

The University of Edinburgh

**Meeting of the Senatus Researcher Experience Committee
to be held on 18 March 2019 at 2.00pm
in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House
Convener: Dr Antony Maciocia**

A G E N D A

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 - 2.2 Enlightenment Scholarships
 - 2.3 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey – institutional questions
 3. **Conveners' Communications**
- For Discussion**
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 5. **Service Excellence Programme – outline proposals** REC 18/19 4A
 6. **Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021** To Follow
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- For information and formal business**
12. **External Engagement:**
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 - 12.3 Coimbra
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 13. **Report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee: 18 January 2019 meeting** REC 18/19 4H
 14. **Any other business**

H/02/26/02

Stuart Fitzpatrick, Academic Services, 12 March 2019

Date of next meeting: 14 May 2019, Raeburn Room, Old College
[All meeting dates and venues for 2018/19](#)

**Meeting of the Senate Researcher Experience Committee
held on 25 January 2019 at 2pm
in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**

Present: Dr Paddy Hadoke (Convener), Director of Postgraduate Research (PGR) and Early Career Researcher Experience, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)
Dr Antony Maciocia, Dean of Postgraduate Research, College of Science & Engineering (CSE)
Professor Stephen Bowd, Dean of Postgraduate Studies, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)
Megan Brown, Students' Association Staff Postgraduate Research (PGR) Representative
Dr Sharon Maguire, Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services (University Secretary's representative)
Ben Möws, Postgraduate Research Student Representative, CSE
Dr Caroline Proctor, School of Biological Sciences
Kirsty Woomble, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Susan Hunter, Academic Services (Secretary)

Apologies: Fabio Battaglia, Postgraduate Research Student Representative, Students' Association
Nichola Kett, Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services
James Saville, Director of Human Resources (HR)
Daniel Dodd, Postgraduate Research Student Representative, CMVM
Dr Katie Nicoll Baines, Early Career Research Representative, CMVM
Dr Mits Ota, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
Professor Jamie Pearce, Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences
Dr Shari Sabeti, Moray House School of Education

Attending: June Bell, Human Resources
Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Services (item 9)
Sarah Harvey, Service Excellence Programmes

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2018

The Committee approved the minutes as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Old Kirk Project

The Project Manager had provided a brief update covering the review of capital projects and value engineering for the Old Kirk Project. Tenders are due back on 28 January 2019.

2.2 Scholarships

The Dean of Postgraduate Research, CSE represents the Committee on the Student Recruitment Strategy Group, which is reviewing all scholarships

including postgraduate. HR advice on students undertaking teaching as a condition of their scholarship is being sought.

2.3 Senate Committee input to the planning round

The Committee had conducted electronic business to input comments to the Director of Academic Services. One Committee member raised a comment on prioritising postgraduate research space and this would be discussed further under items 4 to 5 on the agenda. The Committee noted that due to the devolved budget structure, College and School support is required to influence the planning round.

2.4 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The Head of Researcher Development, IAD had submitted the institutional response to the consultation. Vitae will publish consultation responses and the revised Concordat is due for publication at the end of March 2019. There is a University of Edinburgh postdoc member on the Concordat writing group.

2.5 UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) Supervisor accreditation pilot

The Convener reported that the pilot has launched and UKCGE has provided documentation including a guide for applicants. Colleges will nominate two participants each by 22 February 2019. Colleges should select for a breadth of disciplines and experience. UKCGE will run a webinar for participants on 8 March 2019.

Action: Convener to circulate information to Colleges

3. Convener's Communications

3.1 Task group on sexual violence

The Convener is a member of one of four work streams associated with the task group. The work stream the Convener is a member of will look at shaping policy. A report will be available to a future Committee meeting.

3.2 Policy on disclosure of intimate relationships

The University Executive has approved the policy, which is relevant to student-supervisor relationships. The Students' Association was involved in developing the policy and HR will host the policy document on their website.

The Committee noted that communicating the policy and awareness raising are key to implementation. The Committee identified some potential communication routes, including the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students, Supervisor Briefings, induction events and College communications.

3.3 Postgraduate research quality assurance

Academic Services will invite the Committee to participate in future discussions on the reporting process. The Dean of Postgraduate Research, CSE will attend the next Senate Quality Assurance Committee and provide a report to the next Committee meeting.

4. Postgraduate research student experience

The Committee noted the paper identifying themes that have an impact on the student experience. Evidence included Postgraduate Research Experience Survey results, internal quality reviews and input from postgraduate research student reps. Paper B for item 5 on the agenda provided some statistics to inform discussion.

The Committee discussed expectations of the student-supervisor relationship, including perceptions and consistency of experience. The Committee also noted that some partner agreements include a student-supervisor contract. The Committee noted induction as a key point to set expectations and noted there may be inconsistency in student induction experience. The Committee noted that Student Recruitment and Admissions are looking at induction. The Head of Doctoral Education, IAD is participating in this work and can report to a future Committee meeting.

Action: SM

The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students sets out responsibilities for both students and supervisory teams. Academic Services' evaluation of the Code of Practice will cover student-supervisor relationship expectations.

Action: Academic Services

The Committee discussed the links between postgraduate research (PGR) space and community. Discussion covered opportunities for collaboration (noting discipline dependencies) and supporting students to feel engaged. The Committee considered the possibility of guidance for Schools on providing PGR space. The Dean of Postgraduate Research, CSE will take this to the Space Strategy Group for discussion. The Conveners will consider PGR space at the next Committee agenda-planning meeting.

Action: AM to Space Strategy Group

The Committee noted that Academic Services plans to evaluate the policy on recruiting, supporting and developing tutors and demonstrators in time to submit a paper to the March Committee meeting.

The Committee noted that an item on mental health is planned for the next meeting.

5. Management information: submission and completion rates

The Committee noted the paper, which provided publicly available information, and a closed appendix including management information from the University's Business Information Suite.

6. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

The Committee noted the paper inviting consideration of adding institutional questions, whether to include the wellbeing section and free text comments questions.

The Committee noted that institutional questions are optional and any such questions should be realistic, add value and be deliverable.

The Committee discussed the value of adding institutional questions relating to wellbeing. Members were asked to consider and provide suggestions to the Secretary by Friday 1 February 2019. The Committee will approve any institutional questions by electronic business before the deadline in mid-February.

Action: Committee members, Secretary

The Committee approved including one free-text institutional question from PRES 2017.

The Committee approved excluding the PRES wellbeing section.

The Committee approved free text comment questions being visible in the survey.

Action: Secretary communicate to Student Surveys Unit

7. Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development: progress reports

The Head of Doctoral Education, IAD reported on progress with the task group on career and professional development for supervisors. The draft final report is due for the Committee's March meeting. The Committee noted the report will make a recommendation on the timing and mandatory nature of supervisor training. As the March meeting will be too late to get this Committee's support for including a statement on supervisor training in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2019/20, the Director of Academic Services proposed that the Committee support this inclusion. The Committee supported including a statement on the timing and mandatory nature of supervisor training in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2019/20: that supervisors must undertake supervisor training every five years (and that staff from other institutions who are supervising our students must either undertake University training or equivalent training at their institution).

Action: Academic Services include in proposals to Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

The Committee noted that IAD will recruit a student intern to continue the work on mentorship and wellbeing.

The Committee noted that the final report from the task group on personal and professional development record, including recommendations on content for a PGR Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) was submitted to Service Excellence Programme (SEP).

8. Service Excellence Programme – postgraduate research update

The Service Excellence representative updated the Committee on the Programme's postgraduate research activities. An update on business priorities will be available at the next Committee meeting. The Committee will have an opportunity to influence business cases after the Programme Board confirms priorities in March 2019.

The Committee requested an update to the improvement opportunity for recording supervisors. The Committee asked Service Excellence to update the three-year cycle reference to reflect the recommendation from the task group on career and professional development for supervisors.

Action: SH (SEP)

The Committee discussed challenges for system change requests. It noted change requests could be explored in the Programme's detailed design phase. The Committee also noted the potential relationship between the proposed University-level PGR Programme Handbook and the Programme and Course Information Management strand of SEP.

The Committee asked about opportunities to feed into the prioritisation process. The Service Excellence representative will flag this and feedback the Committee's comments to SEP.

Action: SH (SEP)

The Committee approved a formal communication from the Convener on the importance of postgraduate research considerations.

Action: Convener

9. Regulations

9.1 PhD and MPhil criteria

The Committee noted the paper, which proposed amendments to the Postgraduate Degree Regulations. The Committee considered the proposals and asked for publishable material to be included in Regulation 45 MPhil criteria. Academic Services will revise the proposed regulation changes and circulate to the Committee for further consideration by electronic business.

Action: Academic Services

9.2 PhD by Research Publications

The Committee noted the paper, which proposed amendments to the Postgraduate Degree Regulations. The Committee broadly supported the proposals but as the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) is the principal user of this degree type, it asked CAHSS to propose appropriate wording in relation to eligible candidates and the timeframe for publications to Academic Services. Thereafter, Academic Services will circulate a revised proposal for consideration by electronic business.

Action: CAHSS, Academic Services

9.3 Assessment and Degree Regulations Review

The Committee noted the paper, which proposed amendments to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees and the Postgraduate Degree Regulations. The proposed amendments mainly consisted of essential changes for clarification, which did not change existing practice or policy. The Committee supported the proposed changes noting that in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine the preference for clinical students who have transferred from MD to PhD would be an exit award of MD rather than MPhil.

The Committee discussed one proposed policy change, which would allow resubmission of MSc by Research Degree dissertations. Following changes to the Taught Assessment Regulations for 2018/19 to permit resubmission of Masters dissertations, the MSc by Research Degree is the only degree that does not have a resubmission option. The Committee supported the proposed change with clarity that resubmission is permitted for corrections or modest rewrite with minimal supervision only.

Action: Academic Services

10. Task Groups

10.1 Practical operation of PhD with Integrated Study programmes

The Committee noted the paper, which comprised the task group's final report. The Committee discussed the proposed guidance, intended to support Schools setting up new programmes. The Committee considered that the benefit of PhD with Integrated Study is that it contains credit for taught elements. Therefore, the guidance should include that there is an expectation that programmes contain 180 credits of non-thesis credit. The Committee considered that the guidance on the submission period should be comparable to PhD programmes. That is, there is an expectation to have finished at the end of the period of study although there is some flexibility and submission can be up to the end of the fifth year in PhD with Integrated Study programmes.

Subject to these clarifications, the Committee approved the final report.

Action: Academic Services

10.2 Update on proposed work on Student Status of PhD students after the submission of the thesis

The Director of Academic Services provided a verbal report. The Committee noted that as Business Analyst support was not currently available from Student Systems, this work had been passed to Service Excellence Programme for consideration in its PGR lifecycle work stream. The Committee supported communicating to the SEP Student Administration and Support Board that this is a key piece of work.

Action: Convener include in formal communication to SEP

11. Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR)

11.1 ELIR 2020 update

The Committee noted the paper, which summarised preparations for the next external review and proposed contextualised themes. The Committee noted the focus on demonstrating positive outcomes from strategic activity, implementation and evaluation of impact. Some of the contextual themes identified in the paper cover postgraduate research activity. The Committee considered that there might be an opportunity to include School input on enhancements to the PGR environment.

The Committee supported the preparations and proposed contextual themes.

Any further comments can be sent to Nichola.Kett@ed.ac.uk

11.2 ELIR 2015 Recommendations

The Committee noted the paper. The Dean of Postgraduate Research is supporting Academic Services in providing a further update on PGR activity to the February 2019 Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

Any further comments can be sent to Nichola.Kett@ed.ac.uk

12. Task group on organisation and coordination of postgraduate research activities

The Director of Academic Services gave a verbal report. The Committee noted that this task group proposes to review some key aspects of postgraduate research. The task group plans to begin its review after the Senate Committees governance review is completed.

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13. External engagement:

13.1 League of European Research Universities (LERU)

The Committee noted that the deadline for student nominations to participate in the Doctoral Summer School is 1 March 2019. The University is hosting the Doctoral Summer School and there may be additional opportunities for students to get involved.

The Dean of Postgraduate Studies, CAHSS is attending the next LERU Doctoral Summer School meeting in Leuven.

13.2 UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE)

The Dean of Postgraduate Research, CSE and Committee Secretary attended the Scottish forum meeting in November 2018. Discussion had focused on doctoral supervision including some case studies highlighting success predictors and warning signs.

Colleagues from CAHSS will attend UKCGE's Mental Health and Wellbeing of Postgraduate Researchers event in May 2019. A report will be available to a future REC meeting.

13.3 Coimbra

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

13.4 Network of Universities from European Capitals (UNICA)

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

13.5 Universitas 21

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

14. Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee: 12 October 2018 meeting

The Committee noted the paper. The Committee discussed the item on access to University spaces after 5pm. The Committee noted that where card access was required, postgraduate researchers were experiencing difficulty in gaining access after 5pm in some areas.

15. Research Policy Group report

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

16. Any other business

16.1 Conferences and events

No additional conferences or events were raised.

16.2 College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, new Postgraduate Dean's priorities

The Dean of Postgraduate Studies gave a verbal report. The Committee noted that the Dean's remit covered both postgraduate taught and postgraduate research (PGR). A key priority in relation to PGR will be exploring training needs for non-academic routes for PhD students.

16.3 Conveners' meetings

The Convener reported the intention of the three Committee Conveners to meet on a monthly basis to discuss PGR matters. The Committee supported this approach.

Action: Secretary schedule meetings

16.4 New Dean of Postgraduate Research, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

The Convener reported that Professor Robert Semple has been appointed Dean of Postgraduate Research in the College. The Committee supported inviting him to the next meeting.

Action: Secretary

16.5 Students' Association Teaching Awards

The Students' Association reported receipt of a large number of nominations so far. Nominations are open for another two months and the award covers both undergraduate dissertation supervision and postgraduate research thesis supervision. Colleagues are encouraged to promote the awards through appropriate channels.

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

18 March 2019

Service Excellence Programme – outline proposals

Executive Summary

This paper summarises the outline proposals for the Postgraduate Research workstream that will be submitted to the Service Excellence Programme: Student Administration and Support Board as part of the Full Business Case to be presented for approval in April 2019.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

This aligns with the University's strategic objective of leadership in research. The Service Excellence Programme has also been identified as a strategic priority.

Action requested

To note – no action requested at this time.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Future Service Excellence Programme recommendations will be communicated by the Board through existing committee structures. Future SA&S proposals will be routed through Researcher Experience Committee, Learning & Teaching Committee, Quality Assurance Committee or Curriculum & Student Progression Committee as necessary.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Any resource implications associated with the paper will be managed by the Student Administration and Support sub-programme of the Service Excellence Programme.

2. Risk assessment

There are no risks for consideration at this stage.

3. Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been provided with this paper; however, an assessment will be undertaken and provided within the Full Business Case presented to the Service Excellence Programme: Student Administration and Support Board if required in April 2019.

4. Freedom of information

This paper is **open**.

Key words

Service Excellence Programme, Student Administration and Support

Originator of the paper

Sarah Harvey, Design Lead, Service Excellence Programme (Student Administration and Support), 6 March 2019.

Service Excellence Programme: Student Administration and Support Postgraduate Research outline proposals

This paper builds on the presentation to the Committee on 25 January 2019, which gave a high-level overview of the outputs of the process and people workshops held to build on the work undertaken in the original:

- Current State Assessment (CSA)
- Outline Business Case (OBC); and
- Final Business Cases (FBC) for Comprehensive Student Timetabling, Student Immigration Services, Work and Study Away and Special Circumstances & Coursework Extensions

Through this work, an emerging Target Operating Model (TOM) and Rich Picture have been developed which provide an overview of where Student Administration and Support functions are recommended to be led from in the future as well as the various interaction points a student will have across the University's structure. Recommendations have been evaluated against the SEP evaluation criteria and design principles.

The emerging Target Operating Model and Rich Picture were presented to the Student Administration and Support Board on 28 February 2019, and were endorsed by the Board for further development into a Full Business Case to be developed and presented for approval in April 2019.

Key Points of the Emerging Operating Model

- Students' main focus continues to be their School(s) where they will receive the majority of their support locally
- Colleges will provide a QA and strategy alignment role and will rarely directly interact with students
- Specialist and transactional services will be provided at University level
- Responsibility for the successful adoption of the operating model will be embedded across the University

The Postgraduate Research workstream proposes a system that manages the appointment and recording of supervisors, displays and manages PGR milestones, annual reviews, produces an official HEAR transcript and can manage the online submission process. This work will also include revised student status post thesis submission.

