are undertaken as a matter of course. This is normally conducted through working groups, which include student representatives or student feedback mechanisms. Working groups report back to the PGR Executive. Recent examples include the reviews of the Instructions to Examiners and viva assessment, Etheses and of research student representation<sup>71</sup>. The annual PGR Directors conference also provides a valuable opportunity for discussion of modifications to PGR policy or

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<sup>69</sup> PGR Exec 22 November 2013 Minute 10 (Doc. PGR13D006)

<sup>70</sup> PGR Exec 13 June 2014 Minute A11

<sup>71</sup> PGR Exec 22 November 2013 Minute 9 (Doc. PGR13D005) and 26 February 2014 Minute A6 (Doc. PGR13D029)

practice within the University, and includes academic and administrative staff, UEASS staff and student representatives.

Regular meetings of PGR Managers and Officers provide a further opportunity to share good practice, ensure consistency across the University and develop timely responses to emerging problems and issues. PGR Service staff also feed into the PGR Process Improvement Plan which is reviewed regularly and reported to the PGR Executive.

The University also monitors feedback from students and supervisors at partner institutions, including LAD<sup>72</sup> and UCS<sup>73</sup>, and from our DTP partners. There is student representation on various DTP Management Boards and associated training sub-groups.

The University has participated since 2008 in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and the results are considered by the PGR Executive<sup>74</sup> and by Faculty GSEs. The response rate in PRES 2013 of 33% was low, therefore we are putting measures in place to encourage greater participation of PGR students in PRES 2015 to improve our confidence in the results of the survey.

The results of PRES 2013 have been used to identify areas where we have examples of good practice to share amongst Faculties, and areas where we can improve the PGR experience. Schools and Faculties were asked to produce action plans in relation to PRES, including dissemination strategies to ensure that students know that actions are being taken in response to feedback. Outcomes from PRES 2013<sup>75</sup> have included improved facilities for postgraduate research students in the Library following a consultation and investment of capital funding, student representation from all Faculties at meetings to agree a proposal to UEA Space Management Group and enhancements to research student offices around the campus.

## Assessment

### Indicator 16

*Higher education providers that are research degree awarding bodies use criteria for assessing research degrees that enable them to define their academic standards and the achievements of their graduates. The criteria used to assess research degrees are clear and readily available to research students, staff and examiners.*

The criteria for assessment of research degrees are set out in the individual Instructions for Examiners for degrees, which examiners receive upon appointment. The Instructions to Examiners for the PhD were reviewed by a specially established working group during 2013-14, with the review later being extended to the MPhil and Masters by Research.<sup>76</sup> The Instructions to

<sup>72</sup> PGR Executive 22 November 2013 Minute 5; January 2014 Statements; 15 May 2014 Minute A9 (Doc. PGR13D042)

<sup>73</sup> PGR Executive 13 June 2014 Minute C1 (Doc. PGR13D047)

<sup>74</sup> PGR Executive 27 November 2013 Minute 7 (Doc. PGR13D018), 15 May 2014 Minute A10 (Doc. PGR13D043)

<sup>75</sup> PRES You said We did

<sup>76</sup> PGR Executive 15 May 2014 Minute A4 (Doc. PGR13D037)

Examiners for the MPhil, Masters by Research and PhD have been combined as part of the review of the Instructions to Examiners and viva assessment. There are separate Instructions and additional guidelines for the taught elements of ClinPsyD and EdD assessment<sup>77</sup>. The Instructions are supplemented by the Regulations, Code of Practice for Research Degrees and the Code of Practice for the External Examiner system.

In developing and reviewing the assessment criteria for research degrees use is made of the descriptors for doctoral and research master's degree qualifications<sup>78</sup> as set out in the FHEQ, of the QAA documents on Doctoral degree and Master's degree characteristics and of subject benchmarks where appropriate (e.g. Clinical Psychology).

The Instructions to Examiners are available to staff and students on the PGR Service web pages. In addition students can access guidance on the presentation of the thesis is available in Section 3 of the Research Degree Policy documents and in the Rules in the University Calendar. The PPD programmes include modules on the nature of the higher degree and on developing academic writing skills. These sessions, along with a session aimed at those in Year 3 or 4 on the viva examination, are intended to ensure a high level of awareness of assessment criteria and familiarity with the viva process.

