

The University of Edinburgh

**Meeting of the Senatus Researcher Experience Committee  
to be held on 23 May 2017 at 2.00 pm  
in the Torridon Room, Charles Stewart House, Chambers Street**

**A G E N D A**

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2017** Enclosed
  2. **Matters Arising** REC 16/17 5A
  3. **Convener's Communications**
    - 3.1 Vitae mentoring for Researcher Developers programme pilot
    - 3.2 LERU Doctoral Summer Schools 2017 & 2018
    - 3.3 Coimbra annual meeting, June 2017
    - 3.4 Survey results: Research Staff and Principal Investigators & Research Leaders
- For Discussion**
4. **Policy changes in PhD funding**
  5. **Excellence in Doctoral Research & Career Development:** REC 16/17 5B
    - 5.1 **Progress report on work stream 1: Supervisor Training and Support**
    - 5.2 **Progress report on work stream 2: Mentoring and Wellbeing**
    - 5.3 **Progress report on work stream 3: Personal and professional development record**
  6. **Eligibility to Supervise for Post-Doctoral Scientists** REC 16/17 5C
  7. **Postgraduate Research Student Status** REC 16/17 5D
  8. **Task Groups:**
    - 8.1 **Review of Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators** REC 16/17 5E
  9. **Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students** REC 16/17 5F
  10. **Committee Terms of Reference and Membership** REC 16/17 5G
- For information and formal business**
11. **Knowledge Strategy Committee report: 24 March meeting** REC 16/17 5H
  12. **Research Policy Group report**
  13. **A.O.B.**
    - 13.1 **Conferences and events**
      - 13.1.1 QAA Focus on PGR
      - 13.1.2 UKCGE: Annual Conference, July, Porto
      - 13.1.3 Society for Research into Higher Education, "Postgraduate study and employability", Edinburgh 19 May

Susan Hunter, Academic Services, 16 May 2017

Date of next meeting: 26 September 2017, Board Room, Chancellor's Building, Little France

The University of Edinburgh

## Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

23 May 2017

**Matters Arising****Executive Summary**

1. **Postgraduate Degree Regulations:** approved at Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) by e-business March and submitted to Court (REC [item 5 15 Nov 2016](#)). CSPC amended the revised supervision regulations to clarify that the power to terminate supervision would be vested with CSPC.
2. **Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees:** deferred to June CSPC – includes MSc by Research updates which were outputs from the REC task group. Following REC's March meeting the task group: a) removed the criterion relating to size of dissertation which forced programmes down one of the paths in terms of examination: existing practice should be unaffected by this; b) responded to the comment raised at REC about Schools informing students which approach to examination their programme would take. (REC [item 6.2 14 Mar 2017](#))
3. **Postgraduate Research Space:**
  - 3.1 **Space Strategy Group**  
REC contributions to Space Strategy Group meetings – a nominee to attend to be sought.
  - 3.2 **Queens' University Belfast – Convener's report**  
The Russell Group PGR Special Interest Group met in the Graduate School building at Queen's University Belfast on Thursday 6th April. As discussed with Garry Jebb, I used the opportunity to quiz the locals on their views on the success of the centre, knowing that the proposed Old Kirk development may share many similarities with it.  
My initial response was that the redevelopment of the old library, not dissimilar in design to a large church, was that it looks great. There is a normal height ground floor with office space for Graduate School staff and a tall first floor that comprises a central atrium-style communal space with silent study space and meeting / teaching rooms of varying size around the sides.  
The general impression from everyone I spoke to was that it had been a huge success, despite considerable scepticism, during and for a period after, its construction. The students loved it. It was well used by a wide range of PG students, both PGT and PGR, from across all faculties of the university, including those such as medicine and engineering, that are not close to the Centre.  
Graduate School staff are currently gathering statistics on usage, broken down into PGR and PGT, and have promised to let me see them when they are ready.  
The Centre has been open for around two years now. When asked what would they have done differently, based on this experience, they offered the following:

- More large-sized (40-50) meeting / teaching rooms, at the expense of smaller group study rooms, would have been useful.
- The central communal space has been used for large functions, but the design means that this is impractical, when the (glass-walled) teaching rooms are in use.
- Similarly, there could have been better sound insulation between the communal space and silent study space.
- They would have liked less powerful underfloor heating and / or windows that open!
- The data projectors were very noisy.

The PGR SIG meeting presented an opportunity to find out if other universities had done anything similar. Apparently, Birmingham have just developed a similar centre, and have a very interesting model for managing it. One PGR student from each of the faculties has a proportion of their time bought out by the university to form a management committee. Students are allowed to do this for only one year out of their PhD. So far the initiative seemed to be beneficial to both the efficient running of the centre building and the wider skills development of the students.

4. **Distance PhD Implementation Group:** verbal update from Convener.
5. **Early Career Researchers – determining focus of REC support:** Dr Sara Shinton was not able to attend the rescheduled May meeting.
6. **Highlighting the need for Student Recruitment Strategy to include postgraduate research:** Academic Services contacted Student Recruitment and Admissions with comments from previous meeting held on 14 March 2017.

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

The paper aligns with the University's strategic plan objectives of Leadership in Learning and Leadership in Research.

#### **Action requested**

REC is invited to formally note the paper

#### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The paper provides an information update and no actions are associated with it.

#### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**  
No resource implications are associated with the paper which is for information.
2. **Risk assessment**  
No risk assessment is included as the paper is for information.
3. **Equality and Diversity**  
The paper provides an update on papers previously considered which included equality and diversity information.
4. **Freedom of information**  
The paper is **open**.

#### **Originator of the paper**

Susan Hunter, Academic Services, 12 May 2017

REC: 23.05.17  
H/02/26/02

# REC 16/17 5B

The University of Edinburgh

Researcher Experience Committee (REC)

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

## **Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development: Progress Reports May 2017**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper gives an overview of the progress made from February to May 2017 for all areas of the Excellence Programme. Detailed reports are then given for work stream 1 (supervisor training and support) and work stream 2 (mentorship). These include initial findings and proposed next steps. The committee is requested (as the Programme Board) to discuss these reports and approve proposed next steps where appropriate. Further information on the Programme available here: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/excellence-in-doctoral-education>

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

The paper aligns with the University Strategic Objective of Leadership in Research. It also aligns with the Committee priority of discussing options for taking forward the postgraduate research enhancement work.

### **Action requested**

The committee is requested to comment on, discuss progress to date and, where appropriate, approve proposed next steps for the Programme.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The paper includes indicative timelines for proposed next steps. Actions will then be communicated by the Academic and Programme lead to all appropriate stakeholders.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

It has been agreed that the work included in this Programme can be supported at present by existing staffing resource in the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and Academic Services. If the work identifies further resource implications, early discussions will be undertaken with relevant units.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

No major risks identified

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

Equality and diversity implications are being considered as part of the work streams. Equality impact assessment will be undertaken on any resulting new or amended policy.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is open

### **Key words**

Doctoral education, supervision, mentoring

**Originator of the paper**

Dr Fiona Philippi, Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development (IAD)  
(Programme lead)

Work stream 2: Mentorship:

Roshni Hume, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

Katie Scott, Peer Learning and Support Manager, Edinburgh University Students'  
Association

May 2017

## Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme: Progress Reports May 2017

### Overview

In February 2017, REC approved the commencement of a comprehensive Programme of work to investigate, map and enhance the PGR student experience across the University. This Programme comprises three interrelated work streams.

1. supervisor training and support
2. mentorship and wellbeing
3. personal and professional development record

Details of these and the background to the Programme can be found here:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/papera-excellenceprogramme.pdf>

### Summary Table of Progress made in all areas of the Programme

Area of work	Summary of Progress February 2017- May 2017	Further information
Communication and Consultation	Progress made in both areas	Further details in this report
Work Stream 1: Supervisor Training and Support	Focus on benchmarking and mapping. Initial findings and proposed next steps identified.	Further details in this report
Work Stream 2: Mentorship and Wellbeing	Focus on benchmarking and mapping. Initial findings and proposed next steps identified.	Further details on mentorship in this report Report on wellbeing to be completed by end of June 2017
Work Stream 3: Personal and Professional Development Record	Task group met for the first time in May. Now working on setting objectives and principles for the work.	Task group to meet again in June. To report to the November REC meeting

**REC is requested to discuss, comment on and, where appropriate, approve:**

- The general progress made by the Programme and future plans for communication and consultation
- The proposed next steps for work stream 1
- The proposed next steps for work stream 2 (mentorship)

## Overall Progress to date

### Communication

Dedicated Programme webpages have been developed and can be found here:

<http://edin.ac/2pFy7zo> These will be updated as the work progresses.

The Programme was presented as a lightning talk at the Senate Committees Away day 2017. This led to an invitation to present at the Quality Assurance Committee.

An article on the Programme is featured in the May edition of Teaching Matters.

<http://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/?p=1639>

The Programme has been on the agenda and discussed at all IAD PGR School meetings. Each year, the IAD doctoral training team meet with each School (College in CMVM) to discuss training and support for PGR students. This has generated useful and interesting discussion and comments on various aspects of the Programme, as well as raising awareness.

#### *Future plans for communication*

- Continue to update webpages and link to other work/ initiatives
- Proactively identify opportunities to communicate the work of the Programme to all relevant stakeholders
- Continue to update College committees of progress

### Consultation

A paper on the Programme was drafted for Colleges to discuss at committee meetings and disseminate to Schools. Comments and feedback were requested by the end of March 2017.

A PGR supervisor network will be launched on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June. Booking is now open. This network will aim to inform supervisors of University initiatives and consult on proposals to better support PGR supervision. It will also provide a forum for supervisors to meet and share practice. Participants will have the opportunity to feed into the priorities for network events throughout academic year (proposed to have 3 or 4) 2017/18 and to join a mailing list.

Schools (through Colleges) have been asked to share examples of mentoring practices for PGRs and to give details of thesis committee structures (where they exist). The findings of this exercise can be found in the progress report for work stream 2.

Dates for student discussion groups have been set up (central area/ Kings Buildings / Little France). Ethical approval for this has been granted by Moray House School of Education. These will discuss aspects of the Programme and will comprise a maximum of 20 students. These initial discussions will then be followed up by another series of discussions in the autumn semester of 2017/18.

**REC is asked to comment on the general progress made to date and the future plans for communication and consultation**

## Work stream one: Supervisor training and support

The focus of this work stream to date has been on benchmarking and mapping activities. This report sets out the initial findings and observations of this exercise, and details proposed next steps. The committee is requested to consider and approve these.

### Background and context

Research supervision and its definition, support and formalisation has attracted a great deal of attention and work over the past decade, both from organisations and individual institutions. Much of this work has generated similar recommendations and materials. This is a rich source of existing information which can be drawn from as a basis for enhancement and development.

### Guiding principles

#### 1. Salzburg Principles II 2010

*'Supervision must be a collective effort with clearly defined and written responsibilities of the main supervisor, supervisory team, doctoral candidate, doctoral school, research group and the institution, leaving room for the individual development of the doctoral candidate. Providing professional development to supervisors is an institutional responsibility, whether organised through formal training or informal sharing of experiences among staff. Developing a common supervision culture shared by supervisors, doctoral school leaders and doctoral candidates must be a priority for doctoral schools. Supervisors must be active researchers.'* [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage list/Salzburg II Recommendations.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage%20list/Salzburg_II_Recommendations.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

#### 2. QAA Quality Code B11: Research Degrees – Indicator 9

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

*To ensure that all supervisors possess the expertise required for their role, higher education providers use criteria for eligibility in appointing supervisors, whose performance in the role is kept under review. Supervisors are expected to engage in development opportunities, to equip them to supervise research students, and to meet requirements for continuing professional development. Supervisor training and development opportunities are relevant to research education, providing advice on how to supervise research students effectively in different circumstances, and are given similar status to programmes on teaching and learning in higher education for new academic staff. In supporting supervisors to enhance their knowledge and skills, higher education providers define and enable sharing of good practice and encourage strategies such as mentoring relationships, for example for new supervisors.* [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Pages/Quality-Code-Chapter-B11.aspx#.WRR\\_OXpps40](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Pages/Quality-Code-Chapter-B11.aspx#.WRR_OXpps40)

## Selected Projects and Initiatives – International and UK Organisations

### Universitas 21

Universitas 21 has an ongoing interest in research supervision. In 2014 it undertook a study of five member universities, looking at policy, practices and procedures related to research supervision.