The process workshops reviewed proposals for revised key processes, and people workshops reviewed a Service Delivery Model to identify where in the University those key processes should be delivered, dependent on the level of specialist knowledge required to perform the tasks. The outputs of those workshops have resulted in the following recommendations:

Appointment of Supervisors	<p>The appointment of supervisors will be clearly managed at University level within a system and electronic workflows, subject to agreed criteria for the eligibility of supervisors and training expectation, including IAD briefings to take place on a 5-yearly cycle as recommended by the Committee.</p> <p>Applicants will approach a potential supervisor and apply to the school. There would be a Selection Panel screening applications for requirements</p>
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	<p>within the school and the appointment of supervisors will sit at school level, with an academic making the final decision. However, the administration of the appointment e.g. adding the supervisor to the system could take place centrally.</p>
PGR Milestones	<p>An electronic timeline with some pre-defined milestones and customised for all activities will be visible to students within the review screen and will be linked directly to student progression.</p> <p>A PGR Programme Handbook template will be developed at University level, in line with the Programme and Course Information Management (PCIM) project, linked to the electronic timeline to include all training, conference and publication activities personalised to the student which will be utilised to produce a formal PGR HEAR (transcript) document. The content and format of this HEAR document will align with the recommendations made by the Personal and Professional Development Record Task Group endorsed by the Committee in December 2017, subject to further consultation with schools and colleges as recommended by the Committee.</p> <p>It was agreed that the PGR Handbook development should sit in a specialist central team, who would be responsible for agreeing the standard content to be published and setting pre-defined milestones common to all PGR students. Schools will set any specific milestones for individual students and will directly publish students' handbooks using an electronic system.</p> <p>It was agreed that the creation of the HEAR document should sit within a consolidated transactional team, who will liaise with the school to ensure that the student's stated activities took place. Consideration will be given to how to verify what training a student has undertaken.</p>
Student Progression and Annual Review	<p>The online system and workflows for the annual review process will be improved to enable the scheduling and creation of progression meetings and the communication around these, such as escalations where reviews have not been taking place. Members of the review panel will be enabled to add notes to the review directly within the system.</p> <p>It is recommended that the composition and terminology of a review panel or thesis committee (or equivalent) should be determined and set at University level. Guidance should be set at University level as to how annual reviews should be conducted e.g. what documents are required to be uploaded and completed.</p> <p>Progression must be dependent on completion of the annual review once approved by the Postgraduate Director or equivalent academic lead. Student sign off will be to confirm that they have read the review rather than to approve, and where there is an incomplete review the student will not automatically progress to the next academic year. Final sign off and escalation of reviews not being completed will sit with an academic lead within a school.</p>
Thesis Submission	<p>A new online system to manage Intention to Submit and all other related forms will be introduced. Theses will be submitted via the online system with automatic plagiarism checking, and there will no longer be a requirement to present a hard copy.</p> <p>Where the thesis submission is received is currently being explored. However, it is recognised that there should be a ceremonial aspect kept at school level.</p>

Thesis Examination	<p>The examinations process will be managed online by an electronic system and will be monitored by an administrator who will be responsible for checking examiner eligibility and recording and tracking post-viva actions. The school will nominate examiners, and the Postgraduate Director (or equivalent) will be responsible for approving examiner appointments.</p> <p>There are significant dependencies with the HR Transformation Programme for processes relating to the confirmation of the examination team, involving checking the duration since nomination of examiners forms, completing EE form 95s and preparing external examiner forms. Where this activity is undertaken may therefore need to be explored further as that programme develops. However, it is recommended that viva scheduling is undertaken by a member of administrative staff, rather than academic staff.</p> <p>The final thesis assessment decision should sit with Board of Examiners processes. Where this Board of Examiners is constituted requires further exploration.</p>
Access to Thesis	<p>Access to Thesis will be automatically restricted for 1-year post graduation unless otherwise indicated by the student. A consolidated team will review whether a student's protection period has expired, however there would need to be engagement with the student's school in case of any IPR considerations.</p>

It should be noted that all recommendations above have been arrived at following wide consultation with stakeholders but have not yet been fully approved by the Student Administration and Support Board. Further detail will be available following the decision taken by that Board on the Full Business Case when presented in April 2019, including any phasing of the work detailed above with other projects within the Student Administration and Support portfolio.

Live issues

It is noted that PGR students currently engage directly with colleges post submission, although the emerging operating model envisages that colleges will provide a QA and strategy alignment role and will rarely directly interact with students. This will require further exploration to inform the recommendation to be made in the Full Business Case in April 2019.

REC: 18.03.19

H/02/26/02

REC 18/19 4C

The University of Edinburgh

Researcher Experience Committee

18th March 2019

Report of Task Group on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for PhD Supervisors

Executive Summary

The report outlines the work done to clarify University expectations of training for PhD supervisors and to establish a framework of CPD for supervisors to allow them to develop their practice. The report recommends all PhD supervisors should attend a supervisor briefing every 5 years and that this already established practice should be written into policy for AY 19/20. Recommendations are made for developing additional training, including online.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University Strategic Plan objective of Leadership in Research and the committee priority to improve the Postgraduate Research Student experience.

Action requested

For approval: REC is asked to discuss and approve the recommendation that new supervisors should complete training within 6 months of starting to supervise and that this should be written into policy.

For discussion: REC is asked to discuss and make recommendations for development of online training.

To note: REC approved the recommendation that mandatory 5 year supervisory training become policy, formalising existing practice, in January 2019 meeting.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Recommendation for mandatory 5 year supervisor training to be policy will be taken to CPSC by Academic Services for approval and inclusion in 2019/20 DRPS.

Mandatory nature of training and additional CPD will be communicated by Schools, and in IAD PhD supervisor newsletter and mailings.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

The majority of the work to take forward actions can be supported by existing staffing resource in the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and Academic Services. Development of online training may have additional resource implications, so if this is agreed early discussions will be undertaken with relevant units.

2. Risk assessment

Mandatory supervisor training and offering additional CPD may improve the PhD student experience by supporting supervisors to develop their skills and reducing variability in supervisory practice.

No other risks identified.

3. Equality and Diversity

Mandatory requirement to attend supervisor training could have E&D implications due to accessibility of training for academic staff who are PhD supervisors. This has been considered and training will continue to be offered on a regular basis, with option to attend equivalent training offered by different Schools to increase accessibility. Colleges already act as if this training is mandatory so in practice this will have little change.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is open.

Key words

PhD supervisor, training, CPD framework

Originator of the paper

Sharon Maguire, Head of Doctoral Education (maternity cover), Institute for Academic Development, 26th February 2019

Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme Supervisor Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Task Group Final Report

Introduction and Background

This task group was established in January 2018 following initial work on the first of three workstreams proposed in the [Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme](#). Although the University has a well-established system of regular supervisor briefings for new and continuing doctoral supervisors and a range of optional support for supervisors, there is no clear route of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for supervisors and no policy on expectations for supervisor training. Steps were taken in semester 1 of 2017/18 to start to address this through a new IAD newsletter for supervisors and the establishment of a PGR supervisor network. However, a more comprehensive approach was required to build on these initiatives, to ensure that the University is addressing recommendations made in ELIR 2015 and to maintain the University's position as a sector leader in doctoral supervision. The taskgroup met three times during 2018/19 and conducted work electronically between meetings.

Task Group Members

Fiona Philippi (convenor), Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development (on maternity leave from December 2018)

Sharon Maguire, PG Careers Consultant, Careers Service (Head of Doctoral Education, IAD from December 2018)

Patrick Hadoke, Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Researcher Experience, CMVM

Neil Mulholland, Dean of Postgraduate Studies, CAHSS

Antony Maciocia, Dean of Students, CSE

Mark Metzger, Research Staff representative for CSE

Nichola Kett, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services

Nicola Cuthbert, Researcher Development Manager, Institute for Academic Development

Suzanne Kean, Research Staff representative for CAHSS

Remit and Objectives of the group

- To identify existing CPD frameworks for supervisors in other institutions (both UK and internationally) in order to benchmark against examples of good practice
- To explore the viability of an online training resource for all supervisors
- To understand the particular needs and requirements for the University of Edinburgh supervisor body in terms of CPD
- To set out recommendations for the establishment of a CPD framework for supervisors

Considerations for the group (non-exhaustive)

- Linking with the review of the Code of Practice, and particularly the 5 year rule for mandatory training
- ELIR recommendations
- Linking with the UK Professional Standards Framework and Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)
- Alignment with arrangements for CPD and support for other elements of academic role

- Supervisors at Associated Institutions and external supervisors

Method and Stakeholder Groups

a. Benchmarking

The group undertook a benchmarking exercise of other institutions across the UK. The following themes were looked at:

1. Other universities' training requirements for supervisors from other institutions/organisations.
Are the requirements the same as for supervisors who are members of staff at your university? Is the training delivered in the same way as for supervisors who are members of staff at your university?
2. If Universities have a mandatory training requirement for supervisors
If so what is the timeframe for renewal of training - i.e. every 5 years/ 3 years How do you ensure supervisors are kept up to date in policy/procedure changes during this time?
3. If Universities provide any online training for supervisors?
How is engagement with this? Is this mandatory?

The results of this exercise are detailed in Appendix One and in summary found that:

- Most institutions have a requirement for supervisors to undertake some form of initial training, but challenges persist on regulating this and requirements for renewal vary across the sector. Provision and expectations for external supervisors remains unclear in many institutions.
- Many institutions have some form of online training.

b. Numbers of supervisors at Edinburgh

The group investigated how many supervisors there are at Edinburgh and how many of these are external to the institutions. Student Systems ran a report on 'attachment' between PGR students and supervisors in EUCLID and found that for 2017/18 there were 3095 PGR supervisors and 1400 external supervisors.

c. Current provision at Edinburgh

i. Supervisor briefings

Supervisor briefings are run by the three Colleges (at College or School level) with support from the Institute for Academic Development (IAD). These are usually half day sessions which combine information giving with discussion around case studies. There is a checklist which sets out what should be covered. Colleges and Schools have flexibility in how this information is covered during the session. IAD holds the central database of attendance at these events and this information is communicated back to Schools on an annual basis or when requested. Schools are currently responsible for ensuring that their supervisors attend these briefings - although this is not written in policy Schools do take responsibility for monitoring attendance. The current expectation is that all new supervisors attend a briefing and that continuing supervisors renew this every 5 years. This is set out in the Code of Practice but is currently not policy or regulation The consultation exercise (see section d) confirmed that staff believe it to be mandatory so indicating that we should formalise what is current practice.

ii. Optional support for supervisors

IAD runs a programme of optional support for PGR supervisors. This consists of a series of workshops on different themes, spotlight on... events and a monthly informal discussion group. There are also [webpages](#) for supervisors, which host various online resources and tools.

iii. Online training resources

There are a number of existing online training modules and courses which are relevant for the supervisor role, however these are open to all staff and not specifically designed for supervisors. Some of these are set out in Appendix Two.

The group discussed the desirability of having an online resource specifically designed for supervisors and agreed on a list of themes which this should cover (also contained in Appendix Two). The group agreed that it would be desirable for supervisors to be expected to complete an online and a face to face briefing. However, further discussion is needed to clarify what would be covered in the different training.

iv. Academic roles/Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education

As part of the work of the task group, it was agreed to look at how academic roles recognise supervision and it was highlighted that the current Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education do not mention supervision. It was agreed with the team revising these that the task group would discuss and propose a set of principles to be considered in the revision. These are contained in Appendix Three.

It was also agreed that the work should link up with the Teaching and Academic Careers group.

More generally, it was agreed that it is important that supervisors are given an opportunity during annual review to discuss supervision. An example template for these discussions was developed and is contained in Appendix Four.

d. Consultation on supervisor briefings and CPD

Through the work of the task group, it became clear that wider consultation was required on certain aspects of the supervisor role at Edinburgh, particularly with regard to compulsory elements of training, and recommended CPD. Although seemingly widely accepted as common practice – and written into the Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors -, there is no University wide regulation of supervisor briefings, their frequency nor the provision for external supervisors. The creation of a CPD framework for supervision is dependent on the codification and clarification of this. As a result, the group agreed to run a consultation of stakeholders (Graduate Schools and supervisors) in November / December 2018.

i. Consultation results

30 responses to the consultation, with representation from all Colleges but not all Schools (no responses from Divinity, ECA, HCA, LLC, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, or Geosciences).

Key findings

- Broad agreement that new supervisors AND continuing supervisors must attend a half-day briefing (at School or College level) every 5 years (over 90% agreement)
- New supervisors should be required to attend briefing before starting supervision (64% agreed), or at least within 6 months of starting

- Majority of responses (67%) agreed with recommendation that all supervisors should complete one other CPD activity related to supervision each year
- Agreement that 5-year briefings and annual CPD requirement should be the case for university and honorary staff, but that staff from associated institutions should be required to attend equivalent training at their institution.
- Schools should be responsible for communicating requirements and for ensuring attendance and recording (77% agreed)

Themes from comments

- Need for better system to enable accurate recording of attendance and enforcement
- Importance of quality of training / CPD and for it to be specific to supervisors to encourage attendance
- Online options or higher frequency of briefings needed to allow attendance at convenient times
- Need for mental health training

Overall recommendation

- Continuing supervisors must attend a half-day briefing every 5 years (university and honorary staff) (mandatory)
- New supervisors must attend a half-day briefing either before or at least within the first 6 months of beginning to supervise (university and honorary staff) (mandatory)
- Supervisors from associated institutions are expected to attend equivalent training at their own institution
- Supervisors are expected to undertake one CPD activity related to supervision per year (optional)
- Online training should be developed covering specific elements of supervisor requirements; details of what it will cover still to be discussed
- Schools or Colleges must be responsible for communicating these requirements and for keeping accurate records of attendance

Summary of Recommendations with Actions

Recommendation	Action	Responsibility
5 year rule should be mandatory for university and honorary supervisors	To be written into policy for AY 19/20; Academic Services and HR to be consulted as to which policy and any implications	IAD / Academic Services
New supervisors must attend training within 6 months of starting supervision	To be communicated to Schools, reviewed and written into policy for AY 20/21	IAD / Academic Services
External supervisors from associated institutions should be expected to do equivalent training at their own institution to what is expected of University supervisors	Continue to work with Service Excellence Programme to ensure new CORE system allows accurate recording	IAD
Recommended that supervisors undertake one CPD activity related to supervision per year (optional)	Optional training to be communicated to Schools and supervisors encouraged to attend; document to facilitate	IAD/ School / College

	<p>talking about CPD for supervision as part of annual review conversations to be shared – use would be optional (appendix 4)</p>	
<p>Specific online provision should be considered for PGR supervisors</p>	<p>Details of what is to be covered to be discussed with REC including any resource implications</p>	<p>IAD</p>
<p>Schools and Colleges responsible for communicating requirements and keeping records</p>	<p>Policy update for AY 19/20 to be communicated to Schools</p>	<p>IAD / Schools / Colleges</p>
<p>Work on academic roles and careers should take supervision into account.</p>	<p>Principles developed by the group communicated to the group revising the Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education and the Teaching and Academic Careers working group.</p>	<p>Alan Murray / IAD</p>

Objectives addressed with summaries

	Objective	Summary
1.	To identify existing CPD frameworks for supervisors in other institutions (both UK and internationally) in order to benchmark against examples of good practice	Benchmarking
2.	To explore the viability of an online training resource for all supervisors	Needs further discussion and resource
3.	To understand the particular needs and requirements for the University of Edinburgh supervisor body in terms of CPD	Consultation
4.	To set out recommendations for the establishment of a CPD framework for supervisors	Results of consultation

Bibliography

Taylor, S. (2018) Eligibility to Supervise: A study of UK institutions. UKCGE publication. Available here: <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/content/publications-search.aspx>

Taylor, S. (2018) Enhancing Practice in Research Supervision. UKCGE publication. Available here: <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/content/publications-search.aspx>

Appendices

1. Benchmarking
2. Current and proposed online provision -
3. Principles to be considered in the revision of Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education

4. Example template for discussions on supervision at annual review
5. Report on consultation

Appendix 1: Benchmarking Exercise

The following questions were sent out to contacts at different universities:

Training requirements for supervisors from other institutions/organisations.

Are the requirements the same as for supervisors who are members of staff at your university?

Is the training delivered in the same way as for supervisors who are members of staff at your university?

Is there a mandatory training requirement for supervisors?

If so what is the timeframe for renewal of training - i.e. every 5 years/ 3 years

How do you ensure supervisors are kept up to date in policy/procedure changes during this time?

If universities provide any online training for supervisors?

How is engagement with this?

Is this mandatory?

Overall 9 institutions responded to our request for information. Anonymised individual responses are shown in the table below.