Regulations relating to the assessment criteria for the Higher Doctorates (Doctor of Laws, of Letters and of Science) are published in the University Calendar<sup>79</sup>. There are regulatory frameworks in place guaranteeing consistency across the Schools and Institutes.

#### **Indicator 17**

*Research degree final assessment procedures are clear and are operated rigorously, fairly and consistently. They include input from an external examiner and are carried out to a reasonable timescale. Assessment procedures are communicated clearly to research students, supervisors and examiners.*

The procedures for final assessment of research degrees are set out in the Regulations, Instructions to Examiners and the Code of Practice for the External Examiner System at UEA. The Instructions to Examiners for the Masters by Research, MPhil and PhD were reviewed in 2013-14<sup>80</sup> and the assessment outcomes open to examiners reduced to make decisions simpler. These are available to students and staff on the PGR Service web pages, alongside additional guidance, for example a set of Frequently Asked Questions regarding the changes to the viva assessment processes.<sup>81</sup> All research students are assessed by an oral examination of the thesis conducted by an external examiner and an internal examiner (two external examiners in the case of staff candidates). For those research students registered at UCS they will be examined under UEA

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<sup>77</sup> Instructions to Examiners for the EdD and Instructions to Examiners for the ClinPsyD

<sup>78</sup> PGR Exec 22 November 2013 Minute 6 (Doc. PGR13D003)

<sup>79</sup> [https://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs\(awards\)/doctor-of-laws,-of-letters-and-of-science](https://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs(awards)/doctor-of-laws,-of-letters-and-of-science)

<sup>80</sup> PGR Executive 15 May 2014 Minute A4 (Doc. PGR13D037)

<sup>81</sup> <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/6881115/2014+Viva+Changes+FAQs/5ecf8575-27e4-482d-be68-be42b3c8a417>

assessment regulations and the appointment of examiners will be approved according to UEA practice with supplementary approval via the UCS governance structure.

Research degree candidates submitting theses from 11 August 2014 have been asked to provide an electronic copy of their thesis as well as the two soft-bound copies currently requested. Examiners are given the option of receiving an electronic copy instead of a soft-bound copy. This mirrors the requirement introduced from January 2013 for candidates to provide, on completion of the assessment processes, an electronic copy of the thesis for the Library in addition to a final hard-bound copy.<sup>82</sup>

The criteria for the appointment of examiners are set out in Code of Practice for External Examiners. Recommendations for the appointment of examiners are made at School level<sup>83</sup> and then confirmed by the relevant Faculty Associate Dean PGR, who checks that the proposed examiners are appropriately qualified and suitable and that there are no conflicts of interest. Where a staff candidate is being examined an Independent Chair<sup>84</sup> is appointed to provide procedural guidance. An Independent Chair will also be appointed where, in exceptional circumstances, a viva takes by videoconference. Guidelines are currently being developed for the conduct of a viva by videoconferencing.<sup>85</sup>

Where examiners lack recent experience of the UK HE system they are supported throughout the process by the School PGR Director, which ensures consistency of approach and that good practice is shared. Members of the supervisory team are not permitted to be examiners or to attend the oral examination, although the primary supervisor may attend the viva for the communication of the outcome by the examiners, as laid down in the Instructions to Examiners.

Examiners reports are checked by the PGR Service to ensure all reports are submitted. From 1 October 2014 examiners have been required to provide separate reports before the viva and a joint report after the examination process is completed. The post-examination report carries a section that can be completed in the event that there is a disagreement between the examiners, so as to inform the University as to the next steps to take in assessing a candidate. Students are given a copy of the joint report following the viva, but are not routinely provided with a copy of the pre-viva report although this may be provided on request after the viva has taken place.

External examiners are a key mechanism for the maintenance of academic standards. All examiners' reports are reviewed annually by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes and a summary report confirming the process and setting out any University-wide or matters of principle issues (recognising that for the most part, the reports are very student/project specific) is considered by the PGR Executive and then LTC. The Academic Director will request action by the School or Institute on issues requiring urgent attention or will take matters forward through the PGR Executive where the issues relate to matters of principle, procedure or regulation. The annual reports from examiners for the ClinPsyD and EdD degrees

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<sup>82</sup> PRPPG 23 November 2012 minute A4. Also PRPPG 9 May 2012 (Minute 9 refers) and LTC 27 June 2012 (LTC11M006 Minute 73(4) )

<sup>83</sup> Appointment of examiners form

<sup>84</sup> Section 9 of the Research Degree Policy Documents Role of the Independent Chair

<sup>85</sup> PGR Service Process Improvement Plan 2015

require the endorsement of the School PGR Director and issues raised in them will then be acted upon at School level.