Main findings of the report:

- Need to recognise excellence in supervision
- Professional development of supervisors is important
- Universities should look to build communities of practice around research supervision
- Universities should have clear and dedicated web pages for supervisions – a 'hub' of resources
- Particular emphasis should be given to inducting international students and staff into a different culture of learning

Link: <http://www.universitas21.com/article/research/details/274/research-supervisor-support-development>

**COIMBRA Group**

The Doctoral Studies working group has an interest in research supervision and has been collecting examples of good practice from across the network. Some of these will be presented as part of the annual conference which will be held in Edinburgh in June 2017.

Link: <http://www.coimbra-group.eu/policy-pillars/education/doctoral-studies>

**UKCGE**

UKCGE runs events which focus on research supervision and have recently focused on recognition of good or excellent supervision at institutional and national level. This has led to the addition of a new category at the Times Higher Awards from 2016 (sponsored by UKCGE) for 'outstanding supervisor of the year'. A paper has also been published (March 2017) which analyses the structure and criteria for institutional awards for research supervision across the UK and Australia.

Links: <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/>  
<http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/more/awards.aspx>

**QAA Scotland**

The QAA Scotland Focus on project (2016-2017) on the Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student experience identifies support for staff who supervise research students as a priority area. This involves a series of webinars on good practice in research supervision, films, advice and commentary from experienced research supervisors from a range of institutions and disciplines.

Link: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/focus-on/postgraduate-research-student-experience>

**Irish National Association for the Integration of Research, Learning and Teaching (NAIRTL)**

NAIRTL have produced a practical guide to Developing an Institutional Framework for Supporting Supervisors of Research Students (2012). This was an output of a four-year project to develop strategies to optimise support for research supervision. Available here: [http://www.nairtl.ie/workgroupDocs/SupervisorSupport\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.nairtl.ie/workgroupDocs/SupervisorSupport_Guide.pdf)

**Selected Institutional Examples – International and UK**

A benchmarking exercise of different institutions, internationally and in the UK has highlighted a number of different models of policy, training and support for research supervisors. A selection of these are outlined here as they offer examples of practice of particular interest to this Programme.

- Enhancing compulsory training for supervisors, including exploring the design and implementation of online courses
- Identification, design and pilots of optional training
- Creation of an online toolkit for research supervision
- Regulation and recording of training

**Karolinska Institute, Sweden**

The Institute has developed an online course for research supervisors and have made completion of this mandatory for all principal supervisors. It has 7 sections and takes 1-2 hours to complete.

Link: <https://internwebben.ki.se/en/web-course-supervisors-doctoral-students-ki>

**Imperial College London**

Imperial is currently undertaking a large project which focuses on 'World Class Supervision'. This looks at various elements of the supervisor- student relationship.

Link: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/quality-assurance/development-projects/world-class-research-supervision/>

**University of Oxford**

The Oxford Learning Institute hosts a particularly detailed and accessible hub of resources for research supervisors and doctoral students as well as those involved in mentoring doctoral students. For each area of practice within research supervision there is a section on ideas and tools and insights from research and literature.

Link: <http://supervision.learning.ox.ac.uk/>

**University of Bristol**

During 2016/17 the University launched an extensive programme of workshops and symposia for doctoral supervisors in addition to compulsory training for new supervisors. These include co-supervision, recruiting and attracting doctoral students, examining, interdisciplinary supervision and distance/on-line supervision.

Link: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/academic/learningandteaching/doctoral-supervision-programme/>

**Various Australian institutions**

A number of Australian universities require research supervisors to be accredited. There are various levels of this and different pathways.

Examples:

Monash University: <https://www.monash.edu/graduate-research/supervisors-and-examiners/supervisors/training>

Griffith University: <https://www.griffith.edu.au/health/griffith-health/research/higher-degree-research/supervisory-arrangements>

**University of Edinburgh Provision***Compulsory supervisor briefings*

All new supervisors at the University are expected to attend a supervisor briefing before they start supervising a student. All continuing supervisors should renew this once every five years. This requirement is set out in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students<sup>1</sup>.

Individual Schools hold responsibility for identifying the training needs of their supervisors and ensuring that all members of staff with supervisory responsibilities have attended an appropriate supervisor briefing event.

Currently, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) works with the three Colleges to organise compulsory supervisor briefing events at both School and College level throughout the academic year. The IAD has a responsibility to provide records on attendance at these events for the purposes of ELIR and for internal reporting to Colleges and Schools.

In 2016, IAD created a checklist for these briefings which was circulated to REC members and discussed. An updated version of this is included in Appendix A. SharePoint was also set up for supervisor training but has not been used as yet.

*Optional supervisor events and training*

IAD runs a number of optional workshops for research supervisors. In 2016/17 this has included:

- Handling International Students' Writing Problems (2 times per year)
- Recognition of supervisory activity as teaching: gaining accreditation from the HEA

In addition, there are a number of other workshops of relevance to supervisors in the research and academic staff programme.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf)

**Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2015 – analysis of free text on supervision (University of Edinburgh)**

An analysis of free text comments relating to supervision generated the following observations.

**A significant number of comments highlighted the positive experience of supervision. Respondents particularly appreciated these factors:**

- Supervisors who are helpful and accommodating and understanding of issues outside supervision
- Supervisors who are challenging and supportive and encourage participation in training activity
- Supervisors who are knowledgeable and skilled
- Supervisors who give regular and timely feedback
- Supervisors who encourage students to look at career possibilities

**Equally, there were a number of comments which highlighted negative experiences. These focused on:**

- Supervisors being too busy and inattentive, overloaded with work
- Lack of feedback or support generally
- Supervisors who lack knowledge about procedures, training and support available etc.
- Supervisors who do not support activity outside research
- The variability between individual experiences across the University
- Supervisors leaving the University

**A number of comments focused on suggestions for improvement in supervisor arrangements. These included:**

- Having a more robust mechanism for selection, training and accountability of supervisors
- A more supportive institutional environment for supervision, a number of respondents blamed workloads for inattentive supervision, rather than the supervisor
- Clearer guidance as to what to expect from supervision

Full details of free text comments are available in the surveys wiki: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/data-matters/about-surveys-reporting/student-surveys/central-student-surveys>

**Supervision in Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPRs)**

An analysis of PPR reports from 2014-15 to date highlighted a number of areas of good practice in supervision, particularly in relation to mentorship schemes for new supervisors and opportunities for supervisors to share practice. They also found that some Schools found it difficult to enforce mandatory training, especially for continuing supervisors. There were also recommendations for Schools to look at potential inconsistencies in supervisory role due to variations in workload. Reports can be found here: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/teaching-and-postgraduate-programme-review/postgraduate-programme-review>

## Initial Overall Findings and Observations for Work Stream 1

1. There is a wealth of online material and support for supervisors in existence, both externally and internally. The difficulty is that much of this is dispersed and contained in a multitude of web pages.
2. There appears to be a gap in provision of optional resources and training for supervisors at the University, in comparison with some other institutions.
3. There is a move externally towards online training for supervisors and also towards mechanisms for formally recording and accrediting/ registering supervision.
4. Various reports have emphasised the need for institutions to facilitate informal practice sharing or communities of practice in supervision.
5. Various reports have emphasised the need for institutional recognition of excellence in supervision.

## Work Stream 1: Proposed next steps

1.Revision of IAD webpages for doctoral supervisors to begin to create a 'hub' of dedicated resources and support. This may involve a Learn resource for supervisors.

TIME FRAME: aim to be launched by December 2017

2.Identify further training and support needs through consultation with the PGR supervisor network/ results from CROS and PIRLS 2017 to draw up a programme of activity for 2017/18.

TIME FRAME: scoping and organising June – September 2017 – pilot activities: academic year 2017/18

3.Strengthen the central support for compulsory supervisor briefings through sharing of resources and accessible checklist

TIME FRAME: by the start of academic year 2017/18

4.Further explore and scope development of an online training resource for research supervision using the Karolinska Institute model as a starting point.

TIME FRAME: from June 2017, options to be presented to REC by November 2017

5.Consult with Colleges (through committees) about the 5 year rule for renewing supervisor training

TIME FRAME: College Committees to be consulted from June 2017

6.Explore and scope options for recording compulsory supervisory briefings online.

TIME FRAME: options to be presented to REC by November 2017

7.Work with EUSA to identify three supervisors from the Teaching Award shortlists for institutional entry into the Times Higher Outstanding Supervisor of the Year Award (deadline 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

<http://www.the-awards.co.uk/2017/en/page/home>

8. Continue to benchmark and map examples of good practice both externally and internally and include in this a review of relevant research literature. TIME FRAME: ongoing

**REC is asked to consider and approve the proposed next steps for Work Stream 1**

## Work stream TWO: Mentorship and Wellbeing

### Background

There is increasing awareness of the added benefit for doctoral students to have access to a mentor. It is less clear how this mentor function should operate. It appears that there are several different possible models, each with advantages and constraints. This work stream will conduct background work to identify existing good practice, benchmark and scope for several models. Further details are available within the following paper: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/papera-excellenceprogramme.pdf>

### Progress to date

The work for this work stream has been divided into two areas, mentorship and wellbeing. This report details the initial findings and proposed next steps for the mentoring part. A full report on the work on wellbeing will be completed by the end of June 2017. To date, a benchmarking and mapping exercise has been carried out to identify examples of practice across other institutions and within the University of Edinburgh. This has led to a number of observations and proposed next steps.

### Benchmarking

A benchmarking exercise was conducted to identify models of mentoring for PGRs across several external institutions. This involved initial desk research looking at institutional webpages which was followed up by email/ phone discussions with relevant contacts. A number of models with high levels of reported success were identified (Appendix B). From this it was found that two distinct models were being particularly utilised by a number of institutions.

#### 1. One-to-one/Face-to-face mentoring

A number of institutions operate one-to-one/face-to-face schemes. In the majority of cases, this involves a post-doctoral researcher or a PhD student in the later stages of writing their thesis acting as mentors for new PhD students. These types of schemes are normally managed at School or department level and entail a significant amount of administrative coordination which can involve matching students with mentors, organising and delivering training sessions for mentors. In some cases the schemes are monitored and evaluated for a fixed period of time. All mentors and mentees within the institutions approached receive clear guidance as to the types of queries that mentors can be expected to answer and what should be referred to other sources of support.

#### Some advantages

- This type of scheme allows students to seek information, advice and guidance from a mentor who has recently experienced similar challenges and is not part of the student's supervisory team.
- Interaction within these types of schemes is not prescribed and the relationship can take many forms ranging from having regular meetings to exchanging an e-mail occasionally regarding specific queries. This flexibility means that it can be tailored for individual needs.
- In most cases, mentors are provided with a number of training opportunities and are able to enhance their skills as mentors and advisors. This is particularly useful for post-doctoral researchers.

#### Some considerations

It was reported that this type of scheme requires a significant amount of administrative support, particularly in the initial stages where students are matched with mentors and when mentor training takes place. It is also much more difficult to monitor such schemes, as the relationship between the mentor and mentee can vary to a great extent and are designed provide a personal experience for the mentee. A number of institutions were wary of appearing intrusive when gathering feedback.