In summary:

- All universities offer some form of training to supervisors, varying between face-to-face to online. For most, this is the same training for supervisors from other institutions/organisations. Online training was highlighted as the best way to get external supervisors engaged.
- All universities, with one exception, have a mandatory training requirements for supervisors, this is usually every 5 years. In order to ensure that supervisors are kept up to date in between this time, some universities have a supervisor handbook (online) with others running good practice workshops/briefing sessions, or sending out documents to highlight the relevant changes.
- The majority of universities have online training for supervisors. A couple of universities have invested in Epigeum, with disappointing results, others have or are developing their own online training. The content of this varies depending on institution.
- One University has recently implemented a framework for new supervisors:
 - This has two pathways - experienced / less experienced – with the departmental senior managers deciding the pathway for new supervisors.
 - CPD is focussed on challenges facing students within departments, tailored and relevant
 - Driven by Graduate School-led focus groups which then feed into departmental CPD session

Question 1	Other universities' training requirements for supervisors from other institutions/organisations. <i>Are the requirements the same as for supervisors who are members of staff at your university? Is the training delivered in the same way as for supervisors who are members of staff at your university?</i>
	Central department delivers workshops for new doctoral supervisors and those who are new to the university. There are two disciplinary streams – arts, humanities, and social sciences; and STEM – with 6 or 7 workshop iterations in each stream per year. The workshops are 90 minutes: to consider the role as of supervisor (expectations and duties); to provide an introduction to the administrative requirements of the role; to reflect on best practice to guide students successfully and on how to avoid

	<p>pitfalls; to have an awareness of the range of sources of support available in the University; to consider a range of approaches to supervising.</p> <p>The Researcher Development Programme also provides a course for postdocs who informally assist with doctoral supervision.</p> <p>In addition to the central training, some Schools, Faculties, or Departments offer bespoke 'in house' training.</p> <p>Supervisors from other institutions/organisations who are registered with the Board of Graduate Studies are encouraged to attend this training, although there is no current mechanism to mandate participation. In practical terms, external supervisors are co-supervisors or secondary supervisors, which means that administrative duties are undertaken by the principal supervisor.</p>
	Yes
	All supervisors should fulfil our min training requirements
	This is a highly devolved institution. Schools are required to ensure that supervisors receive training every two years – the nature of that training is not prescribed. They usually rely on individuals accessing training through the Graduate School or request bespoke sessions (we might only get one request every two years for 20+ schools), or they run something themselves and we have no knowledge of it.
	The University is about to launch new training for all Supervisors, our regulations require all supervisors to undergo at least one Supervisory training activity per year. Part of the new training package being developed will be online training which will enable external supervisors to engage with training. Historically they have only been sent our regulations and Research Student and Supervisor Handbook.
	Training is not required but they are encouraged to attend. We hope to have a wider framework of training in the future, and may put something on specifically for external supervisors.
	<p>In theory, supervisors from outside the institution should receive the same training as supervisors at it, but I suspect this does not really happen because we do not have great mechanisms for tracking or enforcing. (This is actually similarly true of supervisors at our institution, and is something we are working towards improving; I recently undertook a trip to a partner institution to learn more about their system for doing this so we can implement something similar). One thing that may help make this possible is the recent rollout of an online module covering the basics of supervisory training. The point of this module was to provide a quick and easy training experience for a) new academics who are already experienced supervisors but perhaps are less familiar with the university system, b) academics who need to supervise *now* but can't make it to one of my face-to-face sessions right away, and c) academics at a distance (e.g., externals). I also use it to create a blended learning experience with my face-to-face modules, such that people do this module as prep work for the face-to-face session. It only takes 15-20 minutes so I am hoping that, increasingly, we can get our external supervisors taking it as a matter of course. We know in particular that there are challenges associated with supervisors in industry and I am creating some bespoke materials for them, so perhaps there may be some specific groups like this for whom we offer a slightly different training experience. If people don't get any sort of formal training, all they would have is access to our teaching QA manual, which contains a dedicated section outlining what is expected of those working with PGRs; we are also creating some easy-access versions of this information that aren't quite as legal-speak as the originals. If external supervisors do read this, which would be better than nothing, they would still be focusing mainly on *what* to do rather than *how to do it well*, which doesn't quite seem adequate.</p>

	At present, supervisors from other institutions are not systematically included in training delivered for staff.
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Question 2	If Universities have a mandatory training requirement for supervisors <i>If so what is the timeframe for renewal of training - i.e. every 5 years/ 3 years How do you ensure supervisors are kept up to date in policy/procedure changes during this time?</i>
	The workshops have been made mandatory in one School, although I don't know how it is effectively enforced. At present, there is no requirement to renew training.
	Every 5 years. We also offer optional courses in the meantime.
	Yes, half day face-to-face for new supervisors. 90min refresher webinar for all supervisors every 5 years. Comms re annual production of supervisor handbook for changes in policy/procedure. Looking to put supervisor handbook fully online this summer.
	There is no mandatory requirement for individuals. New lecturers are required to undertake a PGCHE. There is a half day compulsory module on research supervision. There is no monitoring or tracking of individuals. Engagement with support is entirely voluntary apart from the module for new lecturers.
	As above all Supervisors are required to undertake at least one training activity per year, this is monitored by their line managers and is irrespective of experience. In terms of informing supervisors of changes to Regulations, Policies etc. We annually run briefing sessions however attendance is optional so alongside this we also send out a briefing paper to all supervisors highlighting changes. From this coming year we will also be adding this to our Staff Portal site so that they can access it throughout the year.
	Yes, we have a mandatory training requirement. Supervisors are required to attend a refresher session every 3-5 years. In between they attend good practice workshops and regulatory updates run at faculty level and usually hidden in staff research away days so it doesn't seem like training!
	The College requires all new supervisors to complete a mandatory course called 'Introduction to PhD supervision' which is available either as a face-to-face workshop or an online version, depending on your experience. All supervisors are expected to undergo CPD specifically related to supervision, which in addition to the training courses for new supervisors described above, involves taking part in departmental 'best practice in supervision' workshops compulsory for all supervisors –every 6 years (in line with periodic review) Online Supervisor Handbook
	Supervisors are expected to undertake training when they first arrive (something they schedule themselves) and then to refresh via the offering that Colleges are required to provide every 2 years. However, we have found that people do not always engage with these subsequent sessions—because, again, we don't have a great system for encouraging people to go and penalising people who don't go. We have been talking about enforcing some sort of mandatory refresher outside the College scheme, also, since those every-two-years sessions are highly bespoke and address issues that Colleges are facing at the time; these might not always have the capacity to reflect more general developments in ways of thinking about supervision, as reflected in the pedagogy, and I would be keen to find some way of facilitating better and more discussions on these sorts of stylistic issues. I would hope to build that material into the online module that I refresh each year, and also into the supplementary support materials I post on our website and disseminate —

	so it may be that more informal methods of CPD such as these are where we do some of the refresh work (though these would be harder to track, of course).
	New supervisors are required to be briefed about the regulations and University codes surrounding supervision and are expected to attend skills training via our staff development programme. Schools are expected to organise supervisor training and discussion sessions periodically, where experiences and best practice can be shared between all supervisors and topical issues can be explored, either as bespoke sessions or as items on staff away-days. There is no mandatory threshold for this and approaches vary widely.

Question 3	If Universities provide any online training for supervisors? <i>How is engagement with this? Is this mandatory?</i>
	There is an onlinesite covering the practical and administrative information, plus signposting of where to go for help. Further developments are planned, e.g. to include more 'developmental' material.
	No
	Not currently. We are looking at putting our refresher training online, as a fully-online training course.
	Yes. The Epigeum course Supervising Doctoral Studies. It is not mandatory. We were involved in the development of some of its content and invested heavily in creating content for the 'your context pods'. A report was produced 9 months ago on engagement with this and all of our support provision. The results for the Epigeum course were definitely on the disappointing end of the spectrum. It's had no special advertising except through our seminar sessions.
	We are about to launch online training for the new academic year, and this will be much the same as an online module where supervisors can register and then access the materials. There are some core Mandatory workshops for all Supervisors based around the University Framework and best practice supervision. In addition we have mandatory requirements for staff that are internal examiner, Independent Chairs for Progress Reviews (Annual PGR Progress meetings) and to be Independent Chairs of Examinations.
	We don't currently but it is something we are considering.
	As mentioned above, we do have the short introduction to supervision online module, used both as a standalone and as prep work for our face-to-face session. I'm currently working with developers to create an online module about pastoral tutoring and also one about preparing for vivas (both in terms of being an examiner and supporting a student). All of these would be available for use at any point for people who need or want them; PGR pastoral tutoring training is mandatory for our PGR pastoral tutors but not for others, and nobody is required to take the viva workshop. These would also provide the groundwork for blended face-to-face sessions which would then build on these using more active forms of learning such as Q&A, working through scenarios, and interacting with expert panels. People have really appreciated the online option thus far, as well as the fact that it allows the face-to-face sessions to be shorter but also more targeted — putting the fundamental factual stuff in the online session has a levelling effect so that everyone reaches the classroom with a similar baseline knowledge of the essentials , which allows us to then do more interesting and creative things in person. The feedback does suggest that it's a better experience now in the face-to-face sessions.
	We subscribe to the Epigeum online modules and these are not mandatory, although elements from some modules are incorporated into the staff training for Arts and Humanities supervisors as part of a blended learning programme. We have no measure of take-up currently.

Appendix 2: Current and proposed online provision

Online resources or courses currently available for PhD supervisors include:

- Sexual harassment – no one asks for it (e-learning module available to all staff)
- Overcoming unconscious bias (e-learning module available to all staff)
- eDiversity in the workplace (e-learning module available to all staff)
- Checklist for postgraduate research students – student responsibilities (word document)
- Checklist for supervisors – supervisor responsibilities (word document)
- Discussion prompts for the supervisory team (word document)
- Expectations questionnaire for initial meeting between student and supervisor (word document)

Initial proposal for an online course for supervisors

Format

- Each section has a number of questions, ranging from 1- 4 questions in each section
- Different question types - multiple choice / case study based
- Hosted on LEARN
- Links to further support and training
- Reflection points

Content

Section	Learning outcomes	Topics covered	To be consulted
Attracting and recruiting students		Recruitment best practice Profiles of students: Distance students International students Part-time researchers	SRA Colleges Edinburgh Global
Managing progress		Meetings Writing and feedback Annual reviews Extensions/ interruptions	Colleges/ Academic services/ IAD
Supervisory styles		Understanding own style Expectations Co-supervision Working in a team	Colleges/ IAD
Preparing for examination		Regulations Ways to support students	Colleges/ Academic Services/ IAD
Mental health and wellbeing support		Mental health strategy/common issues/ Where to go for help	Counselling/ Disability/ Advice Place

Professional and career development support		How best to support a student – academic or non-academic careers	Careers / IAD
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References:

Taylor, S. Towards a Framework for the Professional Development of Doctoral Supervisors, *Staff Development Forum Digest*, 2014 (2). Pp. 74- 87 <https://sdf.ac.uk/>

Appendix 3: Principles to be considered in the revision of Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education

The current Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education are being updated and revised. [Exemplars of Excellence](#)

It was agreed that rather than suggest additions to the current exemplars, that it would be better to recommend a set of principles/ expectations for PhD supervision that should be taken into account when redrafting the exemplars. These have been communicated to the Teaching and Academic Careers Group who will take them into account in their work.

1. Examples for PhD supervision should focus on supervisory practice, rather than on management or leadership of others doing supervision.
2. Excellence should not be based solely on numbers of students who have completed their PhDs – examples may include instances of supervision, which have supported students who are struggling/ unable to complete.
3. Supervisory practice could include the following: introduction of the student into the research culture, effective use of networks, effective management of diversity, use of innovative practice (non–exhaustive).
4. Mentoring and acting as a role model for more junior supervisors can be used as examples.
5. Where possible quantifiable evidence should be used to support examples.
6. Evidence of influence over supervisory practice outside UoE can be used.
7. Examples of developing meaningful collaborative supervision with external organisations can be used.

Appendix 4: Supervisory continuing professional development record

Please note: this form could be used as a basis for discussions about development at annual review

Record of continuing professional development for postgraduate research supervisors

Record of activity: what have I done over the past year?

Reflection: what did I learn from these activities? How will I apply this to my supervisory practice?

Plan ahead: what would I like to focus on over the coming year? If possible, identify specific areas of supervisory practice. How will I address this and what support do I need?

Appendix 5: Consultation

New supervisors and half-day briefing

- 93% agreed new supervisors MUST attend a half day supervisor briefing (at School or College level) every five years
- Agreement that this should be the same for university (96% agreed) and honorary staff (83% agreed), but not for staff from associated institutions (only 34% agreed)
- 100% respondents who said that staff from associated institutions did not need to attend this training said they should be required to attend equivalent training at their own institution
- **64% stated** that new supervisors should attend this briefing **BEFORE** supervising a student
- For responses stating a timeframe within which new supervisors should attend a briefing, if not required before supervising a student, the majority stated this should be **within 6 months or less**.

Comments on half-day briefing for new supervisors:

- Need for better system of recording of attendance
- Clarity needed over whether expected to attend both School and College session
- Some requests for more training for completely new supervisors, or for specific topics such as unconscious bias and focus on interdisciplinary topic supervision
- One comment about appropriate systems in Schools which support effective supervision being a better approach than training

Continuing supervisors and half-day briefing every 5 years

- 90% agreed continuing supervisors should attend a half day supervisor briefing (at School or College level) every five years
- Agreement that this should be the same for university (93% agreed) and honorary staff (82% agreed), but not for staff from associated institutions (only 32% agreed)
- 100% agreement that staff from associated institutions should attend equivalent training in their own institutions

Comments on half-day supervisor briefings for continuing supervisors:

- 3 out of 9 comments suggested this should be more frequent (every 3 years)
- Importance of updating experienced supervisors with new procedures
- Suggestions that this could be separate to new supervisor training, or online, to make it more attractive to continuing supervisors
- Need for this to be mandatory and better method of recording

Additional CPD for supervisors

- 67% agreed that supervisors should complete one other CPD activity relevant to research supervision each academic year.
- There was stronger agreement that this should be a recommendation for University staff (74% agreement) than for honorary staff (54%) or staff from associated institutions (22%).
- Of the 78% who disagreed that staff from associated institutions should do additional CPD, 73% agreed they should attend equivalent training at their institution.

Comments on additional CPD:

- Ensuring high quality and specific to supervision, possibly at School level
- Mental health mentioned several times

- Not making this mandatory but encouraging it
- Other areas suggested dealing with difficult relationships, career planning & support, Tier 4 engagement monitoring, Regulations Updates, Progression Monitoring / reporting, supporting student experiential and reflective learning, student welfare, supporting and mentoring others who they are line managing who are undertaking supervision themselves

School responsibility for communicating training, ensuring attendance and keeping records

- 77% agreed this was the responsibility of Schools
- Other comments included stating that this should be College responsibility, or that lack of accurate recording system made this difficult
- Agreement that this should be the same for university staff (97% agreed) and honorary staff (86%) but not staff from associated institutions (45% agreed – but 89% of those not agreeing agreed this should be an equivalent process at their own institutions)

Comments on attendance and recording:

- Focus on improving systems to allow accurate recording
- Recording and communication to happen at level (School or College) where admin resource is provided
- Need to enforce

REC: 18/03/2019
H/02/26/02

REC 18/19 4D

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

13 March 2019

Review of the Structure of the Senate Committees - initial proposals for consultation

Executive Summary

The Principal has agreed that the University should review the structure of the Senate Committees. A task group convened by the Senior Vice-Principal is managing this review. This paper sets the scope of the review, and the task group membership and planned approach to the review. It also sets out the task group's initial proposals for changes to the structure and membership of the Senate Committees, and invites the Committee to comment. The task group plans broader consultation with stakeholders about the proposals in April / early May 2019.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Effective academic governance supports the University in delivering all its strategic plans and priorities.

Action requested

For discussion.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The paper sets out the task group's plans for consulting on the proposals for changes to the Committee structures. Academic Services would take responsibility for coordinating the implementation of any approved changes.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Academic Services will support the review. The operation of the Senate committee structure has resource implications both for the secretariat (provided by Academic Services) and for the members of the Committees. Were the review to lead to an increase or decrease in the number of committees, this would have a commensurate impact on resources.

2. Risk assessment

Effective academic governance assists the University in managing risk associated with its academic activities.

3. Equality and Diversity

The task group will consider equality and diversity issues when developing its recommendations.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services
5 March 2019

University of Edinburgh
2019 review of the Structure of the Senate Committees
Initial proposals for consultation

The Principal has agreed that the University should review the structure of the Senate Committees. A task group convened by the Senior Vice-Principal is managing this review.

This paper sets the scope of the review, and the task group membership and planned approach to the review. It also sets out the task group's initial proposals for changes to the structure and membership of the Senate Committees, and invites the Committee to comment.