## Research student complaints and appeals

### Indicator 18

*Higher education providers put in place and promote independent and formal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals that are fair, clear to all concerned, robust, and applied consistently. The acceptable grounds for complaints and appeals are clearly defined.*

The University has specific procedures dealing with academic and non-academic complaints and academic appeals. These apply to all students who are registered at the University and are published in the University Calendar, on the University intranet and referenced in the CoP: Research Degrees.

Research student appeals and complaints and appeals at Stage 1 are considered by a dedicated Faculty Appeals and Complaints Panel (FACP) which deals solely with research student appeals and complaints, ensuring that panel members have appropriate experience and expertise. The FACPs receive training from the PGR Service and are serviced by PGR Officers and Managers. Students are made aware of the University's complaints procedures and appeals procedures as a part of their induction training. Students are encouraged to try to resolve issues informally because making a formal appeal or complaint and may seek advice from their School PGR Director, Associate Dean or the PGR Service regarding any problems that they feel unable to raise with their supervisor. PGR admissions complaints are dealt with under the University's Admissions Complaints process<sup>86</sup>.

Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement issues arising from the anonymised analysis of academic complaints and appeals, and concessions are considered by the PGR Service at monthly Quality Assurance, Appeals, Complaints and Concessions (QUACC) meetings. The notes of these meetings are circulated to the Academic Director and Faculty Associate Deans in order to formulate consistent approaches to common problems, to share good practice and to formulate new guidance and procedures.

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<sup>86</sup> <https://www.uea.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/apply/our-admissions-policy>

Chapter B11 Mapping Document		v5: 7 January 2015			
<b>The Expectation:</b>		Chapter Champion for Implementation: Dr Vivien Easson, PGR Service			
Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.		B11 Implementation Group 2014-15: Dr Vivien Easson, Head of Postgraduate Research Service (Chair), Dr Kate Conway, NBI Graduate Studies Manager, PGR; Mr Liam McCafferty, Postgraduate Education Officer, UUEAS; Mr David Messling, Research, Policy and Projects Coordinator, UUEAS; Ms Tracey Oak, Research Degrees Manager, PGR; Ms Melanie Steele, Quality and Information Manager, PGR; Mr Jon Sharp, Head of Learning and Teaching, LTS; Mr Gavin Tash, Senior Partnerships Manager, LTS; Dr Nick Watmough, Academic Director for Research Degree Programmes			
		For approval by PGR Executive (13 January 2015) and LTC (28 January 2015)			
The Indicators	Indicator Lead	Location of Evidence	Actions	Who	By When
1 Higher education providers that are research degree awarding bodies have regulations for research degrees that are clear and readily available to research students and staff, including examiners. Where appropriate, regulations are supplemented by similarly accessible, subject-specific guidance at the level of the faculty, school, department, research centre or research institute.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: Regulations in UEA Calendar	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
		Supplemented by: partnership agreements and memoranda; co-tutelle agreements; admissions regulations; studentship terms and conditions; Faculty, School, Programme, NBI and other partner handbooks.	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
2 Higher education providers develop, implement and keep under review codes of practice for research degrees, which are widely applicable and help enable the higher education provider meet the Expectation of this Chapter. The codes are readily available to all students and staff involved in research degrees, and written in clear language understood by all users.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: Code of Practice for Research Degrees	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
		Supplemented by: Appendices	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
3 Higher education providers monitor their research degree provision against internal and external indicators and targets that reflect the context in which research degrees are being offered.	Head of PGR Service	Main sources: Annual Reviews of Research Student Progress and Examiners' Reports; Annual Strategic Overview; PGR Executive papers	Main action: annual systematic review	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
		Supplemented by: submission and completion data; NBI annual admissions reports	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
4 Higher education providers accept research students only into an environment that provides support for doing and learning about research, and where excellent research, recognised by the relevant subject community, is occurring.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: Code of Practice, REF	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
		Supplemented by: contractual agreements; UoA data; NBI equivalence agreements; DTPs; Annual Progress Reviews; checks on fieldwork provision; Ethics Committee minutes; Seminars in PPD provision; Learning Enhancement team; REF environment narratives; Doctoral Training narratives	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
5 Higher education providers' admissions procedures for research degrees are clear, consistently applied and demonstrate equality of opportunity.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: Code of Practice (Section 1)	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	PGR Exec	Ongoing
		Supplemented by: Admissions Complaints Procedure; prospectuses; internal staff handbook on Hobsons procedures; UEA, Graduate School and School websites; process maps for UCS/LAD	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies

Chapter B11 Mapping Document		v5: 7 January 2015				
<b>The Expectation:</b>		Chapter Champion for Implementation: Dr Vivien Easson, PGR Service				
Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.		B11 Implementation Group 2014-15: Dr Vivien Easson, Head of Postgraduate Research Service (Chair), Dr Kate Conway, NBI Graduate Studies Manager, PGR; Mr Liam McCafferty, Postgraduate Education Officer, UUEAS; Mr David Messling, Research, Policy and Projects Coordinator, UUEAS; Ms Tracey Oak, Research Degrees Manager, PGR; Ms Melanie Steele, Quality and Information Manager, PGR; Mr Jon Sharp, Head of Learning and Teaching, LTS; Mr Gavin Tash, Senior Partnerships Manager, LTS; Dr Nick Watmough, Academic Director for Research Degree Programmes				
		<i>For approval by PGR Executive (13 January 2015) and LTC (28 January 2015)</i>				
6	Only appropriately qualified and prepared applicants are admitted to research degree programmes. Admissions decisions involve at least two members of the higher education provider's staff who have received training and guidance for the selection and admission of research degree students. The decision-making process enables the higher education provider to assure itself that balanced and independent admissions decisions have been made in accordance with its admissions policy.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: Code of Practice (Section 1)	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: English language checks; PGR Service Procedures and record of Faculty processes; training for staff making admissions decisions; PGR Service staff training (e.g. on CAS)	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
7	Higher education providers define and communicate clearly the responsibilities and entitlements of students undertaking research degree programmes.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: Offer Letters, Regulations and Code of Practice	Main action: annual systematic review	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: handbooks, induction	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
8	Research students are provided with sufficient information to enable them to begin their studies with an understanding of the environment in which they will be working.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: PGR Handbooks and Induction	Main action: annual systematic review	PGR Service	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: offer letters, Graduate School websites; information on space and facilities	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
9	Higher education providers appoint supervisors with the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support and encourage research students, and to monitor their progress effectively.	Academic Director for Research Programmes	Main source: monitoring procedures within Schools by School PGR Directors and within Faculties by Associate Deans	Main action: annual systematic review	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: Sign off of offers & studentships; records of supervisor training, training and role descriptors for School PGR Directors; procedures for UCS/LAD/external supervisors	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
10	Each research student has a supervisory team containing a main supervisor who is the clearly identified point of contact.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: SITS records of SUP1	Main action: quarterly check that SUP1 is non-empty, annual check via SITS annual progress review that supervisory team is accurate	PGR Service	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: Code of Practice; PGR Service Procedures; offer letters	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
11	Higher education providers ensure that the responsibilities of research student supervisors are readily available and clearly communicated to supervisors and students.	Associate Deans for PGR	Main source: Code of Practice	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: Supervisor Training; School PGR Director Training; handbooks	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
		Academic	Main source: Review of Supervisor Workload	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing

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		<i>For approval by PGR Executive (13 January 2015) and LTC (28 January 2015)</i>				
12	Higher education providers ensure that individual supervisors have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities effectively.	Director for Research Programmes	Supplemented by: Code of Practice; concessions monitoring; Code of Practice; School and Faculty Workload Surveys; checks on partner institutions and external supervisors; completion rates	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
13	Higher education providers put in place clearly defined mechanisms for monitoring and supporting research student progress, including formal and explicit reviews of progress at different stages. Research students, supervisors and other relevant staff are made aware of progress monitoring mechanisms, including the importance of keeping appropriate records of the outcomes of meetings and related activities.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: Annual Progress Review and Interim report documentation	Main action: annual systematic review	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: supervisory meeting notes, Annual Review of Research Student Progress	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
14	Research students have appropriate opportunities for developing research, personal and professional skills. Each research student's development needs are identified and agreed jointly by the student and appropriate staff at the start of the degree; these are regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: PPD module directory and student enrolment records on SITS	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: PPD policy and reviews; initial training needs assessments; training review in Annual Progress Review; Doctoral Training narratives	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
15	Higher education providers put in place mechanisms to collect, review and respond as appropriate to evaluations from those concerned with research degrees, including individual research students and groups of research students or their representatives. Evaluations are considered openly and constructively and the results are communicated appropriately.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: PRES, student representation on committees at UEA and partners	Main action: 2-/5-yearly systematic review	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: additional surveys; feedback on Annual Progress Review forms; informal feedback (e.g. annual PGR team meeting with student representatives)	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
16	Higher education providers that are research degree awarding bodies use criteria for assessing research degrees that enable them to define their academic standards and the achievements of their graduates. The criteria used to assess research degrees are clear and readily available to research students, staff and examiners.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: Instructions for Examiners	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: Regulations; Code of Practice; internal advisor system for new examiners; ClinPsyD/EdD assessment; PPD training for students on thesis and viva preparation	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
17	Research degree final assessment procedures are clear and are operated rigorously, fairly and consistently. They include input from an external examiner and are carried	Head of PGR	Main source: Instructions for Examiners	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec)	Ongoing

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	<b>Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.</b>		B11 Implementation Group 2014-15: Dr Vivien Easson, Head of Postgraduate Research Service (Chair), Dr Kate Conway, NBI Graduate Studies Manager, PGR; Mr Liam McCafferty, Postgraduate Education Officer, UUEAS; Mr David Messling, Research, Policy and Projects Coordinator, UUEAS; Ms Tracey Oak, Research Degrees Manager, PGR; Ms Melanie Steele, Quality and Information Manager, PGR; Mr Jon Sharp, Head of Learning and Teaching, LTS; Mr Gavin Tash, Senior Partnerships Manager, LTS; Dr Nick Watmough, Academic Director for Research Degree Programmes			
			<i>For approval by PGR Executive (13 January 2015) and LTC (28 January 2015)</i>			
	out to a reasonable timescale. Assessment procedures are communicated clearly to research students, supervisors and examiners.	Service	Supplemented by: Regulations, Code of Practice, internal advisor system for new examiners, PPD training for students on thesis and viva preparation	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies
18	Higher education providers put in place and promote independent and formal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals that are fair, clear to all concerned, robust, and applied consistently. The acceptable grounds for complaints and appeals are clearly defined.	Head of PGR Service	Main source: Appeals and Complaints Procedure	Main action: 5-yearly systematic review cycle	Postgraduate Research Executive (PGR Exec), LTC	Ongoing
			Supplemented by: training for FACP panels	See full action plan on attached sheet	Varies	Varies

This action plan contains actions affecting B11: Research Degrees which are either part of a systematic review cycle repeating over a specified period or one-off actions which will start in the academic sessions 2014-15 or 2015-16. Postgraduate Research Executive meetings are held at least six times per annum.