## **Selected Examples of Practice**

### **The University of Sheffield Thesis Mentoring Scheme**

This scheme is a one-to-one coaching programme where research students are paired up for four months with experienced post-doctoral researchers who are trained in the skills of mentoring. The aim of the scheme is to enable research students to understand how they might work best and how to utilise the resources available to them. The Thesis Mentor encourages students to keep up momentum during the write-up period. Thesis mentoring comprises of eight, one hour sessions over sixteen weeks and ends with a formal evaluation. All mentors are provided with training and guidance. The Thesis Mentoring scheme has become a valuable scheme for both students and post-doctoral researchers. Research students at Sheffield have highlighted the value that they have found in being able to speak to someone who has experienced similar challenges and can provide guidance and encouragement when needed. Further information is available at: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/mentoring/thesismentoring>

### **The University of California, Riverside Graduate Student Mentoring Programme**

This programme aims to support new PhD students upon arrival. Each new PhD student is assigned to a mentoring 'family' which consists of one to three other new PhD students and a peer mentor who is studying within a related field. Two to three families are also part of a team which is overseen by a 'Faculty mentor' who is a member of staff.

Mentees meet with their peer mentors individually, in families or in teams weekly. They are also given the opportunity to meet with other mentees and their faculty mentors regularly. This type of scheme encourages interaction amongst peers and provides varying levels of pastoral support from staff. Further information is available at: <http://gradmentors.ucr.edu/>

#### *Feedback from these schemes*

Feedback from the co-ordinators of the above schemes suggest that they have proven to be successful and are highly valued by both students and mentors. PhD students feel supported and have the advantage of being able to benefit from the knowledge and support of someone who has undergone the rigours of research and thesis writing.

## **2. Online Alumni Mentoring**

A significant number of institutions chose to provide mentorship to PGR students via the design and implementation of internal online networking sites for Alumni and students. These are designed to allow students to interact with established alumni who wish to connect with students with an interest in their field of work and/or study. In the majority of cases, students are able to choose their mentor by viewing a suite of alumni profiles and requesting them as a mentor. The mentor is able to accept and decline requests using the online platform. All interaction between the mentor and mentee takes place online either via the platform designed by the institution or via e-mail. As with one-to-one/face-to-face mentoring, the interaction within this type of scheme is not prescribed. The nature of the relationship is dictated by the mentor and mentee. Mentors and mentees are provided with some guidance on what can be expected from both parties. Mentors are given guidance on support and mentees are provided with a guide on how to interact with their mentor. Online evaluations take place periodically (after 6 months in most cases) and the relationship is no longer monitored or evaluated thereafter.

#### Some advantages

- This type of mentoring exposes students to a variety of career paths (usually out with academia) and provides them with an opportunity to interact with an established member of alumni who can provide advice and guidance as well as share their experience of studying.

- Online mentoring does not require a great deal of administrative support as it operates independently. Administrative support is only required if any issues are raised by the mentor or mentee.
- This type of mentoring can lead to career opportunities as it was reported that a number of students have gained employment via their mentor.
- It is flexible, students can decide whether or not they would like to use the online networking site. It is not a requirement.
- A significant amount of data can be obtained regarding the usage of the scheme. Interactions can be measured using statistics recorded on the networking site e.g. how many times students and mentors have signed in, how many times interaction has taken place etc.

#### Some considerations

- Coordinators of the schemes have reported that it can be a challenge to continuously recruit alumni to act as mentors.
- Coordinators have also highlighted that it has often been difficult to manage student expectations in terms of the level of support that they can expect to receive from their mentor as some mentors prove to be much more active and supportive than others.
- One of the institutions approached has chosen to appoint an administrator to match mentees with mentors rather than allowing mentors to choose their own using the online platform. This was reported as being quite time consuming as it involves the administrator contacting the mentees for a list of desired mentors and then manually making a match. In this particular case, the scheme operates on a small scale and if it were to expand, the team would consider allowing students to approach mentors directly using a request facility.
- This type of mentoring is most suited to those who are seeking a career out with academia as in the majority of cases, mentors are established alumni working in non-academic positions. This model does not work particularly well for those who wish to continue researching within an academic setting.

#### **Selected Examples of Practice**

##### **The University of Manchester – Manchester Gold Scheme**

The Manchester Gold Scheme allows students to seek information advice and guidance about their future from an alumni mentor. The scheme has been active for fifteen years and is highly regarded by students who are mentors. Mentors are provided with guidance on what mentees can expect of them and mentees are asked to attend a mandatory introduction session which outlines the how the scheme works and what is appropriate to discuss with their mentor. Mentees select and request mentors via the 'Manchester Network Portal'. Once the mentor agrees to accept the request, interaction begins. Mentors and mentees decide how to manage the mentoring relationship and decide how to interact e.g. via e-mail, phone or face-to-face meetings.

Mentees are asked to complete an evaluation after six months. Further information is available at: <http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/>

##### **The University of Sheffield – v i s t a Online Mentoring Portal**

The v i s t a mentoring portal allows PhD students and research associates to browse profiles of PhD graduates who have succeeded in careers outside of academia, giving students an insight into potential future careers. Students are able to obtain advice and support regarding their development. Mentors and mentees can interact via e-mail, skype chats or meeting face-to-face.

Interaction is not prescribed and an evaluation takes place after 6 months. The online portal is complemented by v i s t a seminars which consist of a programme of lunchtime seminars on post- PhD careers beyond academia. Talks are delivered by PhD graduates who work in non-academic positions.

The seminars expose students to the broad range of professions open to researchers and make them aware of the skills, knowledge or experience required to move into a new career. Further information is available at: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/mentoring/vista>

#### *Feedback from these schemes*

Feedback from the above schemes suggests that online mentoring is popular amongst PGR students who have highlighted the value that they have found in being able to interact with someone who has faced the same challenges and can provide guidance and encouragement when needed.

### **Mapping of existing practice across the University of Edinburgh**

A mapping exercise was conducted to identify examples of good practice within the University. This was conducted by consulting PRES 2015 free text comments for examples within Schools and an email request for information sent out to Colleges. It was found that several models exist across schools/subject areas and departments (Appendix C).

### **Selected Examples of Practice**

#### **College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)**

##### Thesis Committees

Thesis committees are operated College-wide and, in most cases, are responsible for having oversight of a student's progress and are available for the student to seek advice, guidance on training and research skills. Thesis committees normally consist of a chairperson, all supervisors and an external member of staff who should be independent of the group. Membership can vary for each individual student depending on the school/subject area. Each school/subject area is responsible for deciding how meetings are conducted and guidance for each meeting are published online or within a handbook provided for PhD students. Thesis committees have a pastoral role and provide support and guidance to students in addition to the advice and support provided by PhD supervisors.

##### Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies – 'The Hub'

'The Hub' is an online social space for postgraduate students, staff and alumni within the School. 'The Hub' provides a social network with opportunities to communicate key information e.g. job opportunities, research projects etc. via the newsfeed and various discussion forums set up by students and staff. It also contains links to a number of resources which contain information on student support and reading materials which may be of interest. 'The Hub' provides students with an open social space in which they can ask questions, share experiences and seek support if necessary. Staff do not monitor student discussion forums (unless they are specifically asked to be involved in a discussion).

'The Hub' can be viewed at: <http://buddy.vet.ed.ac.uk/>

#### **College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science (CAHSS)**

##### **Moray House School of Education**

The School operates a 'Buddy Scheme' where each new PhD student is allocated a buddy who is a PhD student in year two or above. Each of the buddies are volunteers and are usually from a similar area to the one of the new PhD student. These allocations are made before new students start and all students are e-mailed with the names of their buddies. The relationship is not prescribed and can take many forms e.g. buddies who have more than one mentee often organise group meetings, allowing further interaction and sharing of experiences.

**Health in Social Science**

The School provides each student with a 'Critical Friend' who attends each of the student's annual review meetings. This is a member of academic staff who can input into the student's academic progress each year but is not part of the supervisory team. The 'critical friend' is not expected to provide any pastoral support.

**College of Science and Engineering (CSE)****Physics and Astronomy**

All PhD students have access to a Pastoral Support team who they are all required to meet with during a Year One Pastoral Meeting. All PhD students also have an interview with the Head of School and the Director of the Graduate School at the beginning of Year Two. This is a pastoral meeting and is designed to give the student the opportunity to raise any problems that they may be facing.

**Geosciences**

All PhD students are allocated an Advisor in addition to their supervisors. The Advisor's role is to provide an independent source of advice to the student out with the supervisory team. The Advisor provides a potential intermediary between the student and supervisors, if any issues arise during the course of the PhD. The Advisor is also present at the progress and monitoring events and to give feedback to students.

**Development and Alumni/Careers Service – Student Alumni Platform**

The University Development and Alumni and Careers Services are currently in the process of creating a new University online community which will be used to for networking and communication. This will replace Connect.ed, the current alumni platform (which has 44 PhDs signed up – April 2017). It will be open to all members of the University of Edinburgh community. Members will be able to use it to connect with each other. Each user will have a profile which includes key information about themselves. Users will be able to search for others using certain key attributes mentioned in user profiles. They will then be able to approach users with any queries that they may have using the system. Members of the University community will be able to use the system in a number of different ways including for mentoring and professional networking. Further information is attached in Appendix D.

**Peer Support Schemes – implemented and supported by the Edinburgh University Students' Association**

A number of postgraduate research peer support schemes were highlighted by Schools. A significant number of schools have expressed their support of peer support initiatives and students have found these to be a valuable source of support.

Edinburgh University Students' Association play an active role in the implementation of peer mentoring for within all schools/subject areas and are willing to support Schools who wish to establish such schemes for postgraduate research students.

**Initial Overall Findings and Observations for Work Stream 2 (mentoring)**

- The benchmarking and mapping exercises (Appendices B and C) have highlighted that there are several models of PGR mentoring which are operating successfully within the University and these align with those offered elsewhere. The variety of models which have been implemented externally and across the University (Appendix C) indicates that there is no single mentoring model that would be suitable for all postgraduate research students.

- PGR students appear to value the added benefit that mentoring can provide, and the mentoring experience can also have clear benefits for those in mentee positions, such as other PGR students or post-doctoral researchers.
- External institutions approached provide formal guidance and/or training to those in mentoring roles for PGR students. This appears to be more variable within the University of Edinburgh.
- External institutions and Schools/departments within the University have highlighted the difficulty in evaluating a number of their mentoring schemes due to much of the interaction taking place via e-mail, Skype or face-to-face.
- Thesis committees exist across parts of the institution, particularly in CMVM. Similar structures appear to exist in some other Schools, but these are known by different names. Where thesis committees do exist there is no uniformity in structure, role descriptions or guidance.
- Edinburgh University Students' Association provide advice and support to schools/subject areas wishing to create and implement peer support schemes within their area. The Association also has a large amount of experience in designing, implementing and evaluating peer mentoring schemes for UGs and PGTs.
- The forthcoming online platform created by the Careers and Development and Alumni services is seeking input regarding the requirements of different types of students to ensure that it would be beneficial to all.