1 Summary of options* for consultation

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (see 4.1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status quo - no change to current LTC remit and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the membership of LTC to include some or all Heads of Schools (or their designated representatives)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a joint Senate / Court committee with responsibility for the broader student experience (while the Learning and Teaching Committee continues to focus on learning, teaching, assessment and student support)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer the Researcher Experience Committee's responsibilities for strategic PGR student matters into LTC
Senate Researcher Experience Committee (and broader research matters) (see 4.2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status quo - no change to current REC remit and membership (other than clarifying who will convene the Committee on an ongoing basis), and modest changes to CSPC's membership so that it has greater depth of expertise on PGR matters to assist it to fulfil its existing role on PGR policy and regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merge REC's responsibilities for strategic PGR matters into LTC, and incorporate responsibility for Early Career Researcher matters into Research Policy Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend RPG's remit to incorporate both PGR and Early Career Researcher matters, and change Research Policy Group's reporting lines so it reports to Senate (while retaining strong links to the University Executive)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the roles of REC and other relevant Committees (eg Student Recruitment Strategy Group and Fee Strategy Group) in relation to the governance of PGR scholarships

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (see 4.3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific proposals for changes to QAC's remit and membership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to strengthen the links between QAC and the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, so that the University's quality review processes inform strategic discussion of learning and teaching issues.
Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (see 4.4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend CPSC's membership so that it has greater depth of expertise on PGR matters to assist it to fulfil its existing role on PGR policy and regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change CSPC's name to 'Student Regulations and Curriculum Frameworks Committee'
Other issues for consultation (see 4.5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise the requirement for the Committees to review their remit and membership each year to ensure they have expertise across all relevant aspects of the University's increasingly diverse portfolio of taught and PGR provisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the role of the Student Disability Committee and (if it continues to operate) establish clearer reporting lines to the University formal governance structures

* Note that in some cases the options presented for each Committee are not mutually exclusive.

2 Background

Senate has delegated most of its powers to its committees – and, beyond holding strategic discussions on specific issues, its decision-making role is limited to a small number of formal issues – for example, approving the award of Honorary degrees and the appointment of Emeritus Professors, and commenting on Court resolutions. The University's academic governance therefore relies heavily on Senate's committees.

Senate established its current committee structure in 2009-10, following a review of academic governance. Its four standing committees are:

- Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
- Researcher Experience Committee (REC)
- Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)
- Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

The remit and membership of these committees are available at:

www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees

It is timely for the University to review these committee structures:

- It is now ten years since the University established these committee structures, and over that period the University’s portfolio of taught and research programmes, the size and shape of its student population, and the external policy and regulatory environment, have all changed considerably.
- During that period, the University has also changed some other aspects of its committee structures (eg the establishment of University Executive), and Colleges will have made some changes to their committee structures – it is therefore appropriate to ensure the Senate committee structures continue to align with other committee structures.
- In order to fulfil the requirements of the Scottish Code for Good Higher Education Governance, the University has commissioned a consultant (Dr Jennifer Barnes) to undertake an externally-facilitated review of the effectiveness of Senate and its Committees. This review is considering a range of issues, including: the operation and effectiveness of Senate; the effectiveness of the communication between Senate, its committees and their stakeholders across the University; and how Senate can encourage discussion and debate, and provide effective governance. Dr Barnes has now concluded her review and is writing up her report with a view to reporting to Senate 29 May 2019 meeting. The task group will take account of any recommendations she may make which have implications for the Senate Committee structures.
- In 2020, the University will introduce major changes to the composition of Senate in order to comply with the 2016 Scottish Higher Education (Governance) Act. As a result, Senate’s membership will reduce (from c.800 to c. 300 members), and the membership will become predominantly elected. These changes in the composition could contribute to changes to the format and role of Senate, which would in turn have implications for the Senate Committees.

3 Task group approach and timescales

The task group scope and membership is set out in the Annex. The task group plans the following approach:

February 2019	Task group held first meeting to develop some initial proposals for changes to Committee structures and membership (taking account of approaches at comparator institutions, and emerging findings from the externally-facilitated review of Senate)
March / April 2019	Initial proposals to the Senate Committees for consultation
April / early May 2019	Broader consultation with stakeholders (eg University Executive, Research Policy Group, Heads of Schools and Colleges, Students’ Association) regarding the proposals
Senate 29 May 2019	Present final proposals for committees structures and membership
Summer 2019	Task group to develop detailed Terms of References for revised committee structure

September 2019	E-Senate to approve detail of Terms of Reference for revised Committee structure
Start of 2019-20	Implement revised committee structures

4 Initial proposals for changes to the Senate committee structures

4.1 Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

4.1.1 Governance of the broader student experience.

It is becoming increasingly important for the University to have effective strategies and policies for aspects of the 'student experience' beyond the more traditional Senate focus on learning, teaching, assessment and academic support. At present, while LTC's terms of reference focus on those more traditional Senate functions, it has nonetheless provided direction and approved policy on broader issues, for example student mental health. There may be a case for formalising LTC's role in relation to the broader student experience.

While some comparator institutions do have Senate committees covering the broader student experience, extending LTC's remit would raise some challenges:

- How to define the demarcation lines between Senate and its Committees, and other University committees, in relation to the 'student experience';
- The Committee's membership would need to include expertise on relevant issues (implying a substantial expansion of membership to an already-large committee); and
- The Committee's typical meeting agendas are already long and demanding, and it may be necessary for the Committee to meet more frequently in order to manage a broader remit.

Since many student experience issues (eg transport) have direct resource implications, the Committee's effectiveness would be constrained unless it had an appropriate level of accountability for resources (which it does not have at present). One potential way of addressing this issue would be to establish a joint Court / Senate Committee which could include leaders for key functions (eg Estates) who would have authority over resources.

4.1.2 Effective implementation of decisions

Effective and consistent implementation of policies and strategies approved by Senate Committees often relies on action (and, sometimes, reallocation of resources) at School level. This can be a particular issue for LTC, since it is responsible for the more strategic aspects of the Senate Committees' work (the implementation of which can lead to particularly extensive change at School level). Extending the membership of LTC to include some or all Heads of Schools (or their designated representatives) would assist LTC to take account more explicitly of

School-level resourcing issues when determining policy and strategy, and to increase School management buy-in for Senate Committee decision-making. It could however diminish the role of Colleges and their Deans in overseeing and supporting their Schools to implement institutional policy and strategy. In addition, the Committee may become too large to be effective if all 20 Heads of Schools are members, along with key College and professional services staff, and student representatives.

4.1.3 Alignment of different levels of study

Since 2009-10, Senate has structured its committees so that LTC considers UG and PGT matters together, and REC considers PGR matters separately, whereas previously Senate separated Undergraduate and Postgraduate matters into different committees. While Colleges currently have different approaches to UG and PGT matters (Science and Engineering consider UG and PGT matters in one Committee, whereas the other Colleges consider them in separate committees), the task group has not identified any case for returning to the pre-2009 position and dividing up UG and PGT matters into different Senate committees. The task group is however consulting on possible options for overseeing PGR matters, one of which might be to incorporate strategic PGR matters into LTC (see 4.2 below).

Options for consultation:

- Status quo - no change to current LTC remit and membership;
- Extend the membership of LTC to include some or all Heads of Schools (or their designated representatives);
- Establish a joint Senate / Court committee with responsibility for the broader student experience (while the Learning and Teaching Committee continues to focus on learning, teaching, assessment and student support);
- Transfer REC's responsibilities for strategic PGR student matters into LTC.

4.2 Senate Researcher Experience Committee (and broader research matters)

4.2.1 Location of governance for PGR and Early Career Researcher matters

At present, REC is responsible for postgraduate research degree training, higher degrees and training provision for other early career researchers. Research Policy Group (established in 2008, at the same time as the current Senate Committee structure), discusses University research policy issues, helps manage cross-College activities and promote interdisciplinary research, plays a key role in formulating the University's strategy and policy for REF 2021, and oversees good research practice and stewardship of University wide research policies that relate to research ethics and integrity. See: www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/research/rpg

In recent years, REC's ability to deliver its remit has been constrained by changes in academic leadership. However, it is also not clear whether the way that the Committee's responsibilities are configured is assisting it to fulfil its remit.

There are persuasive arguments for locating governance of PGR matters alongside with taught student governance, and Early Career Researcher matters alongside research policy, like some comparator institutions:

- In addition to the University's MSc by research programmes (which combine taught and research elements), an increasing number of PhD programmes (eg Integrated PhD programmes) combine taught and research elements. This makes it problematic to handle taught and research student provision entirely separately in policy development and governance terms.
- Many academic policies and regulations apply equally to both taught and research students, with only a relatively small number of documents specific to PGR. Of the policies and guidelines managed by Academic Services, roughly twice as many are applicable to both PGR and taught students as are solely about PGR matters.
- It is not clear whether broader 'student experience' issues (such as student mental health and wellbeing) are so distinct for PGR students from taught students that the University should handle them separately in governance terms.
- Early career researchers are key contributors to the University's research capability, as reflected by the University's strategic investments in Chancellors' Fellows, and in the external funding that the University is able to secure for ECRs. Considering ECRs alongside the University's broader research priorities may assist the University to develop a more strategic framework for their development.

However, given the much larger volume of taught students and programmes / courses, there would be a risk of diminishing the focus on PGR issues by locating them in the same committee as taught student matters.

Alternatively, the University could consider incorporating both PGR and Early Career Research into the committee responsible for Research policy, which would enable the University to take an integrated perspective on its research activities the staff and students contributing to them.

4.2.2 Senate responsibilities for governance of research matters

At present, Research Policy Group's formal reporting line is to the University Executive. During the externally facilitated review of Senate (see Section 2, above), some colleagues have suggested that there may be merits in Research Policy Group having a formal reporting line to Senate. This model appears common at comparator institutions, and would be consistent with Senate's formal responsibilities (set out in the 1889 Universities (Scotland) Act), which incorporate 'promoting' the University's research.

4.2.3 Responsibility for policy and regulation on PGR matters

At present, the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee has responsibility for approving policy and regulation for PGR as well as taught student matters. In practice, this means that REC advises on changes to policy and regulation on PGR matters and then passes them to CSPC for approval. CSPC has a co-opted member with expertise on PGR matters to provide a link between discussions at REC and CSPC.

While this overlap in functions is suboptimal, there would be significant practical issues to separating out policy and regulation for PGR students from that for taught students because many policies and regulations apply equally to both taught and research students and programmes. For example, of the policies and guidelines managed by Academic Services, roughly twice as many are applicable both to PGR and taught students as are solely about PGR matters. In part, this reflects the existence of the MSc by Research and Integrated PhD provision that incorporates taught and research elements (see above).

4.2.4 Responsibility in relation to the development of PGR scholarships

Some PGR scholarships (unlike scholarships for taught programmes) are accompanied with conditions or entitlements which affect students' programmes of study. For example, the Enlightenment Scholarships involve students undertaking a programme of teaching development or broader professional development alongside undertaking their research and producing their thesis. As a result, REC has inputted into the development of some PGR scholarships. The recent development and implementation of the Enlightenment Scholarships suggests that there may not be sufficient clarity regarding the respective roles of the Senate Researcher Experience Committee, and other University committees (eg Fee Strategy Group, FSG, and Student Recruitment Strategy Group, SRSG) in relationship to the development and oversight of PGR Scholarships.

Options for consultation:

- Status quo - no change to current REC remit and membership (other than clarifying who will convene the Committee on an ongoing basis), and modest changes to CSPC's membership so that it has greater depth of expertise on PGR matters to assist it to fulfil its existing role on PGR policy and regulations;
- Merge REC's responsibilities for strategic PGR matters into LTC, and incorporate responsibility for Early Career Researcher matters into Research Policy Group;
- Extend RPG's remit to incorporate both PGR and Early Career Researcher matters, and change Research Policy Group's reporting lines so it reports to Senate (while retaining strong links to the University Executive);
- Clarify the roles of REC and other relevant Committees (eg SRSG and FSG) in relation to the governance of PGR scholarships.

4.3 Senate Quality Assurance Committee

It remains necessary for the University to have a committee to provide governance for the quality assurance issues that it is responsible for (eg the University's framework of annual and period quality review, and the University's preparation for and responding to Enhancement-led Institutional Reviews). QAC also has a key role in sharing good practices identified via the quality review processes, and feeding key insights from quality review processes into institutional strategic planning. While some institutions (eg Bristol) combine this quality assurance work with policy and regulatory work, this is unlikely to be workable at Edinburgh without significant change since both QAC and CSPC already have very full agendas.

Options for consultation:

- No specific proposals for changes to QAC's remit and membership.
- Explore ways to strengthen the links between QAC and the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, so that the University's quality review processes inform strategic discussion of learning and teaching issues.

4.4 Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

The University needs to develop and maintain a framework of academic policy and regulation for its taught and research student activities. While it needs to be informed by strategy, the work involved in developing this framework requires careful scrutiny and discussion by stakeholders who have a detailed understanding of how policy and regulation impacts on individual students and courses/programmes. There is therefore a good case for continuing with the current arrangements, in which responsibility for approving policy and regulation is separate from broader strategic discussions on learning and teaching (the responsibility of LTC). The Committee's name does not articulate its core responsibilities (which relate to policy, regulatory and curriculum frameworks) sufficiently clearly however.

Options for consultation:

- Amend CPSC's membership so that it has greater depth of expertise on PGR matters to assist it to fulfil its existing role on PGR policy and regulations (see 4.2);
- Change CSPC's name to 'Student Regulations and Curriculum Frameworks Committee'.

4.5 Other issues for consultation

4.5.1 Governance of an increasingly diverse portfolio

The composition of the Senate Committees is based primarily on staff representing organisational units (eg representatives from Colleges and relevant support services). This will tend to lead to the Committee membership having expertise in relation to the most common forms of provision and students (eg on campus UG and

PGT). However, the University's provision is becoming increasingly diverse, for example with Online and Distance Learning provision, collaborations with other institutions, Executive Education, and Continuing Professional Development becoming significant parts of the University's portfolio. It is important that the Senate Committees take account of the distinctive features of these different types of provision and learners, for example when developing policy. At present, Conveners of Committees can add expertise on an ad hoc basis by co-opting additional members. However, it may be helpful to take a more structured view on the types of expertise required on each Committee.

Options for consultation:

- Formalise the requirement for the Committees to review their remit and membership each year to ensure they have expertise across all relevant aspects of the University's increasingly diverse portfolio of taught and PGR provisions.

4.5.2 Student Disability Committee

While the Student Disability Committee's formal reporting line is to the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (having previously had a formal reporting line to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee), in practice it is not currently reporting to LTC.

Options for consultation:

- Review the role of the SDC and (if it continues to operate) establish clearer reporting lines to the University formal governance structures.

4.5.3 Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Sub-Group

In 2016-17 the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) establish an Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Sub-Group to advise the Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback), and to advise and guide the Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) project, and to act as a forum for discussing broader assessment and feedback activities. This is an opportune time for LTC to review the role of the Sub-Group, since the Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback) has concluded her period of office, and the LEAF project no longer requires the same level of guidance.

Options for consultation:

- Review the role of the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Sub-Group

4.5.4 Governance of collaborations with other institutions

When introducing joint taught or research student programmes with other institutions, it is necessary to go through normal academic approval processes, and also to undertake some additional due diligence activities, prior to development and sign-off of a Memorandum of Agreement. Since collaborations with other institutions can involve academic ways of working that differ from normal University practices,

and can have significant risk profiles, the University needs to have effective academic governance in place to provide direction regarding the types of academic collaboration that the University should consider undertaking, and to support and scrutinise proposals for specific collaborations. There are however limitations to the University's current academic governance structures regarding collaborations (both with UK and EU / international institutions).

While the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) has responsibility for considering non-standard academic arrangements for collaborations (eg assessment regulations different to the normal University arrangements, dual award arrangements), in practice this means that CSPC only considers very specific elements of proposals rather than taking a broader view on the academic merits of the proposals. The University also has an International Ventures Group (reporting to University Executive) to provide advice and guidance on certain types of strategic collaboration (not only taught and PGR collaborations, but also research and commercial collaborations). However, IVG does not currently have any remit over academic or student experience matters.

Since taught and research student collaborations with other institutions can have significant non-academic implications (eg HR, legal, financial), it is important to take account of both academic and corporate dimensions when developing governance structures. The Deputy Secretary (Strategic Planning) is developing potential options for enhancing oversight and support structures. If these have implications for the Senate Committees, the task group will take account of them when submitting its proposals to Senate in May 2019.

In addition to considering the formal governance for joint taught or research student programmes, it would also be helpful to clarify the Senate Committees' role in relation to the governance of student exchange arrangements.

Options for consultation:

- No specific proposals at present

4.5.4 Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG)

The Senior Vice-Principal established LTPG in 2015-16. It has operated as an advisory body with a particular role in coordinating and prioritising the work of the four Senate standing committees and the Vice- and Assistant-Principals with responsibilities for learning and teaching, and in connecting Heads of Colleges' and Heads of Schools' priorities with institutional strategic priorities on learning and teaching. Since the number of Assistant Principals with responsibilities for learning and teaching is likely to reduce, it would be appropriate for the new Vice-Principal (Students), once appointed and in post, to review the future of LTPG.