Primary Indicator	Action	Professional Lead	Academic Lead (where applicable)	Session	Committee Schedule	Repeating Cycle?
B11.1	Introduce probationary status and expectations for probationary review	Easson	AD PGRs	2014-15	Jan 2015 PGR Exec	Once
B11.1	Review ClinPsyD regulations	Steele	Laidlaw	2014-15	Apr 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.1	Index guidance notes of types listed and scope improvements	Steele		2014-15	PGR Service internal	Once
B11.1	Review policy for Category A (inc. staff) and Category B candidates	Easson/Steele	Watmough	2014-15	Apr 2015 PGR Exec	Once
B11.1	Develop regulatory framework for dual award/co-tutelle arrangements	Steele	Watmough	2014-15	Nov 2015 PGR Exec	Once
B11.2	Respond to QAA consultation on degree characteristics	Easson/Steele		2014-15	March 2015 PGR Exec	Once
B11.2	Review Code of Practice for Research Degrees	Steele		2014-15	June 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.2	Ensure applicants made aware of regulations and Code of Practice via CRM plan	Easson		2014-15	PGR Service internal	Once
B11.3	PGR strategic benchmarking	Easson	Watmough	Annual	PGR Executive	Annual
B11.3	Embed PGR employability and DLHE statistics in PGR Executive agenda	Easson	Watmough	Annual	PGR Executive	Annual
B11.3	Review MI reports against B11 indicator 3 and scope improvements	Steele		2014-15	PGR Service internal	Once
B11.3	Review equality data on PGR admissions/lifecycle from Athena Swan submissions	Conway	AD PGR (SCI/FMH)	Annual	June 2015 PGR Exec	Annual
B11.3	Finalise PGR Education Strategy	Easson	Watmough	2014-15	Jan 2015 PGR Exec	Once
B11.3	Develop PGR Recruitment Strategy	Easson/ARM	Watmough	2014-15	PGR Executive	Once
B11.3	Scope modularisation of ClinPsyD and if accepted propose implementation strategy	Oak	Laidlaw	2014-15	Oct 2015 PGR Exec	Once
B11.3	Review of EdD programme	Easson/Steele	Biza	2014-15	Jan 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.4	Review of research environment following REF 2014	Easson	Petley/Watmough	2014-15	March 2015 PGR Exec	Once
B11.5	Review admissions procedures for University Campus Suffolk students	Easson/Oak	Watmough	2014-15	Jan 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.5	Review English language qualification procedures and language support	Easson/delegate		2014-15	June 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.6	Follow up dissemination of recruitment and selection / admissions framework	Easson		2014-15	PGR Service internal	Once
B11.7	Update terms and conditions for UEA studentships	Easson/delegate		Annual	PGR Service internal	Annual
B11.7	Review of postgraduate research programme continuation and other fees	Easson		2014-15	March 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.7	Review of internal contracts and stipend processes	Easson/Oak		2014-15	PGR Service internal	Once
B11.7	Major review of postgraduate research student handbooks	Oak		2014-15	PGR Service internal	5-yearly
B11.8	Implement any changes to induction required by doctoral training strategy	Oak		2015-16	PGR Service internal	Once
B11.9	Review of procedures for ensuring supervision quality, including supervisory training	Easson	AD PGRs	2014-15	June 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.9	Improve web information about safety nets if supervision breaks down	Easson		2014-15	PGR Service internal	Once
B11.12	Review of supervisor workload and inclusion in workload allocation models	Easson	Petley/Watmough	2014-15	March 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.13	Annual Review of Research Student Progress	Steele	AD PGRs	Annual	January PGR Exec	Annual
B11.14	Review of teaching opportunities and related training	Easson		2014-15	March 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.14	Reviews of personal and professional development provision (Faculties)	Oak/Officers	AD PGRs	Annual	Faculty GSEs	Annual
B11.14	Review of personal and professional development programmes (pan-NRP)	Easson	Watmough	2014-15	March 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.15	Review report on PRES data (2013, 2015, ...)	Easson	AD PGRs	Biennial	Jun and Nov PGR Exec	Biennial
B11.15	Set up Research Student Forum in Faculty of Science	Oak	AD PGR (SCI)	2014-15	PGR Service internal	Once
B11.17	Guidance on vivas by videoconferencing	Easson/delegate	Lebeau	2014-15	Apr 2015 PGR Exec	Once
B11.17	Review of guidance to students on examinations, thesis format and copyright	Easson/delegate	Chair of group	2014-15	May 2014 PGR Exec	Once

B11.17	Annual Review of External Examiners' reports	Steele		Annual	March 2015 PGR Exec	Annual
B11.17	Review of examiners' fees and employment status	Easson		2014-15	Apr 2015 PGR Exec	Once
B11.17	Review of research degree examination procedures	Easson/delegate		2015-16	May 2016 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.18	Embed PGR appeals and complaints statistics in PGR Executive agenda	Steele		Annual	PGR Executive	Annual
B11.all	Equality duty focus: disability and mental health	Steele	Watmough	2014-15	June 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.all	Equality duty focus: maternity, paternity, mode of study	Easson/delegate		2015-16	Nov 2015 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.all	Equality duty focus: race, nationality, religion and belief	Easson/delegate		2016-17	Nov 2016 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.all	Equality duty focus: age and career stage	Easson/delegate		2017-18	Nov 2017 PGR Exec	5-yearly
B11.all	Equality duty focus: sex, transgender and sexual orientation	Easson/delegate		2018-19	Nov 2018 PGR Exec	5-yearly

**See also: PGR Service Process Improvement Plan 2015 and PGR Quality Enhancement Plan 2015 (covering all Chapters of the Quality Code not just B11)**