### Work Stream 2 (mentoring): Proposed Next Steps

1. Explore possibility of developing a centrally hosted webpage which communicates the benefits of mentoring, schemes and resources available to PGR students. This would link to available schemes in their School/ subject area.  
TIME FRAME: consult with student groups May/June 2017. Report to REC September 2017.
2. Develop, in consultation with support services and relevant Schools/ subject areas, clear and formal guidance for anyone acting as a mentor for a PGR student in a pastoral capacity.  
TIME FRAME: Consultation to start in June 2017, development through academic year 2017/18
3. Develop central resources for evaluation of mentoring schemes which can be made available to staff involved in mentoring schemes.  
TIME FRAME: academic year 2017/18
4. Work in partnership with the Students' Association to build a clear case for supporting the further extension of peer mentoring to postgraduate research students.  
TIME FRAME: Options to be presented to REC in November 2017
5. Continue dialogue with Development and Alumni and the Careers Service regarding the new student alumni platform, to assist with establishing the requirements for PGRs.  
TIME FRAME: Ongoing

**REC is asked to discuss and approve the proposed next steps for work stream 2 (mentoring)**

## Appendix A: Checklist of content to include in compulsory supervisor briefings 2017

Theme	Description of content	Information
<b>Introduction &amp; overview</b>	An overview of the UoE context and some of the challenges for the institution and the College.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">University Strategic Plan 2016</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Senate Researcher Experience Committee papers</a></li> <li>• University factsheets-<a href="#">student facts and figures</a></li> <li>• Postgraduate Research experience Survey (PRES) results – <a href="#">surveys wiki</a></li> <li>• Different modes of study, recruitment, funding, duration of PhD Projects, timely completion</li> </ul>
<b>Regulations &amp; expectations</b>	Links to University-level policy, regulations and Code of Practice are emailed out in advance (by IAD). Attendees are expected to familiarise themselves with the content and bring questions to the session.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">University Policy, Regulations and Guidance for Research Students</a></li> </ul>
	Highlight key changes in regulations during the session and signpost to support for specific queries (some of these may come out through discussion of case studies).	
	Explore the roles and expectations of the student and supervisor (according to the Code of Practice including any College slant) and the training expectation.	
	Emphasise the importance of establishing expectations and structuring a project so that it can be completed within given time constraints.	
	Explore the role and expectations of the internal examiner.	
<b>Procedures &amp; processes</b>	Introduce School and College support and administrative procedures including where to find further information and who can be contacted for support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EUCLID online annual review (<a href="#">software workflow Prezi</a>)</li> <li>• Postgraduate Admissions training module <i>Postgraduate Admissions: the legal and policy framework</i> on Learn</li> <li>• <a href="#">Health and Safety online training for PIs and Supervisors</a></li> <li>• Attendance monitoring</li> </ul>
	Emphasise the importance of monitoring progress regularly and keeping written records. Raise awareness of key milestones and information flow. There should also be a detailed (local) induction for new academics focusing on practicalities.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English language requirements</li> <li>• School/College specific guidelines</li> <li>• <a href="#">OneDrive</a> could be suggested as a way to share documents and keep records of regular meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Experience &amp; challenges</b>	Reflection and group discussion on the process of supervising research students. Using a range of case studies highlighting various challenges led by experienced supervisors with School and College input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full set of case studies as examples</li> </ul>
<b>Developing your skills &amp; support available</b>	Highlight support available for supervisors and services they can signpost students to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate School, College Office, PG adviser, webpages, wiki, contacts</li> <li>• IAD (provision for Doctoral researchers, Tutors and Demonstrators and Supervisors).</li> <li>• Disability service (<a href="#">Helping distressed students – a guide for University staff</a>)</li> <li>• Mental health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Student counselling</li> <li>• EUSA, Advice place</li> <li>• Careers Service: <a href="#">support for PhD supervisors</a></li> <li>• Edinburgh Global (training for staff on Tier-4 PGR students)</li> </ul>
	Encourage continued professional development and signpost to further sessions and online resources.	
<b>Time for Q&amp;A</b>		

## APPENDIX B: Examples of Mentoring at other Higher Education Institutions

Institution	Examples of Mentoring Schemes
Aarhus University, Denmark	<p><u>AU Mentor PhD</u></p> <p>The programme consists of matching mentors (alumni and external individuals wishing to mentor PhD students) and mentees (PhD students) with mutual interests.</p> <p>The goal of the programme is to bring PhD students and the business community closer together to ease the transition for students from research to a career outside academia.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="http://www.au.dk/en/collaboration/mentor/">http://www.au.dk/en/collaboration/mentor/</a></p>
University of Cambridge – Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities	<p><u>PhD/Post-Doc Mentoring Scheme</u></p> <p>The mentoring programme is consists of one-to-one mentoring and is intended to support doctoral students (mentees) as they negotiate the challenges of a rigorous and often isolating academic programme and to help post-docs (mentors) enhance their mentorship skills.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/26776">http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/26776</a></p>
University of Glasgow	<p><u>'The Network'</u></p> <p>'The Network' is an online professional networking site for alumni and students. The aim is to allow students to step on the career ladder through established alumni who wish to network with students with an interest in their field of work/study. It is also a channel for allowing Alumni to interact with their peers.</p> <p>Students and Alumni can search for mentors/peers by skills, expertise, company and location and then send messages to other users, network and find mentors. Further information is available at: <a href="http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/careers/thenetwork/">http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/careers/thenetwork/</a></p>
University of Manchester	<p><u>Manchester Gold Mentoring Scheme</u></p> <p>The Manchester Gold Mentoring Scheme has been running for 15 years and is highly regarded by students and mentors. Mentees are able to select and request mentors (alumni and in some cases employers) via an online portal. Mentoring can take place online via the portal, Skype or e-mail and in some cases face-to-face. Further information is available at: <a href="http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/">http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/</a></p>
University of Sheffield	<p><u>v i s t a mentoring for PhD students</u></p> <p><u>v i s t a Seminars:</u> v i s t a seminars are a programme of lunchtime seminars on post- PhD careers beyond academia. Talks are delivered by PhD graduates who work in non-academic positions.</p> <p><u>v i s t a Mentoring Portal:</u> The v i s t a mentoring portal allows PhD students and research associates to browse profiles of PhD graduates who have succeeded in careers outside of <u>academia</u>, giving students inspiration for their future careers. Students can also gain expert advice and support for their development by selecting a mentor to work with on a one-to-one basis.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/mentoring/vista">https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/mentoring/vista</a></p>

	<p><u>University of Sheffield Thesis Mentoring</u></p> <p>The thesis mentoring scheme is a one-to-one coaching programme where research students are paired up with experienced post-doctoral researchers who are trained in the skills of mentoring for four months.</p> <p>The aim of the scheme is to help research students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand how they work best and how to work with others</li> <li>- understand what is expected of them and what a good thesis looks like</li> <li>- break down the task of thesis writing and set milestones for their writing</li> <li>- keep up momentum, getting started and continue</li> <li>- be more effective and productive as part of a writing community</li> </ul> <p>Further information is available at:  <a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/mentoring/thesismentoring">http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/mentoring/thesismentoring</a></p>
<p>University of York – Chemistry Department</p>	<p><u>Research Student Mentoring Scheme</u></p> <p>Year 2 and 3 PhD students are nominated by academic members of staff and are assigned as ‘buddies’ to incoming Year 1 PhD students. This is a one-to-one mentoring scheme and mentors are responsible for showing mentees around the department and campus as well as provide advice and guidance when required. Mentors are also tasked with inviting students to research related events taking place across campus. Further information is available at:  <a href="https://www.york.ac.uk/chemistry/postgraduate/mentors/">https://www.york.ac.uk/chemistry/postgraduate/mentors/</a></p>
<p>The University of California</p>	<p><u>Riverside Graduate Student Mentoring Programme</u></p> <p>This programme aims to support new PhD students upon arrival. Each new PhD student is assigned to a mentoring ‘family’ which consists of one to three other new PhD students and a peer mentor who is studying within a related field. Two to three families are also part of a team which is overseen by a ‘Faculty mentor’ who is a member of staff.</p> <p>Mentees meet with their peer mentors individually, in families or in teams weekly. They are also given the opportunity to meet with other mentees and their faculty mentors regularly. This type of scheme encourages interaction amongst peers and provides varying levels of pastoral support from staff. Further information is available at: <a href="http://gradmentors.ucr.edu/">http://gradmentors.ucr.edu/</a></p>

## Appendix C: Examples of Mentoring at the University of Edinburgh

### This sets out the results of a consultation of Colleges/ Schools on mentoring schemes/ thesis committees and information from the Edinburgh University Students' Association on peer mentoring

\*A number of PGT models have been cited below with the aim of reflecting the current provision of peer support at postgraduate level. Additionally, all Schools within the University already have established peer-led programmes at undergraduate level, this may offer the opportunity to extend this provision to include PGR students. However, this would need some investigation to ensure its meeting the unique needs of this cohort and appropriate resources are available. The Department of Peer Learning and Support would be keen to examine this option, offering a sustainable and embedded series of programmes.

#### College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)

School	Examples of mentoring schemes	Thesis committees (or equivalent)
Business	<p><u>UEBS Doctoral Society</u> The School supports an active UEBS Doctoral Society who events throughout the year, starting with dedicated sessions in Induction Week. They have a small budget to arrange academic, career, development and social events to encourage the development of a strong cohort and peer support for each other.</p> <p><u>Teaching Assistant Mentor</u> The School also has a dedicated academic as a TA Mentor, as well as leading on the actual TA training programme she is available to provide individual support to students who are working as tutors.</p> <p>The Business School are very interested to developing further models of Postgraduate peer support. <b>School contact:</b> Rosalyn Claase, Head of Student Experience, <a href="mailto:Rosalyn.Claase@ed.ac.uk">Rosalyn.Claase@ed.ac.uk</a></p>	<p>No thesis committees but pastoral support is provided through the assigned supervisors in the first instance.</p> <p>The School has subject group PhD Representatives, and part of their remit is to be a source of advice and support on matters that students do not wish to discuss with their supervisors in the first instance. The Programme Director is also available in this capacity.</p>
HCA	<p>The School is in the process of establishing a PGR mentoring scheme, intended for the start of 2017/18. This is being developed by the Deputy E&amp;D Director (Stephen McDowall), in collaboration with the PG Director (Emma Hunter).</p>	<p>The School do not operate a Thesis Committee, instead they have a dual supervision model (standard UoE) and Programme Directors with a pastoral remit.</p>

<p>Law</p>	<p>The School do not currently run a PhD mentoring system over and above the mentoring function of supervision. The School supports the PhD community to operate in a mutually supportive way through funding scholarly and social activities and through a structured training programme. This programme is currently under review in line with RCUK, SQF and Vitae guidance.</p> <p>PhD students within the Law School have well-established Reading/Discussion groups within their subject area. These groups consist of students at different levels of their study. They are provided with a small amount of funding to arrange speaker events etc. pertinent to their field of study.</p> <p>There are currently no plans to develop mentoring in the School.</p> <p><b>For interest: <a href="#">PGT provision</a></b></p> <p>In 2013, two student-led communities were established for PGT students in the School of Law. Edinburgh Law Connections (ELC) focused on forging links with alumni as potential sources of professional guidance/future networking, and the Edinburgh Law Postgraduate Hub (ELPH) is dedicated to enhancing the experience of all on-programme taught Masters students through organising social and academic events of direct interest to them, often in collaboration with Postgraduate Programme Directors and other academic staff in the School.</p> <p>Guidelines for each community were drafted by the then Director of PGT, after which students took ownership drawing in staff as required. Both communities were also given support through discreet budgets (Devolved Funding for Postgraduates), leading to the creation of a Law Masters Hub in Old College, with rooms designated for exclusive use by Masters students as a community space, where ELC and ELPH meetings and other shared student-led enterprises (e.g. study groups) could take place. Both of these groups continue to function.</p> <p><b>School contact:</b> Richard Jones, Director of Postgraduate Taught Studies, <a href="mailto:richard.jones@ed.ac.uk">richard.jones@ed.ac.uk</a></p>	<p>The School does not operate a thesis committee structure. Students are assigned two supervisors.</p> <p>They are assessed at a panel, involving two independent academics within the first year in line with regulations. Further panels can be arranged in line with identified needs.</p> <p>There are currently no plans to develop a thesis committee approach.</p>
------------	--	--