Options for consultation:

- No specific options

5 *Practical issues regarding the Committees' Terms of Reference (ToRs)*

Since Senate established the four Standing Committees in 2008, Senate has agreed some minor changes to the committees' ToRs (eg to amend a detailed point regarding a Committee's membership), but has not reviewed the ToRs more generally. The ToRs's statements of purpose and remit are a bit opaque for some of the committees. In addition, the ToRs do not address some operational issues, for example defining a quorum for the committees or explaining how the committees would make decisions in the absence of full consensus (for example, arrangements for voting). The task group will review and revise the Committees' ToRs during summer 2019, once Senate has agreed any changes to the overall structure and membership of its Committees.

Annex – scope of the review, and membership of task group

1 Scope

- Review the current structure, memberships and terms of reference of the four Senate standing committees (currently the Learning and Teaching Committee, Researcher Experience Committee, Quality Assurance Committee, Curriculum and Student Progression Committee)
- Recommend changes in order to ensure they:
 - Provide effective governance of the University’s learning and teaching, and student and early career researcher, matters;
 - Enable the University to take an effective and strategic approach to enhancing the student experience, developing the University’s taught and research student portfolio, and maintaining academic standards and quality assurance;
 - Take account of the planned 2020 changes in the composition of Senate; and
 - Are aligned to the University’s other committee structures, and to the Colleges’ committee structures.
- Review the current levels of devolution of authority from Senate to the Senate Committees, and, if appropriate, recommend changes.
- Out of scope:
 - Current levels of devolution of powers from Senate and its committees to Colleges;
 - Detailed working methods of the Committees and their task groups;
 - Arrangements for induction / training of Committee members;
 - Arrangements for communication and consultation regarding the business of Senate and its Committees;
 - The operation of Senate itself;
 - The governance role of Senate and its committees in relation to any current projects (eg Service Excellence);
 - Resourcing for projects sponsored or led by Senate or its committees;
 - The arrangements for other Senate Committees - Appeals Committee, Student Discipline Committee, Honorary Degrees Committee, Chaplaincy Committee; and
 - The arrangements for joint Senate – Court Committees (eg Knowledge Strategy Committee).

2 Task group membership

- Convener - Professor Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice-Principal
- Conveners of the four Senate Committees
 - Prof Charlie Jeffery (Learning and Teaching Committee)
 - Prof Tina Harrison (Quality Assurance Committee)
 - Prof Alan Murray (Curriculum and Student Progression Committee)

- Dr Paddy Hadoke (Director of Postgraduate Research, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine – co-convener of Senate Researcher Experience Committee)
- Senior Academic Administrators from each College
- Dr Lisa Kendall – Head of Academic and Student Administration, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)
- Claire Vallance – College of Science and Engineering
- Philippa Burrell – College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
- One Dean from each College (aiming that between them, they cover UG / PGT and PGR)
 - Dr Sabine Rolle (CAHSS Dean of Undergraduate Studies)
 - Dr Linda Kirstein (CSE Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture)
 - Dr Sarah Henderson (Director of Postgraduate Taught provision, CMVM)
- Director of Academic Services – Tom Ward
- Students Association Vice-President (Education) – Diva Mukherji
- Professional services support for the group - Theresa Sheppard (Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services)

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Researcher Experience Committee
18 March 2018

Senate Committee Planning 2019-20

Executive Summary

In Semester One 2018-19 the Committee had an opportunity to identify:

- Student experience, learning and teaching issues that Schools / Colleges / support groups should take account of in the planning round; and
- Major institutional projects that the Committee would like to make a case for, which would require significant support from support services which could not be accommodated within existing resources.

In previous sessions, during Spring the Committee would have an opportunity to identify its full set of priorities for the coming session. This session, for reasons set out in the paper, the Senior Vice-Principal asks the Committees to limit their Spring 2019 planning to identifying projects currently underway that will require further work in 2019-20, relatively modest projects to address urgent 'hygiene' issues, and activities necessary in order to respond to external factors. Academic Services would then coordinate more substantive planning work for 2019-20 during summer 2019.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with University Strategic Objective of Leadership in Learning, and with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to identify its priorities for the coming session, taking account of the parameters that the Senior Vice-Principal has set.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Academic Services will submit the plans to Senate's 29 May 2019 meeting, and will communicate them more widely using the Senate Committees' Newsletter. College representatives on the Committee are encouraged to discuss the plans with their Schools.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Yes. The paper will assist the University to use its resources strategically. Any priorities identified by the Committee must be possible to implement within existing resources, since it is too late in the planning round for 2019-20 to make a case for new projects.

2. Risk assessment

No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake a risk analysis.

3. Equality and Diversity

No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake an equality and diversity assessment.

4. Freedom of information

For inclusion in open business

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 26 February 2019

Senate Committee Planning 2019-20

1 Background - 2018-19 plans

At its meeting on 30 May 2018, Senate endorsed the Senate Committees' plans for 2018-9, see Paper C at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20180530agendaandpapers.pdf>

2 Input into overall 2019-20 planning cycle

In Semester One 2018-19, the Committee had the opportunity to identify:

- Student experience, learning and teaching issues that Schools / Colleges / support groups should take account of in the planning round; and
- Major institutional projects that the Committee would like to make a case for, which would require significant support from support services which could not be accommodated within existing resources.

3 Identifying Committee priorities for 2019-20

In previous years, during Semester Two the Senate Committees each had an opportunity to identify their full set of priorities for the coming session. Each Committee would then submit its plans to the last Senate meeting of the year for approval.

This session, the context for setting the Committee's plans for the coming session is unusual for the following reasons:

- The University is in the process of appointing a new Vice-Principal (Students) – once in post they will have a key role in determining the Senate Committees' priorities.
- The University is in the process of developing a Student Experience Plan, which will set out a range of key priorities regarding teaching, curriculum and student support (as well as actions in relation to the broader student experience).
- The University is in the process of reviewing Senate's Committee structures, and has also arranged a broader externally-facilitated review of Senate – both of which are due to report to Senate on 29 May 2019.
- The Student Administration and Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme (SEP) will be presenting business cases for strands of work across a wide range of areas that have policy implications for the Senate committees (eg academic lifecycle, examination board operations, programme and course information management, PGR lifecycle) to its Board in April 2019. In addition,

SEP and the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee are initiating a major review of academic and pastoral support. It would not be sensible for the Senate Committees to plan actions that could overlap with the areas that SEP is considering, until the SEP Board decides which business cases to support.

- At present, Student Systems have relatively little capacity to support additional analysis and development activities. It would therefore not be sensible for the Senate Committees to plan additional actions contingent on Systems analysis and development work.
- This year's planning round is more complex than usual.

Taken together, these circumstances make it difficult for the Senate Committees to plan for 2019-20 at this point, and suggest that it would be more appropriate to wait until summer 2019 before planning the main Committee priorities for 2019-20.

The Senior Vice-Principal therefore asks the Senate Committees at this point in the session to limit their planning for 2019-20 to identifying:

- Projects currently underway that will require further work in 2019-20;
- Relatively modest projects to address urgent 'hygiene' issues (eg to address problems with the operation of particular regulations); and
- Activities necessary in order to respond to external factors.

Annex A proposes a set of priorities for the four committees. **The Committee is invited to discuss these priorities.**

Annex – proposed Senate committee activities for 2019-20**Proposed activities cutting across the four Committees**

Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with Students' Association to promote and implement the Student Partnership Agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish implementing the changes in Senate's composition associated with the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, including holding elections to the newly-constituted Senate in March / April 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement any agreed changes to the operation of Senate and to its Committee structures following the externally-facilitated review of Senate, and the review of the structure of the Senate committees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Administration and Support strand of Service Excellence Programme – likely to raise various new strands of activity for Senate Committees, for example regarding academic policy and regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to take steps towards aligning with the new UK Quality Code, with a view to full alignment prior the University's next ELIR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep a watching brief on the development of Teaching Excellence Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies and Codes – Ongoing programme of review of policies

Learning and Teaching Committee

Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee continued implementation of University Learning and Teaching Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with the Service Excellence Programme's Student Administration and Support board, oversee and guide the review of student support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the implementation of recommendations from the 2018-19 task group on inclusion, equality and diversity in the curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the implementation of the new institutional policy to support the University's Lecture Recording service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure continued progress to enhance support for Careers, Employability and the development of graduate attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor implementation of the Student Mental Health Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to strengthen the University's understanding of retention and continuation rates for different undergraduate student groups, and to focus on enabling students from all groups to succeed

Researcher Experience Committee

Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence in Doctoral Training and Career Development programme - evaluate the effectiveness of School / College briefings for supervisors, assess the impact of changes to requirements supervisor training and support planned for 2019-20, and explore the development of online training to supplement School / College briefings for supervisors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance support for Early Career Researchers (make more visible, enhance and structure provision, strengthen partnerships)

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Service Excellence Programme to oversee the implementation of any significant policy changes associated with the current programme of work (e.g. Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions, Programme and Course Information Management)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide the University's response to any policy issues raised by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment's report on degree classification outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the implementation of changes in policy regarding resubmission of PGT dissertations and associated dissertation supervision support, and PGT assessment/progression arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the implementation of changes to the Code of Student Conduct following the review in 2018-19, and conduct a light-touch review of the impact of the amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the implementation of any agreed changes to the Support for Study Policy following the review in 2018-19

Quality Assurance Committee

Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evaluate the impact of the new programme-based approach to the Class Representation System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee institutional activities in response to the University's 2015 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) and contribute to preparations for the 2020 ELIR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee implementation of mid-course feedback to taught postgraduate courses (subject to the outcome of the review during 2018-19)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the operation of the Personal Tutor system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support Schools to reflect on their patterns of degree classification outcomes

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

18 March 2019

MSc by Research Dissertations: resubmissions**Executive Summary**

Proposal to include an MSc by Research resubmission option in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees. The Committee supported including this option at its January 2019 meeting and the paper proposes content for inclusion in the regulations.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with the University Strategic Plan objective of Leadership in learning.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to support the content for submission to the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee as part of the annual regulations review.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee would need to approve changes to the regulations. Academic Services communicate regulation changes in their annual communication to Colleges and Schools in June.

Resource / Risk / Compliance**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

There are resource implications for staff time associated with resubmission of MSc by Research dissertations. It is not anticipated that this will be overly burdensome, given that the number of students who meet the criteria for resubmission is likely to be small, and the fact that these students will be entitled to receive written advice from their supervisor on one occasion. Once resubmitted dissertations have been marked, they can be considered at an existing Board of Examiners meeting.

2. Risk assessment

There is a potential risk should the University decide from 2019/20 to offer students the opportunity to resubmit MSc by Research dissertations or research projects where the student has marginally failed at the first attempt. Current or previous MSc by Research students may potentially feel aggrieved that they were not offered this opportunity. However, the practical implications of offering resubmission to students from previous cohorts on request would be prohibitive. There is, therefore, an inevitable "cliff edge" involved in the introduction of such a policy regarding resubmission. However, the stated benefits to future students of adopting this revised approach should mean that this remains both worthwhile and defensible, and the small numbers of students failing MSc by Research programmes annually mean that the risk is minimal

3. Equality and Diversity

The proposed changes should not raise any implications for equality and diversity. Academic Services will carry out an equality impact assessment on the assessment and degree regulations.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Services

19 February 2019

MSc By Research Dissertations: Resubmission

At its January 2019 meeting, the Committee supported including a resubmission option for **MSc by Research dissertations**, in line with new Postgraduate Taught Masters dissertation regulation. Current regulation 54 MSc by Research degree revisions states that students cannot resubmit their research project or dissertation. For student starting in 2018/19 or later, the Taught Assessment regulations now permit Masters students to resubmit where they have achieved a marginal fail (45 – 49%) on first attempt or have been affected by Special Circumstances.

Academic Services proposes the amendments below to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees, which are based on the equivalent content in the Taught Assessment Regulations. New content is added at Regulation 51 (d) and 51.2, and Regulation 54 has been rewritten and expanded.

Regulation 51 MSc by Research degrees: examiner recommendation

The examiners may recommend:

- (a) Award Pass with Distinction in MSc by Research. See Regulation 52; or
- (b) Award Pass with Merit in MSc by Research. See Regulation 53; or
- (c) Award MSc by Research. The research project or dissertation satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study as appropriate and that the degree should be awarded; or
- (d) Offer resubmission for MSc by Research. The dissertation or research project satisfies the requirements for the degree except that minor corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these with minimal supervision and without undertaking any further original research; or
- (e) Award exit award. The research project or dissertation is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the MSc by Research. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of postgraduate diploma or certificate; or
- (f) Fail. The research project or dissertation is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and does not meet the requirements for any award.

Application of the regulation

51.1 For those MSc by Research degrees assessed by a Board of Examiners within a School, the Board makes a single recommendation for each student directly to the Senatus.

51.2 On programmes where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, students must have obtained 45 to 49% at the first attempt to be

entitled to resubmission under Regulation 51 (d). Regulation 54 provides more information about resubmission of MSc by Research research projects or dissertations.

Regulation 54 MSc by Research degrees: resubmission of the research project or dissertation

Where the Board of Examiners has offered resubmission in line with Regulation 51 (d), students are entitled to one resubmission of the research project or dissertation. Students may also be offered the opportunity to resubmit the research project or dissertation where a special case regarding an individual student's circumstances has been approved by the College.

Application of the regulation

54.1 The relevant Board of Examiners will provide a student permitted to submit a revised dissertation or research project with a statement, which outlines the deficiencies in their original submission. The student is also entitled to receive further written advice from their dissertation or research project supervisor on one occasion before resubmission.

54.2 The Board of Examiners will advise the student of the deadline for submission of their revised dissertation or research project, which will be three months from the date of the student receiving notification of their original result.

54.3 Where a student declines the opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project, or fails to submit by the stated deadline, the Board of Examiners will treat the mark the student received for their first attempt as final and the Board of Examiners will consider the student for a relevant exit award.

54.4 If the Board of Examiners agrees that the revised dissertation or research project meets the requirements for a pass at MSc by Research level, the student will be awarded the MSc by Research degree. Where a mark is recorded for the dissertation or research project, the recorded mark for the revised dissertation or research project will be capped at 50%.

54.5 Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their research project or dissertation in the University library, they may be permitted to submit a revised version within one month of recommendation of award, but the revised version will not be subject to reassessment. A student cannot graduate until they have submitted the final version of their research project or dissertation to the College Postgraduate Office.

Susan Hunter, Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Services
19 February 2019

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

18 March 2019

Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2019/20

Executive Summary

Draft Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2019/20. Key changes are included on page 2 of this paper.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the Committee's priority of "good housekeeping" in updating and maintaining the regulatory framework.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to discuss and endorse the draft assessment regulations for academic year 2019/20.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The draft regulations will be sent for approval by Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee in May 2019. Academic Services will communicate the approved regulations in the annual update on regulations and policies.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
- 2. Risk assessment**
- 3. Equality and Diversity**

The majority of the proposed changes do not result in changes to policy or practice, but are clarifications of existing wording. Resource, risk, and equality implications of the proposals relating to resubmission of MSc by Research degrees are covered in a separate paper.

- 4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services and Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services

6 March 2019

Key Changes to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2019/20

Regulation	What has changed
22 PhD by Research and other Doctorates: examiner recommendation	<p>Amended (d) to clarify that this is a resubmission for the PhD/Doctorate.</p> <p>New 22.7 to clarify that students failing to meet resubmission requirements may be considered for an exit award.</p>
23 PhD by Research Publications: examiner recommendation	<p>Amended (b) Minor Corrections, (c) Additional Oral Examination Needed and (e) Substantial Work on Thesis and Additional Oral Examination Needed to clarify that examiners can only request corrections to the critical review.</p> <p>Amended (d) to clarify that this is a resubmission for the PhD by Research Publications and that examiners can only request corrections to the critical review.</p> <p>New 23.4 to clarify that students failing to meet resubmission requirements may be considered for an exit award.</p>
24 MPhil: examiner recommendation	<p>Amended (d) to clarify that this is a resubmission for the MPhil.</p> <p>New 24.4 to clarify that students failing to meet resubmission requirements may be considered for an exit award.</p>
51 MSc by Research: examiner recommendation	<p>New (d) to provide the offer of a resubmission for the MSc by Research degree. This provides consistency with all other degrees offered by the University after the introduction of a resubmission opportunity for taught Masters degrees in 2017/18. One resubmission opportunity with minor corrections and minimal supervision will be permitted. (See separate paper.)</p>
54 MSc by Research degrees: resubmission	<p>Amended to provide one resubmission opportunity for the MSc by Research degree. (See separate paper.)</p>

Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

Academic Year 2018/19/20



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Purpose of Policy

The assessment regulations set minimum requirements and standards for students and staff, articulating the academic goals and policies of the University.