<p>LLC</p>	<p>The School does not offer a mentoring scheme.</p> <p><b>For interest: PGT</b></p> <p><i>LLC Dissertation Workshops</i></p> <p>The LLC Masters Dissertation Workshops were first introduced in AY 15/16, led by two Literature MA students, with the aim of fostering a sense of community within LLC and supporting academic skills development, particularly among new international students.</p> <p>It comprised of a series of five workshops designed to appeal to a wide range of LLC students, from English and Scottish Literature, Film Studies, Theatre Studies, and Languages and Translation Studies. The venue was 50 George Square where all the LLC classes are, and had around 16 attendees per session.</p> <p>The workshops centred on key study skills necessary for the MA courses in LLC. Topics included essay writing, proofreading, using secondary sources as themes, and hearing from current PhD students on their experiences of writing their Master’s dissertations.</p> <p>This project ended when the student leaders graduated and no replacement leads have been identified in the current cohort.</p>	<p>The School does not operate a thesis committee.</p>
<p>ECA</p>	<p><i>Design PhD Mentoring</i></p> <p>The Design PhD Mentoring Scheme was established in AY 15/16 with the express aim of supporting Masters students to make the transition in to doctoral studies. This involved current PhD students’ mentoring Masters students through the PhD application process and getting started. The programme was successful and there was an interest from the school in continuing, however unfortunately this did not happen due to staffing changes within ECA.</p>	<p>The School does not operate a thesis committee.</p>
<p>HSS</p>	<p>The School does not offer any form of mentoring scheme for PGR students.</p> <p>Students receive support from their supervision team, and are directed within the PGR Handbook to the four subject area Postgraduate Research Directors with whom they can meet if they require additional support.</p>	<p>The School provides each student with a ‘Critical Friend’ who attends each of the annual review meetings. This is a member of academic staff who can input into the student’s academic progress each year, but who is not expected to provide any pastoral support. The ‘assessment panel’ therefore consists of</p>

	Additional support is also provided by the Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator when required.	the supervisory team and the 'critical friend'. A 'panel chair' is only assigned if this is thought to assist the process.
PPLS	<p>The School does not offer a mentoring scheme.</p> <p>The School is in discussion about the possibility of developing a peer mentoring scheme for PhDs which would match senior PhDs with new students but nothing formal has been introduced at this stage.</p> <p>On a more local level, PhD students in Linguistics and English Language are hoping to develop a new peer mentoring scheme starting in September 2017. They are also developing a reading/training group for Linguistics MA and PhD students for statistics, as there is currently a lack of advanced statistical training within the Department. There is a desire for peer support to sit alongside this group, and for it to become a sustainable project even if/when more formal training for statistics is provided by the School. The Department are currently investigating how this group would sit vis-à-vis the statistics group and how the needs of the cohort will be best served. Plans will be reviewed by May 2017 before proceeding for the next academic year.</p> <p><b>School contact:</b> Judy McCulloch, Head of Student Support and Experience, <a href="mailto:Judy.McCulloch@ed.ac.uk">Judy.McCulloch@ed.ac.uk</a></p>	The School does not operate a thesis committee.
SPS	<p>The School does not offer official mentoring or a buddy system.</p> <p>Subject areas do include PGR students in research seminars and staff/PGR community activities.</p> <p>All subject areas have dedicated research PG advisors who can act as mentors and provide additional guidance to students, particularly when they are having problems.</p>	The School does not operate a thesis committee.

	<p><i>For interest:</i></p> <p><i>SPS PG Mentoring</i></p> <p>A new PG Mentoring Scheme has recently been established in SPS, with PhD students mentoring PGT/R students. The purpose of the programme is to provide advice and guidance on the different aspects of life as a postgraduate student, while building a sense of belonging within the School PG community. The programme follows the 'lifecycle' of the MSc programmes, including pre-arrival advice and information, settling into the UK education system, learning at PG level, making the most of tutorials and seminars, supervisory relationships, the job market and more. Additionally an emerging theme has been employability, in and out of academia. This is an area PhD students felt was lacking from their Masters experience.</p> <p>The support offered is pastoral in nature and any academic support is focused around skills development, with this purpose in mind mentor matches are not based on academic specialisms.</p> <p>The Scheme has support of school staff, Dr James Mitra (Deputy Director Graduate School – Research) and Lucie Stokes (Student Development Manager) and will be reviewed at the end of the academic year with a view to roll it out more widely if appropriate, this may include more experienced PhD students supporting new doctoral students.</p>	
--	--	--

<p>Education</p>	<p><b>'Buddy System'</b></p> <p>The School has a mentoring scheme called the 'Buddy system'. Each new PhD student is allocated a buddy who is a PhD student in year 2 or above. Each of the buddies are volunteers and are usually from a similar area to the one of the new PhD student. These allocations are made in the week before the starting dates (1 October and 1 January each year) and all students are emailed with the names of their buddies. There is a School induction day in week 1. The scheme has been proven very popular with many students.</p> <p><b>For Interest:</b></p> <p><i><a href="#">Performance Psychology Alumni Mentoring</a></i></p> <p>This new scheme was piloted in semester 1, 2016/17, having been conceived by soon-to-graduate MSc students at the end of academic year 2015-16. The idea was to start a Mentoring Scheme where alumni from the programme would mentor MSc students with aim of creating a legacy, connection and greater wealth of opportunity in the programme. They wanted to build a sustainable network of alumnus and current students to share experiences from one cohort to the next and to support students to find internships and job placements during the program, and open pathways for employment after the program.</p> <p>The Scheme ran in AY 16/17 and an online evaluation of the Scheme has found that mentees felt that the Scheme added a great deal of value to their student experience, bringing inspiration and connection to the wider professional network.</p> <p><b>School contact:</b> Dr Evelyn McGregor, <a href="mailto:evelyn.mcgregor@ed.ac.uk">evelyn.mcgregor@ed.ac.uk</a>.</p>	<p>The School operates an optional year 2 'forum'. This process is similar to the progression board in year 1 that can be triggered by a student or supervisor towards the end of year 2 (or p/t equivalent) of the studies. The School will strongly recommend the process when particular challenges or areas for substantial improvement are identified in the Y1 progression board; sometimes the expectation to hold the forum is clearly stated in the feedback of the Y1 progression board. Two internal examiners/advisers are involved in this forum (often the same as in year 1), as well as the supervisors. The process of the student and their future plans are reviewed and appropriate recommendations are made to improve progress. There is no pass/fail element to this process.</p>
------------------	---	--

## College of Science and Engineering (CSE)

School	Examples of Mentoring schemes	Thesis Committees (or equivalent)
Biological Sciences	<p>No mentoring schemes at present. The School did run a Peer Support Group for year 1 PGR students for 4 years, after which there was no longer a demand for the group.</p> <p>Each PGR student has access to a Postgraduate Advisor. Advisor's act as a source of support for students should they face any challenges or difficulties.</p> <p><b>For interest:</b>  <a href="#"><i>PGT Biology Dissertation Workshops</i></a>            The PG Biology Dissertation Workshops ran in the second semester of the 2015/16. It was started by students and supported by Vicky MacTaggart, the Programme Advisor in the Biology Teaching Organisation and Frances Parry, the Deputy Head of Masters Provision at the Institute for Academic Development. Sessions were held at Kings Buildings with varying attendance between 19 and 40 students. The workshop topics were on various aspects of writing dissertations, with individual topics such as: time/project management, analysing papers and protocols, scientific style of writing, writing: planning, starting and keeping going, and more.            The Peer Learning and Support Team are looking into developing this as a sustainable scheme embedded into the programme of study.  <b>School contact:</b> Emma Currie, Administrative Assistant,  <a href="mailto:Emma.Currie@ed.ac.uk">Emma.Currie@ed.ac.uk</a></p>	<p>Thesis Committees are in operation within the School.</p> <p>Each student has:            2 supervisors            1-2 additional academics who are not directly involved in the student's project.</p> <p>Further information is available at:  <a href="https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SBSGRAD/Training+and+Milestones">https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SBSGRAD/Training+and+Milestones</a></p>
Chemistry	<p>Mentoring for PGR students is led by the principal supervisor and co-supervisors.</p>	<p>Annual Review Committee            In addition to the student's supervisors, an additional member of staff is assigned as a member of the Annual Review Committee.            Graduate Committee            The Graduate Committee has 4 specific functions within its remit.</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. To enable students to enhance their leadership skills</li> <li>7. To enable student to enhance their transferable skills</li> <li>8. To provide pastoral care to students</li> <li>9. To prepare students for employment after graduation and enhance their communication skills</li> </ol>
Physics and Astronomy	<p><u>Pastoral Support Team</u> In addition to supervisory support, student have access to a pastoral support team: <a href="https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SOPAGraduateSchool/Pastoral+Support">https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SOPAGraduateSchool/Pastoral+Support</a> All students meet a member of the pastoral support team during a pastoral meeting which takes place in Year 1 of the PhD programme.</p> <p><u>Pastoral Meeting</u> All students have an interview with the Head of School and Director of the Graduate School at the beginning of Year 2. This is a mainly pastoral meeting to allow the student to raise any issues that they may be having and to discuss future plans. This meeting takes place in an informal setting.</p> <p><u>Physics Intergroup Postgraduate Committee (PIPC)</u> <a href="https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=316726174">https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=316726174</a> This committee is run by PhD student, for PhD students. A small committee of students in the later years of their study organise social events for PhD students. They also organise seminars to which they invite speakers and hold discussions. The committee also organise a weekend away during the summer. The purpose of the trip is to allow social interaction amongst peers.</p>	<p><u>Annual Interviews</u> Students are allocated two assessors to each student, who usually are staff/senior fellows who are not part of the student's supervisory team but are familiar enough with the student's work to assess it academically.</p> <p>These assessors carry out annual interviews with PhD students, without input from supervisors and wherever possible, the same two assessors conduct the interviews for the entire PhD.</p> <p>They also conduct a mock viva at the end of Year 1 of a student's PhD. This experience is designed to give students an insight into how a viva is conducted.</p>
Mathematics	Support is provided by the Postgraduate Advisor and 2 <sup>nd</sup> supervisor	Thesis committees are not in operation within the School
Geosciences	All PhD students are allocated an Advisor in addition to their supervisors. The Advisor's role is to provide an independent source of advice to the student out with the supervisory team. The Advisor	Thesis committees are not in operation within the School

	provides a potential intermediary between the student and supervisors, if any issues arise during the course of the PhD. The Advisor is also present at the progress and monitoring events and to give feedback to students.	
Engineering	<p>Students are provided with a clear support network outwith the supervisory team, including a Postgraduate Research Advisor, the School's Postgraduate Progression Committee and Graduate School support staff.</p> <p>The Peer Learning and Support team have found there to be a great deal of interest from PG students in creating a peer support system but no formal programme has been developed thus far. However, the PGR students run a society called the EngGradSoc, this group has a social focus and provides some informal peer support. The school is interested in developing a more structured Scheme and have a highly successful UG peer support provision, which this could be built on.</p> <p><b>School contact:</b> Anna Creery, Postgraduate Taught Conversion Officer, <a href="mailto:anna.creery@ed.ac.uk">anna.creery@ed.ac.uk</a></p>	Students are provided with an independent reviewer as part of the annual review process.
Informatics	The School had a peer mentoring programme, however, this was discontinued as a 'Student Families' programme was initiated.	Thesis committees are not in operation within the School

### **College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)**

<b>Deanery / Institute/ Centre</b>	<b>Examples of Mentoring schemes</b>	<b>Thesis Committees (or equivalent)</b>
All Deaneries/Institutes/Centres within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	<i>Institute of Genetics and Molecular Medicine</i> IGMM has a Buddy system in place for students based at the Institute, which is led by the Staff	Thesis Committees are formed within Schools/Centres and the membership of these varies for each students.

	<p>Student Liaison Officer. The programme pairs 1st-year PhD students who wish to be involved with friendly and supportive final year students and aims to help with their integration into the Institute, informally answer any questions and queries regarding starting their PhD, and also to offer support with beginning a new life in Edinburgh.</p> <p><b>School contact:</b> Dr Martin Reijns, Staff Student Liaison Officer,  <i>Usher Institute of Population Health Sciences and Informatics</i></p> <p>The PhD committee at the Usher Institute run a holistic peer support programme, within this buddy system each new student is contacted by a current PhD student prior to starting their course. They arrange socials and a Firbush retreat –focused on outdoor activities and educational sessions. They also develop and distribute an Usher Institute PhD students’ guidebook and maintain online spaces including a wikipage which has information on school ethics processes, yearly reviews etc. They run this programme alongside their representation roles, attending PGR meetings to represent student issues.</p>	<p>Thesis Committees, in most cases, oversee a student’s progress and conduct annual assessments during the course of their studies. The Thesis Committee is also available for the student to seek advice and guidance on training and research skills.</p> <p>In most cases, Thesis Committees consist of a chairperson, all supervisors and an external member of staff who should be independent of the group.</p> <p>Each area is responsible for deciding how these meetings are conducted.</p> <p>Thesis Committees also provide pastoral support if the student requires it.</p>
Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies	<p><u>‘The Hub’</u>  ‘The Hub’ social space for postgraduate students, staff and alumni from within the School. The Hub provides a social network with opportunities to communicate key information e.g. job opportunities, research projects etc. via</p>	<p>Thesis committees are in operation within the School in line with College requirements (described above).</p>

	<p>the newfeed and various discussion forums set up by students and staff. It also contains links to a number of resources which contain information on student support and reading materials which may be of interest.</p> <p><u>Online Peer Tutoring/Mentoring</u> The Vet School has been running an online Peer Tutoring scheme for the last 3-4 years. This is aimed at online PGT students at this time. They have trained up a team of peer tutors (on campus students) who run sessions in various PGT online courses via Skype or Collaborate and answer questions on discussion boards. The focus is not on course content but on academic skills.</p>	
--	--	--

## **Appendix D: Further information on new student alumni platform**

### **Student Alumni Platform – Development and Alumni and Careers Service**

#### **Background**

In a recent survey, one in five UoE alumni expressed an interest in mentoring. With nearly 200000 contactable alumni, there is a vast and talented resource willing to support the personal and professional development of students and peers.

The University's employability rating is generally high but this is not the case across the board and students have petitioned for more support, particularly with the transition from university into work.

The Careers Service and Development and Alumni are planning to procure a pan-institution digital platform using social networking technology to address these needs.

It will mean members of the University of Edinburgh community can connect to share and learn from each other's experiences and insights to their mutual benefit, wherever they are in the world.

The community would include other groups as well as students and alumni (including staff, prospective students and other supporters of the University) and the interactions could be broader in scope than careers inspiration and mentoring (e.g. voluntary work in the community).

Examples of similar successful communities can be found at most other top 50 world leading institutions, particularly in the UK and US.

#### **Benefits**

A large, diverse and active on-line community of Edinburgh students and alumni would provide a range of benefits aligned to the University's strategic goals:

1. Enhancement of the Student Experience through ready access to a tremendously powerful network, the availability of additional support and a sense of belonging to a community of people with a shared experience and interests
2. Support for the Employability agenda through the provision of inspiring careers advice and mentoring, alongside the provision of specific contacts and introductions for students with a clear career plan
3. Further support to existing efforts to improve student satisfaction and outcomes
4. Providing a new service to recent alumni, to facilitate alumni-alumni careers networking. Both individual alumni and the University as a whole have a shared interest in accelerated career progression for our graduates beyond their first job; we currently have no offering that can be managed at scale for tens of thousands of recent graduates
5. The facility for inter-disciplinary interactions (e.g. a History student looking to break into the business world linking up with an MBA graduate from the Business School) and cross-border interactions, consistent with our efforts to amplify European and other international connections and collaborations in a post-Brexit environment
6. A service or offering that can be promoted in the student recruitment process (international students, in particular, are known to value this element of a university's offering)

7. An additional means of engaging alumni in the life of the University (as well as a means of engaging students in a way that will encourage them to become active alumni in due course)
8. A means of mitigating the risk of losing contact with alumni as a result of coming changes to Data Protection regulations and the implementation of the Fundraising Preference Service
9. The opportunity to expand the on-line community in future to involve additional groups (staff, prospective students, and non-alumni supporters, subject to appropriate checks and balances) and to broaden the range of interactions that take place
10. The avoidance of a proliferation of duplicate local solutions, likely to be sub-scale, lacking consistency, and missing the connectedness and breadth of networking a University-wide solution will offer

## **Overview**

### **We are talking about...**

An exclusive community online, a space for networking and communication, similar to applications like LinkedIn or Facebook.

### **Who would use it?**

It would be open to all members of the University of Edinburgh community. This potentially includes groups such as current students and prospective students, alumni, staff and friends of the University and allows for different levels of access and functionality.

### **What will users do?**

Members of the community would use it to connect with each other.

Each user has a profile that includes information such as their location, place of work, programme of study, interests, club or society membership, and what areas they are willing to advise other members of the community about or offer help with.

Users are able to search using any of these attributes to find others. Depending on what they are looking for, they may be satisfied by simply reading the profiles of others or they may have specific questions they'd like to explore by connecting with them through the system.

Their motivation might span personal, professional and academic realms, and mean it is used in different ways:

- For example, as an information resource, like a directory,
- For social networking, e.g. around common interest groups, or location
- For professional networking, e.g. with transitioning from university into work, moving to a new city or country, branching out in a new career.
- The University could use the community tactfully as a means to offer tailored, structured support, for example, with mentoring.

### **Why?**

What it offers is a safe, relaxed space that enables users to share and learn from others' experiences and insights.

It opens up new ways for members of the community to participate in the ongoing life of the University, for example, by making it possible to offer non-financial support from anywhere in the world according to the time, inclination and ability of the user.

It extends the Edinburgh Offer, beyond borders and well beyond graduation, making manifest the value of a University of Edinburgh experience and the Edinburgh connection wherever you are in the world and wherever you are in life.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

## **Eligibility to Supervise for Post-Doctoral Scientists**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper sets out the case for approving post-doctoral scientists as supervisors for PhD students. It is apparent that granting approval for post-docs to act as PhD supervisors is currently constrained by University Systems requirements (EUCLID), is implemented unevenly across the different Colleges, and does not reflect the contributions many early career researchers (ECR) are making to PhD student supervision. The paper follows from previous discussions in CMVM (Post-Graduate Board of Examiners; Postgraduate Researcher Experience Committee), informal discussion with other colleges, and an initial discussion at REC.

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

The paper aligns with the University's strategic plan objectives of Leadership in Research and Leadership in Learning. It also aligns with the Committee priority of discussing options for taking forward the postgraduate research enhancement work.

### **Action requested**

For discussion and approval of granting permission for Post-doctoral scientists to be approved to act as PhD Supervisors (either as third supervisor or as 'Associate' supervisor) or PhD Advisors.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The action will be implemented by College Postgraduate Boards of Examiners and communicated by way of supervisor training briefings.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Little is required other than an agreement for consistency of action in the three different Colleges and minor alterations to EUCLID. Implementation and communication of the change would be built into existing processes.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

No major risks identified. Procedures will be discussed to ensure that confirming Eligibility to Supervise for Post-doctoral researchers will not have an adverse impact on either the staff enrolled as supervisors or the students receiving supervision.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

No major equality and diversity issues are identified. If any change of policy is agreed an equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**

### **Key words**

Doctoral supervision; Post-doctoral researchers. Early career researchers

### **Originator of the paper**

*Dr Patrick Hadoke, Director of PGS/ ECR Experience (CMVM)*

## Eligibility for Post-Doctoral Scientists to Supervise Doctoral Students

*(N.B. It is difficult to find a correct designation for the staff members identified in this paper; for convenience, the term post-doc is used. This is intended to primarily cover staff (who may also be referred to by other titles, such as Early Career Researchers) at Grade 7 whose salaries are paid by fixed-term funding.*

### General Summary and Proposal

Supervision of PhD projects in CMVM frequently involves day to day supervision and oversight from post-doctoral researchers who play a major role in training PhD students. It is acknowledged that post-docs acting in this capacity should receive recognition, training and support for their roles but, as a result of a number of issues that affect this group of staff, this does not always occur. Partly this is related to constraints under the current regulations under which supervisors are recorded on EUCLID as Principal and co- or assistant supervisors; this system provides no mechanism for formally recording the input of these early career researchers. Informal discussions also suggest that these regulations are not applied evenly across the different colleges, raising the possibility that staff are treated differently depending on affiliation. Formal recognition of the role that our early career researchers play in training postgraduate students represents an important step in supporting the career development of post-doctoral fellows and enhancing their future employment prospects.

It is proposed that application of the regulations is streamlined to allow:

**ONE:** Registration of Post-Doctoral Researchers as Co-Supervisors on EUCLID.

and/or

**TWO:** Registration of Post-Doctoral Researchers as 'Associate Supervisors'.

and/or

**THREE:** Appointment of Post-doctoral researchers as PhD Advisors

### Overview and Background

Supervision of students is an important component in the career development of Early Career researchers. Early career researchers often make important contributions to day-to-day supervision of post-graduate students but in many instances cannot be registered on EUCLID as supervisors. This presents two problems: (1) post-docs are not receiving official credit or recognition for this important role and (2) post-docs are not receiving the necessary training and support for supervision. These failings have important implications for the career development of post-docs and for the effective supervision of graduate students.

***Eligibility to supervise regulations***

Current regulations require that to be given eligibility to supervise an individual must have:

1. A higher degree, normally PhD or MD or significant equivalent experience (10 years research experience plus extensive publication list as evidence of leading and supervising research).
2. A minimum of 5 years research experience (e.g. 3 year PhD + 2)
3. A minimum of 2 publications to which they have made a significant contribution
4. Evidence of previous research supervisory experience at Honours, BSc or MSc level
5. Be part of a supervisory team for an identified student/studentship
6. Funding in place for a minimum of three years

***Uneven Application of Regulations***

From discussions it appears that CMVM take the most stringent approach to approving eligibility to supervise, preferring that applicants hold a Grade 8 position or above. This approach would preclude most ECR from acting as supervisors. In contrast, CAHSS suggest a pragmatic approach should be taken and also suggested appointing post-docs as PhD Advisors. CSE actively encourage post-docs to become second supervisors.

***Issues***

Key concerns in allowing post-docs eligibility to supervise are:

- (i) Their contracts may not extend beyond the duration of the PhD project.
- (ii) Once allowed eligibility to supervise they will be registered on EUCLID and will be able to take on a further students (compounding the problem indicated in point (i)).
- (iii) Allowing post-docs to supervise may lead to them experiencing inappropriate pressure to supervise to the detriment of their own work.
- (iv) Acting as a supervisor brings legal responsibilities that it is felt are not appropriate for post-doctoral staff.

However, in not allowing post-docs recognition as supervisors, the University:

- (i) Is ignoring the reality of many post-doctoral jobs.
- (ii) Cannot generate a meaningful work load model for post-docs.
- (iii) Cannot ensure adequate support and training for post-docs acting as *de facto* PhD supervisors.
- (iv) Is harming the career development prospects of its post-docs.

## Proposal

It is proposed that the appropriate recognition of, and support for, post-doctoral researchers acting as PhD supervisors should be applied consistently across the three colleges. Three possible (complementary) approaches are suggested for consideration by REC.

**ONE:** Post-docs are given eligibility to supervise as co-supervisors in a strong supervisory team.

A component of the eligibility to supervise regulations addresses the concern that post-docs may leave their post before completion of a PhD project, leaving a student without adequate supervision. With the increasing trend for supervisory teams to require at least two supervisors, allowing a post-doc to act as a co- (2<sup>nd</sup>, or preferably 3<sup>rd</sup>) supervisor makes this less of an issue. It is proposed that this would only apply to Post docs whose contracts outlast the studentship.

An additional concern relates to the fact that approving eligibility to supervise for one student/ project results in the individual being registered as a supervisor on EUCLID and, thus, effectively able to take on further PhD students (potentially with projects extending beyond the end of the post-doc's contract).