Overview

These regulations:

- (i) replace the previous Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees;
- (ii) set out the rules which must be followed in research assessment for Research Degrees; and
- (iii) provide links to other sources of guidance or related regulations.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

These regulations are University-wide and apply to all postgraduate research degrees at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework levels 11 and 12. The regulations apply to work submitted for assessment during the current academic year. They relate to all research degrees listed in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study: www.drps.ed.ac.uk.

More detail is given in the document.

Contact Officer Susan Hunter Academic Policy Officer Susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 01.06.17	Starts: 18.09.17	Equality impact assessment:	Amendments: N/A	Next Review: <u>2017/2020</u>
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Approving authority Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

Consultation undertaken

Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations Working Group, Colleges, [EUSA Students' Association](#), Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, Researcher Experience Committee, Student Disability Service, College Academic Misconduct Officers, Records Management, Distance Learning, Student Administration and Edinburgh Research and Innovation

Section responsible for policy maintenance & review

Academic Services

Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

Student Appeal Regulations, Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students, DRPS Glossary of Terms: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2018-19.pdf

UK Quality Code

The regulations are consistent with [The UK Quality Code Chapter B11: Research Degrees](#)

Policies superseded by this policy

Previous versions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4490.

Keywords

Assessment, assessment regulations, degree award, examination, examiners, progression, research assessment, oral examination, viva

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Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 20~~18~~/19/20



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Additional guidance

For research degree programmes that contain a significant proportion of taught courses, taught elements are governed by the University's Taught Assessment Regulations:

www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf. The regulations must be applied, unless a concession has been awarded by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) on the basis of a case proposed by a College. The "Application of the regulation" must also be applied, unless the College has approved an exemption on the basis of a case proposed by a School. Concessions and exemptions are recorded by CSPC and Colleges as appropriate. The regulations operate in accordance with legislation and University policies on Equality and Diversity:

www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/legislation-policies/policies. Members of staff who need additional guidance may consult their Head of College or their nominee, their College Postgraduate Office, Academic Services, Student Administration or Student Systems.

Where reference is made to "the relevant Dean" this should be taken as being the Dean with responsibility for postgraduate research matters and "the Committee" is the relevant College Postgraduate Committee, or the Committee of each College which is formally identified as exercising the functions of a College Postgraduate Committee for the purposes of postgraduate research academic decisions. Where reference is made to 'the Head of College' or 'Head of School' this may also in some cases be a designated representative of that individual. The term MSc by Research includes Masters by Research, MTh by Research and LLM by Research.

For Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) students on courses that use the assessment grade scheme, the term 'mark' in the regulations also includes 'grade'.

Definitions of some of the key terms in the regulations can be found in the Glossary of Terms: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2018-19.pdf

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These research assessment regulations, and related University practices, are consistent with the [Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code of Higher Education, Chapter B11: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-b-assuring-and-enhancing-academic-quality](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-b-assuring-and-enhancing-academic-quality)

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This document should be read in conjunction with University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study; the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students; the External Examining Code of Practice; and Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees. These are available via:

www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/a-to-z



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Section A Roles and Responsibilities

Regulation 1 Scope of regulations

All relevant provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees apply to all Doctoral and MPhil degree programmes except where stated.

The Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees also apply to MSc by Research degree programmes where relevant. Information regarding how these regulations apply to MSc by Research degree programmes is provided in Section E of these regulations.

Regulation 2 College Postgraduate Committee: responsibility for research degree programmes

Research degree programmes are the responsibility of the relevant College Postgraduate Committee.

Application of the regulation

- 2.1 The College Postgraduate Committee will consider and ratify the recommendation of the Internal and External Examiners appointed to examine a student for the award of a research degree.
- 2.2 The responsibilities of the College Postgraduate Committee include:
 - (a) approving the format of assessments;
 - (b) the security of and arrangements for assessments; examining and marking assessed work; and processing and storing marks and grades;
 - (c) the quality and standards of marking;
 - (d) ensuring all examiners are aware of their responsibilities;
 - (e) accurate recording, minuting and reporting of decisions of the Committee.
- 2.3 Committees may, where appropriate, delegate operation of some responsibilities to Schools. Such delegation decisions are recorded by the College.
- 2.4 Colleges produce information on postgraduate research assessment:
CHSS: www.ed.ac.uk/arts-humanities-soc-sci/research-students
CMVM: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/CMVM/PGMarketing/CMVM+Postgraduate
CSE: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=118719348

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Regulation 3 Examiners: appointment

Examiners are appointed by the relevant College. There are Internal Examiners, who are staff of the University nominated by the relevant Head of School, and External Examiners.

Application of the regulation

- 3.1 Where appropriate, upon receipt of a student's Notice of Intention to Submit form, the College Office will contact the Head of the student's School to request that examiners are nominated for the assessment of the thesis or submitted assessment.
- 3.2 Before submitting nominations to the College, the Head of School should consult the student's supervisors over the choice of examiners. Supervisors inform students of the names of possible examiners, and students must inform their supervisor if any problems are likely to arise if particular examiners are appointed. Any comments will be taken into account but students have no right to determine the Head of School's eventual recommendation, and therefore have no right to veto any particular appointment.
- 3.3 The External Examiner will be approached informally by the Head of School to establish their willingness to act. However, the College Postgraduate Committee has responsibility for the approval of all examiners. Any objection to the proposed examiners must be made to the College committee in good time before the relevant assessment. Complete final lists of examiners are maintained by the relevant College Office.
- 3.4 Internal Examiners are academic and/or honorary staff of the University. Honorary staff, in this context include:

Staff from Associated Institutions: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/associated-institutions ;

Teachers and senior staff from partner schools to the Moray House School of Education;

Academic staff from partner higher education institutions as part of specific collaborative agreements;

and NHS staff who are honorary staff members of the University of Edinburgh.
- 3.5 Internal Examiners are appointed by the student's School with approval by the relevant College. Staff who are or who have been a supervisor of the student at any time cannot be an Internal Examiner for that student.

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- 3.6 No person who has held an appointment on the teaching or research staff or has been a student of the University, or who has been granted honorary status in the University, is eligible to act as an External Examiner until a period of four years has elapsed since the termination of the appointment or the status. In exceptional circumstances this rule may be waived by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. Members of affiliated or associated institutions may be Internal but not External Examiners.
- 3.7 The School must inform the student of the names of their examiners when the examiners have been approved by the College committee.
- 3.8 If more than three months have elapsed between the examiners being appointed and the student submitting the thesis, the College Office has responsibility for checking whether the commitments of any examiner have changed significantly so that consideration may be given to appointing an alternative examiner.

Regulation 4 Non-Examining Chair: appointment

The College must appoint a Non-Examining Chair if the Internal Examiner is acting for the first time, or is a member of honorary staff.

Application of the regulation

- 4.1 The appropriate process for appointing a Non-Examining Chair is the same as for appointing Internal Examiners (see regulation 3).
- 4.2 The role of the Non-Examining Chair is to ensure that due process is carried out and to attend for the duration of the oral examination. The non-examining chair needs to be a person with appropriate experience of postgraduate research examining from within the University. The Non-Examining Chair need not be from the same School as the student. The Non-Examining Chair must ensure that all parties to the examination process fully understand the expectations of them and should offer assistance and facilitation where necessary. The Non-Examining Chair must not express an opinion on the merits of the thesis.

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Regulation 5 Number of examiners

Each student is assessed by at least one External Examiner and one Internal Examiner.

Application of the regulation

- 5.1 In particular cases, such as the assessment of an interdisciplinary topic, a second External Examiner may be appointed.
- 5.2 When the student is or has been a member of staff of the University during their research degree there must be two External Examiners and one Internal Examiner. "Member of staff" will be defined by the student's School with approval by College. There is no requirement for students who are or have only been tutors or demonstrators (or have undertaken similar roles) to have two external examiners.
- 5.3 See also Regulation 7 Avoiding potential conflicts of interest.

Regulation 6 Examiners: responsibilities

Examiners must have the requisite experience to examine the degree programme at the level at which it is offered. They need to meet the responsibilities set out by the College Postgraduate Committee and comply with quality and standards requirements.

Application of the regulation

- 6.1 The College Postgraduate Committee will specify responsibilities and requirements to examiners, and ensure they are aware of these regulations and the recommendations available to them.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of the College Postgraduate Committee to ensure that the External Examiner is competent to assess the degree. The External Examiner is appointed for their specialist knowledge, whereas the Internal Examiner may be a generalist or an expert in only part of the subject matter of the thesis.
- 6.3 Internal Examiners must be fully conversant with the procedures and regulations for oral examinations within the University. Heads of School must ensure that Internal Examiners are aware of all their duties in the examination process.
- 6.4 During the assessment the examiners must hold the thesis and the abstract in strict confidence.



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Regulation 7 Avoiding potential conflicts of interest

No member of University of Edinburgh staff, Internal Examiner, External Examiner, or Non-Examining Chair shall be involved in any assessment or examination in which they have a personal interest, for example a current or previous personal, family or legal relationship with a student being assessed.

Application of the regulation

- 7.1 If there is a potential conflict of interest the College Postgraduate Committee will be consulted.
- 7.2 The University's Policy on Conflict of Interest is relevant:
www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Conflict_of_Interest.pdf



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Section B Conduct of Assessment

Regulation 8 Assessment requirements: student responsibilities

It is a student's responsibility to be aware of the assessment practices and requirements for the degree programme, including the Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis.

Application of the regulation

- 8.1 The grounds for the award of specified research degrees are provided in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/
- 8.2 The student must read the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf
- 8.3 It is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the student is informed of all assessment practice and requirements, including *The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students*.
- 8.4 There are flow charts showing the thesis assessment process and the responsibilities of the student, College, School and Examiners: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/doctoralthesisassessment.pdf
- 8.5 The Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis can be found online at: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf

Regulation 9 Assessment deadlines: student responsibilities

It is a student's responsibility to meet their assessment deadlines, including thesis submission deadlines and oral examination times and location.

Application of the regulation

- 9.1 It is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the student is informed of all assessment requirements.

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Regulation 10 Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made to assessments for disabled students.

Application of the regulation

- 10.1 Reasonable adjustments must be determined in advance by the Student Disability Service (SDS). They are recorded in the student's Schedule of Adjustments by the SDS, which communicates the Schedule of Adjustments to the student, the student's supervisor, the School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments, and other relevant areas.
- 10.2 The School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Schedule of Adjustments. The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with academic colleagues who are responsible for putting the adjustments in place in the School. In the case of oral examinations, the supervisor is responsible for communicating relevant adjustments to the chair of the oral examination.
- 10.3 The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with the SDS should any adjustments require further discussion, clarification or alteration. If there are any amendments to the Schedule of Adjustments, the SDS will communicate these and ensure that the student is informed.
- 10.4 The SDS provides examples of reasonable adjustments, deadlines and support: www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/student-support/support-we-offer/study-adjustments
- 10.5 The SDS supports students in the preparation and review of their Schedule of Adjustments. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their Schedule of Adjustments covers all types of assessment methods relevant to the programme. For example if a student discovers that an aspect of their programme is likely to impact on their support needs, they should contact the SDS as soon as possible in case any amendment is required to be made to their Schedule of Adjustments.
- 10.6 Arrangements can be made via the SDS for students with temporary injuries or impairment, on the submission of relevant medical information. Students should contact the SDS as soon as possible to allow the SDS to determine any relevant adjustments and support.

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Regulation 11 Language of assessment: languages other than English or Gaelic

The English language is the usual medium of teaching and assessment at the University of Edinburgh. All work submitted for assessment must be written in the English language, with the following exceptions: theses, dissertations or research projects may be submitted in Gaelic (see regulation 12); theses, dissertations or research projects, and other assessed work may be submitted in the language which is being studied where the relevant course or programme handbook specifies that this is allowable.

Application of the regulation

- 11.1 Quotations may be given in the language in which they were written.
- 11.2 In very exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be granted permission to submit a thesis, research project or dissertation written in a language other than English, where this is not specified by the relevant course or programme handbook. Approval will only be given in cases where the nature of the research is such that presentation of the research results in the language(s) of the materials under analysis confers significant intellectual advantage to the community of scholars who are expected to comprise the primary audience of the research. Approval to do so must be sought either at the time of admission to the University or no later than by the end of the first year of full-time study (or equivalent part-time study), and will not normally be granted retrospectively. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that there are sound academic reasons for the request, and that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis, research project or dissertation in the proposed language of submission.
- 11.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the thesis, research project or dissertation should also include a substantial summary (of approximately 10,000 words in the case of theses) written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in a language other than English, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

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Regulation 12 Language of assessment: Gaelic

Theses, research projects and dissertations submitted for assessment and examination may be submitted in Gaelic.

Application of the regulation

- 12.1 The University of Edinburgh wishes to accord Gaelic equal respect with English under the terms of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 12.2 Candidates who wish to submit a thesis, research project or dissertation in Gaelic should seek approval to do so as early as possible, and certainly not later than by the end of the first year of full-time study (or equivalent part-time study) in the case of Doctoral and MPhil students. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis, research project or dissertation.
- 12.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the thesis, research project or dissertation should also include a summary (of approximately 1500 words) written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in Gaelic, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

Regulation 13 Progression review

The first progression review will take place for all students within 9 to 12 months of their enrolment. The student must participate in a meeting and may be required to make a written submission and/or prepare an oral presentation. Progress in the subsequent years (at 9 to 12 months) is assessed until the thesis is submitted. The online progression report form must be completed.

Application of the regulation

- 13.1 Guidance on the procedure for the progression review is included in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf
- 13.2 It is expected that progression reviews are normally held early within the 9 – 12 month period, to allow time for a repeat review if this is required.



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- 13.3 There are similar procedures for full-time and part-time students, and reviews of part-time students will also take place within 9 to 12 months of their enrolment. Part-time students will not be expected to have made as much progress as full-time students within this time. Exceptionally, the first progression review may be postponed, with permission from the College. The postponement must be no longer than six months.
- 13.4 Colleges/Schools may also have additional requirements, for example 10 week review.
- 13.5 Schools must ensure that students are aware of how the progression review will be conducted.

Regulation 14 Annual progression review recommendation

The Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School, in consultation with the supervisors will make one of the following recommendations after the annual review

- (a) confirmation of registration, for example for PhD, MPhil;
- (b) a repeat progression review must be undertaken within three months before confirmation of progression;
- (c) for part-time students only for the first progression review: deferment of the confirmation decision to the second annual review;
- (d) registration for a different research degree such as MPhil or MSc by Research;
- (e) registration for a postgraduate taught degree (for example MSc) or diploma can be recommended if the student has undertaken the coursework for that qualification;
- (f) exclusion from study.

The College Postgraduate Committee is responsible for making the progression decision, having considered the recommendation of the Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School.

Application of the regulation

- 14.1 If the outcome of the annual review is 14(b) then the three month period starts from the date of issue of the progression decision to the student.
- 14.2 If there are doubts about a student's ability to complete a PhD successfully then option (d) must be considered. If there are serious doubts as to the student's research capability, then options (e) or (f) must be considered.
- 14.3 The Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Study can be found at:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf



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Regulation 15 Repeat progression review

If the annual progression review indicates some concerns about a student's progress then a repeat review must be undertaken within three months.

Application of the regulation

- 15.1 The repeat review can contain any or all of the components of the progression review (see regulation 13).
- 15.2 The options for recommendations from the repeat progression review are those listed in regulation 14, with the exception of Regulation 14(b). Only one repeat review may be undertaken before confirmation of registration.
- 15.3 The College has responsibility for providing the student with a statement on expectations for progress.

Regulation 16 Notification of intention to submit a thesis for assessment

Students must notify their supervisor and the College Postgraduate Committee of their intention to submit their work for assessment.

Application of the regulation

- 16.1 The student must complete the suite of submission forms at least two months before the thesis is submitted:
 - Notification of Intention to Submit,
 - Thesis Abstract,
 - Access to a Thesis and Publication of Abstract.

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms



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Regulation 17 Deadlines for the submission of a thesis for assessment

A student must submit their thesis for assessment, to the relevant College, within 12 months of the completion of their prescribed period of study, except:

- For the degree of **PhD by Research Publications** a student must submit their thesis within three to twelve months of registration.

Application of the regulation

- 17.1 At least two, soft-bound copies of each thesis containing an abstract and lay summary, and one electronic copy of each thesis, abstract and lay summary must be submitted to the relevant College Office. If more than two examiners are appointed then additional copies of the thesis will be required. Only the submission sent by the College Office is assessed by the examiners.
- 17.2 All theses must conform to regulations and guidance in Section C.
- 17.3 Once a student has submitted a thesis they cannot retract it.
- 17.4 The relevant College Office is responsible for transmitting the thesis and the examiners' report forms to the examiners.