A further consideration is that having a post-doc as 2<sup>nd</sup> supervisor when the post-doc's Principal Investigator/ line manager is Primary supervisor would be unsatisfactory. In such circumstances, it would be preferable to have a 2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisor from a different lab and the post-doc as 3<sup>rd</sup> supervisor.

It is proposed that post-docs should be considered for eligibility to act as co-supervisors and enrolled as such on EUCLID. In these cases the current criteria (above) should still apply but with the caveat that supervision is allowed for this specific case only and a further application should be submitted if the post-doc wants to supervise additional students. ***This would require changes to the Eligibility to Supervise form and Guidelines but not to EUCLID.***

and/ or

**TWO:** Post docs are registered in a new role of Associate Supervisor.

The original idea for the post of "Associate Supervisor" came from an external member of a PPR committee several years ago, with the information that Dundee University had started using it as an official title. Under this proposal, the informal post of "Associate Supervisor" would be formalised. Post docs would potentially be allowed to take on this role (as 3<sup>rd</sup> co-supervisor) if their contracts did not extend to the end of the PhD student's funding, as long as an appropriate supervisory team was in place.

With the introduction of on-line reporting for PhD students, changes in EUCLID are on-going. It is proposed, therefore, that ***this is an opportune moment to introduce the new supervisory***

***status of Associate Supervisor*** which could recognise the role that postdocs play and support their career development.

and/or

**THREE:** Post-docs are registered as PhD Advisers.

The definition of PhD adviser is given in the Code of Practice:

***PhD Adviser – from Code of Practice:***

*In some research programmes other staff members will be involved in an informal advisory capacity, especially if specialised equipment is to be used. It is the duty of the Principal Supervisor to ensure that these informal advisers are prepared to undertake this work and to take responsibility for instruction and safety.*

This would be suitable for post-docs giving specific, focussed input to a project but would not be appropriate for those having a greater role in PhD supervision. It would be appropriate for this role to be introduced to the on-line reporting for PhD students on EUCLID.

REC: 23.05.17

H/02/26/02

**REC 16/17 5D**

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

## **Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student Status Following the End of the Prescribed Period**

### **Executive Summary**

The paper provides an update on progress and proposes next steps in taking this work forward.

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

The paper aligns with the University's strategic plan objectives of Leadership in Research and Leadership in Learning. It also aligns with the Committee priority to address regulatory issues regarding the status of students during the writing-up period

### **Action requested**

REC is invited to formally note the paper.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

No action is associated with the paper.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Next steps will be met from within existing resources.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

No major risks identified. Further discussion will consider risk assessment.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

No major equality and diversity issues are identified. Further discussion will consider equality and diversity implications if any policy change is indicated.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**

### **Originator of the paper**

Julia Ferguson, College of Science & Engineering  
19 May 2017

## Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student Status following the end of the Prescribed Period

### Background

Following discussion of Paper REC 16/17 2D at REC in November 2016, “REC considered that once outcomes from the SEP board were known, a further paper identifying key action points should be submitted to REC for discussion.”<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the Service Excellence Programme (SEP) projects currently underway will potentially cover some aspects of PGR student activity, projects focussing specifically on creating systems, tools and processes to support the PGR lifecycle are planned for the future (over the next 2-3 years).<sup>2</sup>

The issues identified in Paper REC 16/17 2D and listed below are, therefore, unlikely to be fully considered by SEP in the current round of projects. As these issues continue to impact student experience and create risks in relation to Tier 4 engagement monitoring as well as involve additional administrative resource to deal with them, further discussion and action is required.

### Issues

1. The ‘submission period’ as defined in the regulations is not the same as the ‘writing up period’ commonly referred to by staff and students.
2. Lack of clarity in relation to a candidate’s status between the end of the Prescribed Period of Study (in EUCLID) and Maximum End Date.
3. Status post-submission for examination and viva.
4. Recording of candidate status post-viva is inconsistent across the University
5. Confusion about the eligibility of doctoral candidates for interruptions and extensions during the corrections period.

### Next steps

Academic Services and College office colleagues will meet to clarify the issues, identify key stakeholders for further consultation and identify any further actions. A progress report will be provided to the next REC meeting.

Julia Ferguson  
May 2017

---

<sup>1</sup> Item 6: Minutes of the meeting of the Researcher Experience Committee held on Tuesday 15 November 2016  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20161115minutes.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Student Administration & Support team current activity:  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group/service-excellence-programme/projects/student-administration-support-programme/current-activity>

REC: 23.05.17  
H/02/26/02

# REC 16/17 5E

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

23 May 2017

## **Task Group to Review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators**

### **Executive Summary**

The paper provides an update to REC on the work of the Task Group appointed to review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators.

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

The Task Group's remit supports the University's mission to provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning and enable our graduates and staff to be exceptional individuals equipped to address global challenges. It also supports the strategic objective of leadership in learning.

### **Action requested**

REC is invited formally to note the work of the Task Group, to discuss feedback from the view-seeking exercise, and to agree that the Policy will be approved by electronic business over the summer.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Not applicable at this stage.

### **Resource/ Risk/Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

No resource implications are identified in the paper.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

No risk assessment as the Policy is only at draft stage.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The Policy has been drafted with the aim of promoting consistency and equality of treatment of Tutors and Demonstrators. The Task Group will finalise its Equality Impact Assessment prior to requesting approval for the Policy.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**.

### **Originator of the paper**

Theresa Sheppard

Academic Policy Officer, May 2017

The University of Edinburgh

**Researcher Experience Committee Task Group on the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators**

**Update on the draft policy for tutors and demonstrators**

**Background**

The Task Group appointed by the Researcher Experience Committee to review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators has completed its task of seeking the views of Schools, Colleges, the University and College Union and the Students' Association on its draft proposed policy for the support and development of tutors and demonstrators.

The draft policy, attached at Annex A, was circulated to those stakeholders in February together with a communication which set out the key points for consideration, along with background information on the Task Group web page which summarised the work of the Group: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/reviewing-the-code-of-practice-for-tutoring-and-de> Stakeholders were given six weeks to respond.

Three Focus Groups to discuss the draft policy were held with tutors and demonstrators from across the University.

Discussions on the draft were held at the March meetings of Researcher Experience Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee.

The Task Group has now had the opportunity to consider the responses from these key stakeholders and has identified a set of key areas that require further consideration before a final draft of the Policy will be produced. A summary of the view-seeking exercise is provided below.

REC is asked to take action as follows:

- To note the progress of the Task Group and the results of the view-seeking exercise
- To discuss the feedback from the view-seeking exercise
- To agree that the Policy will be approved via electronic business over the summer, to allow additional time to resolve outstanding issues and in order to implement the new Policy in the next session. LTC will be asked to approve the final Policy.

**Summary of the view-seeking exercise**

Responses received

Comments on the draft policy were received from the following stakeholders:

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

The Business School

Edinburgh College of Art

School of Economics

School of Health in Social Science

The Law School

School of Literature, Languages and Culture  
School of Social and Political Science  
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine  
Edinburgh Medical School  
College of Science and Engineering  
Biological Sciences  
School of Engineering  
School of Mathematics  
School of Physics and Astronomy  
Edinburgh University Students' Association  
UCU  
Human Resources

All Schools were represented at the Focus Groups for tutors and demonstrators, with the exception of the School of Economics, Edinburgh College of Art, Moray House School of Education and the School of Health in Social Science. Participants included students, researchers and part-time visiting tutors.

#### Key points for further consideration

The draft Policy elicited a wide range of responses, both overarching comments on the employment of tutors and demonstrators generally and detailed suggestions for amendment to the draft Policy text.

In general, the draft Policy was well received; stakeholders were supportive of the move to create a Policy that would provide greater support and consistency in the recruitment and development of tutors and demonstrators. It was acknowledged that consistency in practice across Schools and Colleges was a priority, but that the Policy should be flexible enough to address the broad range of teaching experience offered by tutors and demonstrators across the University.

On the whole, it was felt that the draft contained all the necessary themes required to set out the support for all aspects of tutors' and demonstrators' work and that the contents were appropriate. In some cases, Schools volunteered information on how they would implement the Policy and how it would complement their current guidance to tutors and demonstrators.

A large number of stakeholders responded to the draft and put forward detailed responses to the text. These included divergent views on a number of issues. The Task Group has welcomed the high level of engagement with the view-seeking exercise, but the process of reviewing the responses and devising solutions which are suitable for all stakeholders will require more time before a final draft will be available to be signed off.

The Task Group is currently considering the following key areas of contention prior to producing a final draft of the Policy.

- a. The extent to which the Policy should be explicit about the individual tasks involved in tutoring and demonstrating and the tasks that should be paid for: these tasks

must be explicit, but it may be preferable to ask Schools to tailor a list to their individual needs and publish it separately.

- b. The University-wide perception of postgraduate students who are tutors and demonstrators: tutoring and demonstrating is viewed as a development opportunity for postgraduate students and this entitles them to a certain amount of training and support. On the other hand, students feel strongly that Schools should view them more professionally and offer them the full range of resources available to other teaching staff.
- c. The role of the supervisor in advising postgraduate students who are tutors and demonstrators: it is felt that there is a potential conflict of interest in asking supervisors to approve students' applications for posts. Some Schools feel, however, that supervisors should be involved in mentoring students who teach.
- d. The potential cap on the number of hours worked by postgraduate students, over which there is disagreement among stakeholders. The Task Group has agreed to seek and analyse further data on how the number of hours worked affects completion rates before reaching agreement on this issue.
- e. The provision by Schools of a mentor: there is both support and opposition to the need for Schools to provide all tutors and demonstrators with a mentor.
- f. Provision of training to tutors and demonstrators teaching at different levels: additional wording may be included on different levels of training in light of comments from stakeholders.
- g. Implementation of the Policy: a key concern for tutors and demonstrators is how the Policy will be implemented and how their treatment at School-level might be monitored. The second phase of the Task Group's work will be to consider a plan for implementation.

Once the Task Group has reached a position on the points above, the Policy will be amended to take account of all feedback and approval of the final version will be sought over the summer.

Theresa Sheppard

Academic Policy Officer

May 2017

**DRAFT – for comment, February 2017**

**University of Edinburgh**

**Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators**

Tutors and demonstrators are valued members of the teaching team at the University of Edinburgh and the experience provides them with potential career development benefits. The following framework is designed to ensure that tutors and demonstrators contributing to our on-campus and on-line courses receive appropriate support and guidance for the task and that they are well equipped to deliver excellent quality teaching. Those providing tutoring and demonstrating services include postgraduate research students, post-doctoral research fellows and staff, members of staff on Guaranteed Hours contracts and visiting tutors with specific expertise.

1. Recruitment processes

1.1 Recruitment of tutors and demonstrators must be transparent and open in line with the University's recruitment and selection policies. Schools must provide fair and equal opportunities to become tutors or demonstrators to those with the relevant knowledge and skills who may be interested, although the opportunities will vary across Schools.

1.2 Recruitment must be timely in order to allow for a formal induction to be undertaken before duties commence (see section 5).

1.3 Selection for posts should adhere to the University's [Conflict of Interest policy](#).

2. Contracts and Payment

2.1 This section is only relevant to tutors and demonstrators who have a specific contract to provide these services and is not relevant to those for whom tutoring/demonstrating is part of a wider role or those for whom tutoring/demonstrating is an expectation under the terms of their scholarship.

2.2 Tutors and demonstrators must be specifically contracted for teaching and assessment duties and paid the rate agreed within that contract. The contract must be approved by the Head of School, or a suitably delegated member of staff,<sup>1</sup> before the tutor or demonstrator assumes duties.

2.3 Tutors and demonstrators will be asked to undertake work which is consistent with the grade at which they are paid. [Grade descriptors](#) will set out the work which is appropriate to each grade.

2.4 Tutors and demonstrators must be remunerated for contact hours and such time as the School judges is necessary for preparation of teaching material, marking and assessment of work, in line with the relevant work allocation. Tutors and demonstrators must also be paid for their formal induction and mandatory training associated with the contracted teaching/demonstrating (see section 5).