Regulation 18 Early submission

Any student wishing to submit their thesis earlier than three months prior to the end of the prescribed period of study must have the permission of the College Postgraduate Committee.

Application of the regulation

- 18.1 The student must discuss early submission with their supervisor. Colleges are unlikely to approve early submission without the agreement of the Principal Supervisor.

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Regulation 19 Examiners' reports

The College will send the thesis to the examiners who must each submit an initial, independent written report in advance of the oral examination. The examiners must not consult with each other in completing their initial report. Examiners will not send any comments or decision to the student prior to the oral examination. After the oral examination the examiners will submit a joint report.

Application of the regulation

- 19.1 At the University of Edinburgh, doctoral and MPhil degrees are assessed through a two-stage process in which each examiner, acting independently, submits an initial ('Part I') report on the thesis before the oral examination is held. Following the oral, the examiners are asked to submit a joint ('Part II') report on the thesis. Examiners submit their own Part I reports and the Internal Examiner is responsible for sending the Part II report to the relevant College Postgraduate Committee. The forms are available online:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/school-college-forms
- 19.2 Exceptionally, if the examiners do find it necessary to consult before writing their Part I reports, this fact and the reason(s) for it must be noted in their reports.
- 19.3 The reports must be sufficiently detailed to enable members of the College Postgraduate Committee (after the oral examination) to assess the scope and significance of the thesis and to appreciate its strengths and weaknesses. They must be expressed in terms that are intelligible to those who are not specialists in the particular field of the thesis.
- 19.4 Examiners must complete their initial reports (Part I) prior to the oral examination, in the time frame advised by the School or College. The joint report (Part II) should be completed directly after the oral examination and sent to the College Postgraduate Committee within two weeks of the oral.
- 19.5 The chair of the oral examination should ensure that the Part II report gives a full account of the examiners' views. In the unlikely event of examiners failing to reach agreement, separate recommendations may be made and will be subject to arbitration by the College Postgraduate Committee.



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Regulation 20 Preparation for oral assessment

All examiners must participate in any oral assessment of the student. The College has responsibility for overseeing the oral assessment of the student.

Application of the regulation

- 20.1 Oral assessment may be conducted using technology such as video conferencing, enabling the student or an examiner to participate but not be physically present at the University. Such remote assessment must have the permission of the College Postgraduate Committee, the student, all examiners and any Non-Examining Chair. The College has responsibility for approving and overseeing this process.
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/videolinked_phd_oral.pdf
- 20.2 The Internal Examiner is responsible for consulting with the relevant Graduate School and ensuring that all the necessary arrangements for the oral assessment are made. The arrangements, including the date and place of the oral, the chairing of it, and the names of all those participating in it, must be provided in advance to all those who are to be present (i.e. the student, all examiners, any Non-Examining Chair and any observer). Where a Non-Examining Chair has not been appointed the Internal Examiner will chair the oral. (See regulation 4.)
- 20.3 If an examiner is unable to participate in the oral assessment, it may be postponed to a later date. If postponement would be a serious hardship to the student, the College Postgraduate Committee will consider appointing an alternative examiner.
- 20.4 The examiners complete and submit the relevant forms by the specified deadline:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/school-college-forms

Regulation 21 Oral examination

The examiners will hold an oral examination to assess a student's doctoral or MPhil thesis. Oral examination may be used as part of the assessment process for other research degrees.

Application of the regulation

- 21.1 The expectation is that the oral examination will be held within three months of submission of the thesis.
- 21.2 The oral examination may be used to establish a student's knowledge of the field of their research, to establish the extent of any collaboration and to confirm that the work is the student's own. Through the oral examination, the examiners are assessing jointly whether the thesis and the student's defence of it satisfy the

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requirements and regulations for the award of the degree. Requirements that specific research degree programmes have for oral assessment are set out in Section D.

- 21.3 Where there is a non-examining chair, they will chair and attend for the duration of the oral. Where a non-examining chair has not been appointed the Internal Examiner will chair the oral. (See regulation 3.)
- 21.4 Supervisors may attend the oral examination, with consent of the student and examiners, but will not participate in or comment during the oral examination. Supervisors must leave the examination room with the student and do not participate in the examiners' discussion and decision on recommendations.
- 21.5 The (oral) examination procedure of practice-led PhDs can include exhibitions, performances and other events, elements and processes.
- 21.6 The professional doctorate oral examination may cover any part of the degree programme.
- 21.7 At the end of the oral examination, the examiners may, if they have agreed a recommendation to make to the College Postgraduate Committee, indicate their recommendation to the student. The examiners must stress, however, that their recommendation is not final but will form the basis of the Part II report (see regulations 22-24). Receipt of the Part II report by the student from the College constitutes formal notification of the decision and beginning of any additional period of study set by the examiners.

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**Regulation 22 PhD by Research and other Doctorates: examiner
recommendation**

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the doctoral degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see www.drps.ed.ac.uk/) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses, as identified by the examiners, must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without further supervision and without undertaking any further original research. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis needs work above and beyond editorial corrections or minor weaknesses in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, and this work may require further supervision. However, the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner(s) (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The student ought therefore to

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be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or

- (f) **Award MPhil.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements; but the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil; or
- (g) **Award MPhil following Minor Corrections.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil except for stated minor corrections in the thesis. The student should be invited to carry out the specified minor corrections as indicated by the examiners. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (h) **Substantial Work on Thesis Needed before Resubmission and oral examination for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis may satisfy the requirements for the degree of MPhil if stated deficiencies in the thesis are remedied. Accordingly, the student should be invited to resubmit the thesis in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners for the degree of MPhil. The revisions should be completed within a further period which must not exceed 12 months; or
- (i) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements or the requirements of the MPhil. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or
- (j) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree requirements.

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Application of the regulation

- 22.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once in line with 22 (d), (e) and (h).
- 22.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under 22(b) to (h) then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.
- 22.3 A student presenting a thesis under Regulation 22 (h) may not subsequently be permitted to resubmit the thesis under Regulation 24 (e).
- 22.4 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.
- 22.5 Where a student is offered the award of a different degree under (f), (g) or (i) above then the original word limits for the offered degree are set aside.
- 22.6 Where the examiners' recommendation is (j), the College will provide the student with a written explanation of the decision. In these circumstances the College Postgraduate Dean or nominee will be available to discuss the outcome with the student, should the student request this.

22.7 Students failing to meet requirements following resubmission under (d), (e) or (h) may be considered for an exit award.

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Regulation 23 PhD by Research Publications: examiner recommendation

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the doctoral degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see www.drps.ed.ac.uk/) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. Examiners may only request corrections to the critical review. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without further supervision and without undertaking any further original research. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal



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Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. Examiners may only request corrections to the critical review. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD by Research Publications.** The thesis needs significant work in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. Examiners may only request revisions to the critical review. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD by Research Publications.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy them. Examiners may only request revisions to the critical review. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or
- (f) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree.

Application of the regulation

23.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once in line with 23 (d) and (e).

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23.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under Regulation 23 then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.

23.3 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.

23.4 Students failing to meet requirements following resubmission under (d) or (e) may be considered for an exit award.

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Regulation 24 MPhil: examiner recommendation

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award MPhil.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree of MPhil as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see www.drps.ed.ac.uk/) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without supervision and without undertaking any further original research. These corrections to the thesis must be completed within a specified period of not more than three months and are, subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed = Resubmission for MPhil.** The thesis needs significant work in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The revised thesis must be

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completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy them. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or
- (f) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the MPhil and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or
- (g) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree.

Application of the regulation

- 24.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once in line with 24 (d) and (e).
- 24.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under Regulation 24 then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.
- 24.3 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.
- 24.4 Students failing to meet requirements following resubmission under (d) or (e) may be considered for an exit award.
- 24.5 Where the student is offered the award of an MPhil as an exit degree, having originally submitted for a doctorate, the MPhil word count will be set aside.

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Regulation 25 Thesis resubmissions

Where the examiners decide that resubmission of a thesis is required, they must write a detailed statement of the aspects which require revision. The resubmitted thesis is judged only against this written statement. A student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit their thesis.

Application of the regulation

- 25.1 No further criticism of other material or aspects of the thesis passed as satisfactory at the first assessment can be introduced at a later stage. The written statement and the aspects of the thesis which require revision must be approved by the College Postgraduate Committee and cannot subsequently be altered without the agreement of that Committee.
- 25.2 A student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit their thesis. Thereafter, at most, they may make only minor corrections.
- 25.3 In the event of resubmission, the examiners will re-assess the thesis and hold a second oral examination.
- 25.4 If resubmission is recommended, only one copy of the original thesis should be returned to the student. The other should be retained by the Internal Examiner to facilitate checking of revisions when the thesis is resubmitted.

Regulation 26 Academic misconduct

It is an offence for any student to make use of unfair means in any University assessment, to assist a student to make use of such unfair means, to do anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment, or to impersonate another student or allow another person to impersonate them in an assessment. Any student found to have cheated or attempted to cheat in an assessment may be deemed to have failed that assessment and disciplinary action may be taken.

Application of the regulation

- 26.1 Plagiarism is the act of copying or including in one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another or your own previously assessed original work. It is academically fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. The innocent misuse or quotation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement can constitute plagiarism, even when there is no deliberate intent to cheat. Work may be deemed to be plagiarised if it

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consists of close paraphrasing or unacknowledged summary of a source, as well as word-for-word transcription. Any failure adequately to acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work could lead to lower marks and to disciplinary action being taken.

- 26.2 It is academically fraudulent and an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for a student to invent or falsify data, evidence, references, experimental results or other material contributing to any student's assessed work or for a student knowingly to make use of such material. It is also an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for students to collude in the submission of work that is intended for the assessment of individual academic performance or for a student to allow their work to be used by another student for fraudulent purposes.
- 26.3 A student who has submitted work for one course at this or another University must not submit the same work or part of the work to attempt to achieve academic credit through another course. See also the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations at: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/
- 26.4 Students need to be careful when asking peers to proof-read their work. Proof-readers should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English. They should not advise on subject matter or argumentation. Edinburgh University Students' Association runs a peer proof-reading scheme and information can be sought from the Advice Place: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/academic/peerproofreading/
- 26.5 Students need to be careful to avoid academic misconduct when submitting group projects and to be clear about their individual contribution to the submission.
- 26.6 Information on academic misconduct and plagiarism, and how such cases will be handled, is given on the Academic Services website. www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct

Regulation 27 Security of marks

Assessed work, marks and grades must be handled, transported, recorded and stored securely.

Application of the regulation

- 27.1 The College has responsibility for the security of arrangements. In practice, the operation of this may be delegated to the College Office, Graduate School or equivalent.

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27.2 Security arrangements must also include sending assessed work, marks and grades to examiners, including External Examiners; marking arrangements for online assessment; and correspondence about marks, which may be by email.

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Section C Thesis Regulations

Regulation 28 Format of thesis

Students are responsible for ensuring that the submitted thesis is presented in a clear, accessible and consistent format.

Application of the regulation

- 28.1 Guidance regarding the Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis is available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf
- 28.2 If the School or the examiners have concerns regarding the presentation of a thesis they should seek advice from the College. If the College considers the presentation of a thesis to make it unreasonable for the examiners to conduct the examination, it may require the student to represent and resubmit the thesis.

Regulation 29 Copyright

The student holds copyright as author of all work submitted for assessment.

Doctoral and MPhil students must grant the University the right to publish the thesis, abstract or list of works, and/or to authorise its publication for any scholarly purpose with proper acknowledgement of authorship.

Application of the regulations

- 29.1 The student reserves the copyright on both the thesis and the abstract.
- 29.2 Students must complete the Access to a Thesis and Publication Abstract form available to download from:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms
- 29.3 Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their research project or dissertation in the University library, the provisions of this regulation apply.



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Regulation 30 Thesis title

The student must provide a thesis title with the Notice of Intention to Submit Form (where this form is used).

Application of the regulation

- 30.1 The Notification of Intention to Submit Form is available online:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms
- 30.2 The expectation is that the student's thesis title on the Notification of Intention to Submit Form will be the final title for the thesis.

Regulation 31 Thesis length

Research degree theses, research projects and dissertations must not exceed the length specifications set out in the regulations for the degree.

Application of the regulation

- 31.1 Word count specifications are provided in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) or programme documentation: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Regulation 32 Previously published material

Where material to be included in a thesis, research project or dissertation has been published before the thesis, research project or dissertation is submitted, the student must acknowledge the fact of such publication.

Application of the regulation

- 32.1 The signed declaration must contain a clear statement on the inclusion of any previously published material. See also regulation 34.
- 32.2 A student cannot include in a thesis material that has been accepted for publication prior to the start of their programme of study, unless registered for a PhD by Research Publications degree. Guidance on including publications in a thesis is available online: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/publications_in_thesis.pdf
- 32.3 See also regulation 26.

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Regulation 33 PhD by Research Publications: submission

The portfolio of published work submitted for the PhD by Research Publications must be accompanied by an abstract and also by a general critical review by the student of all the submitted work.

Application of the regulation

- 33.1 The critical review must summarise the aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions covered by the work submitted in the portfolio. It must also critically assess how the work contributes significantly to the expansion of knowledge, and indicate how the publications form a coherent body of work and what contribution the student has made to this work.
- 33.2 The specifications for submission of PhD by Research Publications are listed in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS): www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Regulation 34 Signed declaration

Every student must incorporate a signed declaration in the thesis, research project or dissertation submitted for assessment, stating:

- (a) that the thesis, research project or dissertation has been composed by the student, and
- (b) either that the work is the student's own, or, if the student has been a member of a research group, that the student has made a substantial contribution to the work, such contribution being clearly indicated, or
- (c) that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified, and
- (d) that any included publications are the student's own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised and clearly identified on the declarations page of the thesis.

Application of the regulation

- 34.1 Guidance on completing the signed declaration is available online: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesis_signed_declaration.pdf

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Section D Assessment Decisions

Regulation 35 College Postgraduate Committee: approval of assessment decisions

The College Postgraduate Committee discusses the examiners' reports and decides whether or not to approve the recommendations made by the examiners.

Application of the regulation

- 35.1 Prior to the meeting of the College Postgraduate Committee, examiners' recommendations are provisional until approved or modified by the Committee.
- 35.2 The examiners for individual students do not participate in any assessment decisions regarding these students in the relevant meeting of the College Postgraduate Committee.
- 35.3 The Secretary to the College Postgraduate Committee is responsible for giving reasonable notice of meetings: ensuring that the recommendations of the Committee are approved in writing and made available to Student Administration at the required time; and ensuring that a minute of the meeting is produced.
- 35.4 The minute is a confidential document although information on a particular student may need to be disclosed to that student under the Data Protection Act and generic information may need to be disclosed under Freedom of Information legislation.

Regulation 36 Committee recommendation

The College Postgraduate Committee must *either* confirm the examiners' recommendation and transmit it to the Senatus without further comment *or* for stated reasons make a different recommendation to the Senatus, including, where appropriate, assessment by different examiners.

Application of the regulation

- 36.1 The Committee, on receipt of a recommendation by the examiners, must consider whether it appears to be adequately justified in the light of the full reports by the examiners, and may make further inquiry of the examiners and the student's supervisor(s).
- 36.2 If the Committee receives reports by the examiners indicating disagreement as to the appropriate recommendation, it may recommend to Senatus that the recommendation of one of the examiners be accepted in preference to that of the

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other. The Committee may require that a further report on the thesis be obtained from some other examiner or examiners, or that the assessment of the thesis be conducted from the beginning by different examiners.

- 36.3 If the Committee is offering an alternative award to that for which a student had originally submitted (for example MPhil as an exit award for PhD submission), the student must either agree or decline to accept the alternative award.
- 36.4 If the Committee varies the recommendation of the examiners for the degree, the College will provide the student with a written explanation of the decision. In these circumstances the College Postgraduate Dean or nominee will be available to discuss the outcome with the student, should the student request this.

Regulation 37 College Postgraduate Committee: quorum for assessment decisions

Provided reasonable notice of a meeting has been given, a meeting is properly constituted and empowered to act if at least three academic members (including the Convenor) are present.

Application of the regulation

- 37.1 The Convener of the Committee may, at their discretion, invite any person who has been involved in the assessment of the work under consideration by the Committee to be present 'in attendance' but without voting rights.

Regulation 38 Confidentiality

All discussion about the assessment of an individual student at a College Postgraduate Committee meeting is confidential.

Application of the regulation

- 38.1 The College Postgraduate Committee reaches a collective decision. The decision does not need to be unanimous.
- 38.2 The views of a particular committee member should not be made known to a student. If a student makes a request under the Data Protection Act, information recorded in the minutes on that particular student will need to be disclosed. In doing so, comments should be anonymised, e.g. assigned to Member 1, Member 2. Further information is available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf

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- 38.3 Students have a right to see information about themselves recorded in minutes of the College Postgraduate Committee meeting.
- 38.4 Other than with the written permission of the student concerned, members of staff should not make available information about marks to persons or bodies outside the University except when necessary in the context of a reference.
- 38.5 Guidance on disclosing information on students can be found at:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information

Regulation 39 Retention and destruction of material

Assessed material must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the University's student records retention guidance.

Application of the regulation

- 39.1 Information about the student records retention schedule is online:
www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/guidance/records/retention/student-records
- 39.2 Material which contributes to the assessment of the degree will be retained in the School, College Office, Library for a suitable period after the College Postgraduate Committee meeting which decides the overall classification or award of the degree, diploma or certificate. This enables the University to respond to any student appeal.
- 39.3 Assessment material should be destroyed at the end of the retention period. For students who submit appeals, the retention period will need to be extended until the end of the appeal process. Other material which contributes to the final assessment of the degree may be returned to the student after the expiry of the retention period providing they do not make known the views of a particular examiner (see regulation 38). Theses, research projects and dissertations may be retained by Schools, who have the responsibility to make them available to any enquirer in response to a Freedom of Information request (unless an exemption applies). Assessment samples may be retained for specified periods as supporting documentation for accreditation and quality assurance purposes, e.g. Postgraduate Programme Reviews. Material which is not retained or returned should be destroyed at the end of the retention period.



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Regulation 40 Award of degrees

Degrees are awarded by the Senatus on the basis of recommendations of the College, or Board of Examiners.

Regulation 41 College Postgraduate Committee: return of decision

Decisions and awards recommended by the examiners and confirmed by the College Postgraduate Committee must be recorded on the Student Records System as the final official results of the University.

Application of the regulation

- 41.1 Doctoral and MPhil students receive Part II reports, which constitute formal notification of the Committee decision, after the meeting of the College Postgraduate Committee.
- 41.2 The decisions of the Committee must be notified to Student Administration as soon as possible and certainly no later than 21 days before the date of graduation.
- 41.3 Notification of final results and recommendation of the award of qualification to students, following the meeting of the Committee, is the responsibility of the College Office.
- 41.4 Because of the nature of research degrees, transcripts for such degrees are not issued by the University. Colleges may instead provide students with an explanation of the specific degree awarded and confirmation that the student has been awarded (or is eligible to be awarded) this degree.

Regulation 42 Status of Decisions

Decisions by a College Postgraduate Committee, once certified in writing are final. In exceptional cases the College Postgraduate Committee can review its decision.

Application of the regulation

- 42.1 A College Postgraduate Committee may, review a decision if significant information relevant to that decision, which was unavailable at the time the decision was made, comes to light or if any error having a material bearing on that decision or an error in the written certification of that decision has been made.
- 42.2 If the Committee is satisfied that there are grounds for changing its decision it will report its decision to Student Systems.

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- 42.3 Where an error is discovered in the assessment or marking of any examination or any component of an assessment or in the calculation, recording or notification of the result of any assessment or any component thereof or in the classification or result of any degree or in any process connected with any of these matters, the University shall forthwith correct that error and amend its records to show the correct result or classification and whether or not the result or classification has been published or otherwise notified to the student. The University shall notify the student of the corrected result or classification as soon as practicable and shall also correct any reference or statement which may have been provided by the University whether to the student or to a third party. Having been notified of the corrected result or classification the student shall return to the University any documentation which may have been issued to the student notifying the original result or classification which has been corrected. The student shall have no claim against the University for any loss or damage which may have been incurred by the student as a result of any error which may have been made.
- 42.4 In proved cases of substantial and significant copying, plagiarism or other fraud, the Senatus has the power to reduce the classification of, or to revoke, any degree it has already awarded, and to require the degree, diploma or certificate scroll to be returned.
- 42.5 Any member of Senatus may request Senatus to refer for investigation any matter concerning assessment.

Regulation 43 Convener's Action

The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee or Progression Board may take decisions by Convener's Action.

Application of the regulation

- 43.1 This may occur when the College Postgraduate Committee takes a decision in principle but needs confirmation or further information, or when the Committee considers the possible outcomes and authorises the Convener, once relevant information is known, to apply the appropriate option. Convener's Action may also be appropriate when the decision to be made follows an existing precedent.
- 43.2 Decisions made by Convener's Action should be recorded and reported to the relevant Board or Committee.

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Regulation 44 Final version of the thesis

The student is required to submit the final version of the thesis to the College Postgraduate Office.

Application of the regulation

- 44.1 Degrees are conferred upon receipt of the final version of the thesis and following approval by the Senate at graduation.
- 44.2 The final version of the thesis must be submitted within one month of approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award. A student cannot graduate until they have submitted the final version of their thesis to the College Postgraduate Office. See:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/graduations.
- 44.3 Final submission must be notified by the College Office to Student Systems as soon as possible. Graduation deadline information is available online:
www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/key-dates
- 44.4 Students are responsible for submitting their final version in electronic form in addition to one hard bound copy. Hard bound copies should conform to standards for the format and binding of theses:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf
- 44.5 Further details on the submission of theses are available in the *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students* and from the Edinburgh Research Archive (ERA) at www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk.

Regulation 45 Academic Appeal

Students have the right of academic appeal against the decisions of the College Postgraduate Committee on specific grounds, which are set out in the University's Student Appeal Regulations:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/appeals

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Section E MSc by Research Degrees

Regulation 46 MSc by Research degrees: examination

There are two types of MSc by Research degrees:

1. MSc by Research degrees which are examined by the relevant College Postgraduate Committee, and are subject to all relevant provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees except for those regulations listed below.
2. MSc by Research degrees for which the responsibilities of the College Postgraduate Committee are carried out by a Board of Examiners within a School. For these programmes, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to the operation of Boards of Examiners apply instead of the following regulations in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees: 2 to 7; 35-38; 41 to 43.

Both types of MSc by Research degrees are exempt from the following provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees: 13-19; 22-25; 33; 44.

Schools will inform students at the start of an MSc by Research programme which examination arrangements apply to their programme.

Regulation 47 MSc by Research degrees: submission of research project or dissertation

Students on MSc by Research degrees must submit their research project or dissertation on or prior to the completion of the prescribed period of study.

Application of the regulation

- 47.1 Once a student has submitted a research project or dissertation, they cannot retract it.
- 47.2 Students on some MSc by Research programmes may be required to complete Notification of Intention to Submit forms prior to submission of their research project or dissertation. The relevant School or College will inform students where they are required to submit the form.

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Regulation 48 MSc by Research degrees: markers

For MSc by Research programmes, staff who are or have been a supervisor of the student may not act as a marker or Internal Examiner for the research project or dissertation, where the research project or dissertation is worth more than 60 credits.

Regulation 49 MSc by Research degrees: oral assessment

Oral assessment may be used as part of the examination process for MSc by Research degrees. Schools will inform students at the start of an MSc by Research programme whether oral assessment is to be used as part of the examination process for their degree. Where oral assessment is used on an MSc by Research programme, the relevant College Postgraduate Committee or Board of Examiners will determine whether regulations 20 and 21 of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees, or the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to Oral assessment will apply. Schools will inform students which regulations apply to their programme.

Regulation 50 MSc by Research degrees: requirements for award

In order to be awarded the degree of MSc by Research, students must pass at least 180 credits' worth of courses. This may include the award of credits on aggregate for up to 40 credits. Where credit on aggregate is offered, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations (under "Postgraduate assessment progression") apply.

Where marks are awarded for assessment on MSc by Research degrees, these must be expressed using the postgraduate common marking scheme:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

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Application of the regulation

- 50.1 In each Common Marking Scheme, Colleges and Schools may amplify, but not alter, the overall description of grades.
- 50.2 For some MSc by Research programmes the examiners may award a mark or grade, merit or distinction.
- 50.3 There will be no progression hurdle to proceed to the research project or dissertation.
- 50.4 Where a mark is awarded for the research project or dissertation, this must be passed at a minimum of 50%. Failure to achieve this standard will automatically result in no award at MSc level being made.

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Regulation 51 MSc by Research degrees: examiner recommendation

The examiners may recommend:

- (a) **Award Pass with Distinction in MSc by Research.** See Regulation 52; or
- (b) **Award Pass with Merit in MSc by Research.** See Regulation 53; or
- (c) **Award MSc by Research.** The research project or dissertation satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree as laid down in the University's [Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#) as appropriate and that the degree should be awarded; or
- (d) Offer resubmission for MSc by Research. The dissertation or research project satisfies the requirements for the degree except that minor corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these with minimal supervision and without undertaking any further original research; or
- (e) **Award exit award.** The research project or dissertation is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the MSc by Research. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of postgraduate diploma or certificate; or
- (fe) **Fail.** The research project or dissertation is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and does not meet the requirements for any award.

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Application of the regulation

51.1 For those MSc by Research degrees assessed by a Board of Examiners within a School, the Board makes a single recommendation for each student directly to the Senatus.



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Regulation 52 MSc by Research degrees: distinction

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with distinction. Different criteria for the award of distinction may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

- (a) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation; or
- (b) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded; or
- (c) Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Distinction.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

- (d) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.

Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with distinction, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

Application of the regulation

52.1 For degree programmes that permit resubmission of the research project or dissertation, a student may only qualify for distinction based on their first attempt.

52.2 The postgraduate common marking scheme can be found at:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

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Regulation 53 MSc by Research degrees: merit

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with merit. Different criteria for the award of merit may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

- (a) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation; or
- (b) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded; or
- (c) Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Merit.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

- (d) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.

Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with merit, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

Application of the regulation

53.1 For degree programmes that permit resubmission of the research project or dissertation, a student may only qualify for merit based on their first attempt.

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Regulation 54 MSc by Research degrees: resubmission of the research project or dissertation revisions

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Where the Board of Examiners has offered resubmission in line with Regulation 51 (d), students are entitled to one resubmission of the research project or dissertation. Students may also be offered the opportunity to resubmit the research project or dissertation where a special case regarding an individual student's circumstances has been approved by the College.

Resubmission of the research project or dissertation with revisions is not permitted in the case of MSc by Research degree programmes unless a special case regarding an individual student's circumstances has been approved by the College.

Application of the regulation

54.1 Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their research project or dissertation in the University library, they may be permitted to submit a revised version within one month of approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award. A student cannot graduate until they have submitted the final version of their research project or dissertation to the College Postgraduate Office.

54.1 The relevant Board of Examiners will provide a student permitted to submit a revised dissertation or research project with a statement, which outlines the deficiencies in their original submission. The student is also entitled to receive further written advice from their dissertation or research project supervisor on one occasion before resubmission.

54.2 The Board of Examiners will advise the student of the deadline for submission of their revised dissertation or research project, which will be three months from the date of the student receiving notification of their original result.

54.3 Where a student declines the opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project, or fails to submit by the stated deadline, the Board of Examiners will treat the mark the student received for their first attempt as final and the Board of Examiners will consider the student for a relevant exit award.

54.4 If the Board of Examiners agrees that the revised dissertation or research project meets the requirements for a pass at MSc by Research level, the student will be awarded the MSc by Research degree. Where a mark is recorded for the dissertation or research project, the recorded mark for the revised dissertation or research project will be capped at 50%.

54.5 Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their research project or dissertation in the University library, they may be permitted to submit a revised version within one month of recommendation of award, but the revised version will not be subject to reassessment. A student cannot graduate until



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they have submitted the final version of their research project or dissertation to the College Postgraduate Office.



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Section F Interpretation and significant disruption

Regulation 55 Interpretation of the regulations

The Curriculum and Student Progression Committee has authority to resolve any dispute arising from these regulations. The University Secretary and their nominees have authority to make urgent decisions relating to assessment issues.

Application of the regulation

- 55.1 Staff who need guidance on the postgraduate assessment regulations for research degrees, beyond that provided in the regulations and associated guidance, should contact the relevant Dean and/or the Academic Policy Officer with responsibility for the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression
- 55.2 The University uses questions on the regulations as a source of information for training and development of the regulations.

Regulation 56 Significant disruption: concessions and standards

When the University's assessment practices are vulnerable to significant disruption then the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee may approve temporary concessions to mitigate the impact of assessment disruption on students, without compromising academic standards. The College takes decisions that ensure the consistency of treatment of students and the maintenance of academic standards. The overriding principles are that:

- (a) the academic judgement of the examiners remains paramount;
- (b) the University's academic standards will be maintained; and
- (c) the provisions of the University's Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees remain in force except where a concession has been approved by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

These concessions will only be used where necessary: if a College Postgraduate Committee is able to operate without a concession then the Committee will do so.

Application of the regulation

- 56.1 Significant disruption can be extremes of weather, loss of facilities, and factors beyond the University's control which have an impact on the assessment of students. This may result in College Postgraduate Committees only having partial results available.

Commented [HS3]: This comment for TAR was for Reg 71 where only partial results are available to the Board. A similar reg doesn't currently exist in PGR Assessment Regs.



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- 56.2 In response to individual significant disruptions that may have a widespread impact on assessment, the University will adopt a communication strategy for students, staff and key external stakeholders, e.g. External Examiners, to ensure that they are aware of the measures that are adopted.
- 56.3 All forms of assessment, such as theses submitted for assessment, examination scripts and course assignments, are the property and responsibility of the University, not of individual examiners or markers. They therefore must be accessible to the University when required.
- 56.4 Drawing on previous experience [CSPC 14/15 2 C], the issues and regulations where CSPC may consider concessions include, but are not limited to:
- (a) participation of External Examiners;
 - (b) College Postgraduate Committee quorum;
 - (c) annual progression decisions.

1 June 2019~~8~~

REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE**18 January 2019****1 Information Services Group Plan**

The Chief Information Officer presented the emerging key components for the Information Services Group's annual planning round submission. Key challenges and opportunities were highlighted, including:

- Challenges: Brexit, Plan S, ageing IT estate ('technical debt'), compliance and rising IT costs, information security, heritage collections risk;
- Opportunities: Distance Learning at Scale, student experience, digital transformation, core systems, City Region Deal, business intelligence and analysis.

In discussing prioritisation, the Committee noted student support for live mapping availability of study spaces and the subtitling of recorded lectures. Integration of the City Region Deal's data-driven innovation programme into 'core' University activities and the digitisation of library materials were also noted. Further updates on the planning round submission were requested.

2 Distance Learning at Scale Showcase

The Committee received a demonstration of the visual outputs for the first Distance Learning at Scale (DLAS) programme, an MSc in Business Analytics. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The re-usable design template and overall approach of building in re-usability in all aspects was welcomed;
- DLAS courses are not intended to replace existing online courses, whether online Masters degrees or Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) but MOOCs can feed in to DLAS courses and those running existing online Masters degrees may choose to take up the DLAS design template;
- DLAS is in a pilot phase to test the business model and approach taken, with the Committee to be kept updated on progress.

3 Student and Staff Experience Action Plan

An update on the development of a student and staff experience action plan was reviewed. Work to standardise the University's Virtual Learning Environment and improve the proportion of reading lists available electronically is ongoing, with significant progress made in lecture capture, with around 85% of lectures now being recorded. The Committee discussed demand for lecture capture from Masters-level international students who use small teaching spaces not fitted with lecture capture equipment. The new approach taken and use of logic modelling was supported.

4 Plan S

The likely impact of a new initiative from major research funders to accelerate the transition to full and immediate open access to research publications, known as Plan S, was considered. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Copyright procedures will be reviewed to ensure that they are Plan S compliant;

- Clear communication with academic staff is vital given the compressed timetable and concerns that Plan S may restrict freedom to publish in some highly regarded academic journals and with some book publishers that choose not to comply with Plan S and make a full transition to open access;
- A further paper may follow on DORA (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment);
- Possible effects on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and international university league tables are under review;
- 70% of research in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences is not funded by direct grants from external funders and any indirect effects from Plan S will need to be considered, although the immediate focus will be on compliance in research that is directly affected.

5 Library Materials Budget: Long Term Planning

An update on the review of the model used to divide the overall Library material budget between central funds and the three Colleges was presented. The Committee discussed potential Plan S costs and the effect of currency fluctuations on the library materials budget given the large foreign currency-denominated purchases.

6 Information Security Strategy

A draft Information Security Strategy was considered prior to submission to the University Executive. Links with the City Region Deal, the extent to which mandatory information security training is enforced, access to University systems by staff who have recently left the University and best practice in password protection was discussed. It was agreed to invite the Chair of the newly formed Data Ethics group linked to the City Region Deal to present to the Committee at a future meeting.

7 Other items

Updates on the core systems procurement, network replacement procurement and information security were reviewed