2.5 For tutors/demonstrators who are current students, employment is offered for a fixed period of time related to the period of the programme of study. For fuller information

---

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, 'Head of School' may refer to the Head of School or suitably delegated member of staff. Schools should identify delegated staff members and communicate these to tutors and demonstrators via the key contacts information (see Appendix).

please see the Appendix in the following guidance:

[http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/fixed\\_term\\_contracts -  
\\_reason\\_codes\\_golden\\_copy\\_october\\_2016.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/fixed_term_contracts_-_reason_codes_golden_copy_october_2016.pdf)

- 2.6 Employees are engaged on standard University of Edinburgh conditions of employment and should ensure they familiarise themselves with employee policies relevant to their post.

*Maximum Hours' Work*

- 2.7 For tutors and demonstrators who are registered as students at the University, teaching must not impede the successful completion of the tutors' and demonstrators' own degrees and must not contravene any conditions of their funding body. Postgraduate research students may only undertake to sign a contract for tutoring/demonstrating activities with the permission of their principal supervisor.
- 2.8 **[We are keen to hear views regarding whether the University should limit the number of hours all full-time students should work, as well as what the limit should be].** For students on Tier 4 visas, additional constraints on employment will apply, and some studentships will also include conditions regarding the number of hours of paid teaching or other work that students can undertake. Heads of School are responsible for keeping an overview of the number of contract hours undertaken by each individual.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 Tutors and demonstrators may contribute to a range of activities including the following:
- Seminars and workshops;
  - Tutorials;
  - Laboratory and other practical classes;
  - Field trips.

*Allocation of responsibility*

- 3.2 It is the responsibility of the Course Organiser to allocate work at an appropriate level to tutors and demonstrators, to provide guidance on what is involved in particular duties, and to supervise all duties undertaken. The Course Organiser is responsible for ensuring that work is allocated that is manageable [and, in the case of tutors and demonstrators who are students, within the prescribed weekly time limit]
- 3.3 Should the Course Organiser deem it appropriate for tutors and demonstrators to undertake work that is not normally applicable to the grade at which they are currently working, but is thought to be useful for development reasons, this work must be supervised and feedback must be provided.

*Pastoral support*

- 3.4 While tutors and demonstrators can offer a convenient first point of contact for students who wish to discuss personal problems, in practice their role is to direct students to more specialised sources of pastoral support. Formal induction should include guidance about appropriate people within the School (e.g. a Personal Tutor) or University support services to which students can be referred, and about relevant local procedures.

*Involvement in assessment and feedback*

[The Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee is currently undertaking a review of the University's policy on moderation. Sections 3.5 to 3.7 may need to be revised to take account of that review].

- 3.5 The Head of School is responsible for appointing markers who contribute to the assessment process. Where the Head of School appoints tutors or demonstrators to undertake assessment and feedback duties, the Course Organiser has responsibility for allocating their duties and for ensuring that the type of work and the manner in which it is undertaken is accordance with the [University's Taught Assessment Regulations](#).
- 3.6 Where tutors and demonstrators are allocated assessment and feedback duties, the Course Organiser is responsible for supporting and overseeing their work. This will include briefing tutors and demonstrators in advance on how to conduct all relevant aspects of the assessment and feedback process.
- 3.7 The Course Organiser has responsibility for ensuring that appropriate moderation processes are in place and for informing tutors and demonstrators of these arrangements. Typically, Course Organisers will operate more robust moderation processes when marking is undertaken by tutors and demonstrators.

#### 4. Access to facilities and resources

- 4.1 Tutors and demonstrators must be given access to all facilities and resources that the Head of School deems they require to fulfil their duties, and a summary of these must be included in the formal induction (see section 5).

#### 5. Mandatory induction and training

- 5.1 Tutors and demonstrators must not commence their duties until the School has provided them with appropriate formal induction on all core aspects of their role. Recommended content of the formal induction plan is set out in the Appendix.
- 5.2 Mandatory training specific to the courses that the tutors and demonstrators are assigned may, in some circumstances, be delivered separately to the formal induction and may continue after tutoring/demonstrating work has been commenced. Heads of School must recommend an appropriate amount of training.

**[We are interested in views regarding whether the University should stipulate the knowledge / skills / training or support required for postgraduate students who are acting as tutors and demonstrators at certain levels, e.g. PGT level]**

#### 6. Feedback and Review

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure that tutors and demonstrators are adequately supported in their role and that their work is monitored satisfactorily.
- 6.2 Feedback makes a valuable contribution to tutors' and demonstrators' experience and development. It is important that tutors and demonstrators receive constructive feedback on their performance. This feedback may be received through various channels. Tutors and demonstrators will be mentored by a member of the academic staff appointed by the Head

of School, who will be responsible for helping them reflect on their teaching. **[We are particularly interested in views regarding this proposed mentoring role].**

6.3 Schools are responsible for providing tutors and demonstrators with a formal annual review of their development and progress. For tutors and demonstrators working 0.2 FTE or more this will take the form of an individual meeting, which should be undertaken by the Course Organiser or suitably delegated member of staff. For tutors and demonstrators defined as low-hours employees (working less than 0.2 FTE), alternate arrangements apply, see: [www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/annual-review/guidelines/line-managers-reviewers/low-hour-employees](http://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/annual-review/guidelines/line-managers-reviewers/low-hour-employees). If tutors/demonstrators are currently postgraduate research students, reviews of their development and progress in tutoring and demonstrating must be separate from the postgraduate research annual review process.

7. Non-mandatory training and development

7.1 It is valuable for tutors and demonstrators to be given the opportunity to develop beyond their current tasks and mentors must discuss with them the availability of any optional training which will allow this development. This training might include courses or briefing meetings organised by the Course Organiser, the School or the Institute for Academic Development (IAD). Tutors and demonstrators will not be paid for time spent undertaking non-mandatory training.

8. Resolving problems

8.1 If tutors and demonstrators experience any difficulties, for example, balancing teaching with their studies, they should, in the first instance, speak to the Course Organiser. If this does not resolve the problem, an appointment should be made with the key contact outlined by the Head of School (see Appendix).

## Appendix

### Formal Induction Plan

Each School must form an induction plan for tutors and demonstrators which should include the following:

#### Key contacts

- Whom tutors and demonstrators should contact in case of any queries about the course (e.g. Course Organiser), their development (their 'mentor'), their contract or pay (e.g. School office staff) (advise two different people in case of absence or conflict).
- An introduction to all key people in relevant formal roles in the School.

#### Contracts and pay

- How many hours tutors and demonstrators are expected to work (including detail of preparation time, marking time, teaching time).
- How much tutors and demonstrators will be paid for this work, when they will be paid, and how they will be paid.

#### Course and subject specific information

- Course content and processes.
- The facilities and resources that are available to tutors and demonstrators.
- Administrative tasks related to teaching (e.g. class allocation).
- Detailed marking criteria

#### Roles and responsibilities

- The expectation of tutors and demonstrators in terms of teaching and assessment responsibilities
- The role of tutors and demonstrators in relation to pastoral support for students, including information regarding the key staff in the School with a role in providing pastoral support, local procedures for referring students, record keeping and confidentiality issues.

#### Relevant policies and procedures

- This Policy document.
- Arrangements for making tutors and demonstrators aware of reasonable adjustments that they need to make for students with disabilities.
- Feedback or review arrangements that are in place and when these processes will occur, including how tutors/demonstrators may provide feedback on their experiences.
- Information about any teaching-related accessibility, equality, and diversity policies (e.g. Accessible and Inclusive learning policy).
- Any confidentiality or data rules or processes within the School.
- Relevant health and safety guidance.
- Any School handbooks or other documentation for tutors and demonstrators.
- Any relevant employment policies.

#### Training and development

- Mandatory training activities.
- Additional development opportunities (e.g. workshops provided by the IAD)

**[Links will be provided to relevant resources including HR policies]**

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

23 May 2017

## **Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students – update for 2017/18**

### **Executive Summary**

As agreed at REC's February 2017 meeting, the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students is updated with minor amendments to reflect any policy or regulation changes for 2017/18. Support services have been consulted on existing content and comments incorporated in the attached draft. A major review of the publication will be undertaken during 2017/18 for a revised publication to be available for the start of 2018/19.

Changes to the current Code of Practice are highlighted in the attached paper and include the addition of mediation information in section 4.6.

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

The Code of Practice supports the University's Strategic Plan objectives of Leadership in Learning and Leadership in Research.

### **Action requested**

REC is invited to approve the revised Code of Practice for publication.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will communicate changes to the Code of Practice in its annual communication on new and revised policies and regulations in June 2017.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Updating the Code of Practice is met from within existing resources in Academic Services.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

A risk assessment is not included as changes are minor and no policy changes are included. The addition of mediation information is anticipated to help mitigate risks associated with occasions when the supervisory relationship appears to have broken down.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The Code aims to meet the needs of different equality groups and remove or minimise disadvantage. The addition of mediation information is intended as a mechanism to support equality groups, for example disability. An equality impact assessment will be carried out by Academic Services.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

*The paper is open*

### **Originator of the paper**

Susan Hunter, Academic Services

May 2017

# Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

---

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	<b>Scope of the Code of Practice</b>	<b>4</b>
1.2	<b>Research Degree Standards</b>	<b>4</b>
1.2.1	Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes	4
1.2.2	Joint PhD Degrees	5
1.2.3	Prescribed Period of Study	5
1.2.4	The Thesis	5
1.3	<b>Key Responsibilities</b>	<b>5</b>
1.3.1	Supervisory Team	5
1.3.2	Principal Supervisor	6
1.3.3	Postgraduate Director	6
1.3.4	Subject Area Postgraduate Adviser	6
1.3.5	College Postgraduate Academic Management	6
1.3.6	Senate Committees	7
1.3.7	Support Staff	7
<b>2</b>	<b>THE STUDENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	<b>Finding a Supervisor and Research Topic</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1.1	Choice of Topic and Supervision	7
2.1.2	Appointment of Supervisor	8
2.1.3	Principal or Lead Supervisor	8
2.1.4	Co-Supervisors	8
2.1.5	Assistant Supervisor	8
2.1.6	Advisers	8
2.1.7	School Postgraduate Advisers	9
2.1.8	Collaboration with Other Institutions	9
2.1.9	Review of Topic and Supervisory Arrangements	9
2.2	<b>Welcome and Induction of New Students</b>	<b>9</b>
2.3	<b>Supervision of the Research Project</b>	<b>10</b>
2.3.1	Deciding on a Research Project	10
2.3.2	Responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor	10
2.3.3	Absence of the Principal Supervisor	11
2.3.4	Role of Assistant Supervisor	11
2.3.5	Role of Co-Supervisors	12
2.3.6	Supervisors in Associated Institutions	12
2.4	<b>International Students</b>	<b>13</b>
2.4.1	English Language Requirements	13
2.4.2	Immigration and Visa Advice	13
2.5	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>14</b>
2.5.1	Provision in Schools and Departments	14
2.5.2	Representation on Committees Dealing with Postgraduate Provision	14
2.6	<b>On Being a Research Student</b>	<b>15</b>
2.6.1	The University and the Student	15
2.6.2	Involvement in the Life of the University	15

2.6.3	Responsibilities of the Student	15
2.6.4	Responsibility for the Quality of the Thesis	16
2.6.5	Team Working	16
2.6.6	Proofreading	16
2.6.7	Previously Assessed Material	17
2.6.8	Producing Publications	17
2.6.9	Intellectual Property	17
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Support Services</b>	<b>18</b>
2.7.1	The Advice Place	18
2.7.2	Student Counselling Service	18
2.7.3	English Language Tuition	18
2.7.4	Study Skills	19
2.7.5	Library Collections and Services	19
2.7.6	Computing Resources	19
2.7.7	Disabled Students	20
<b>3</b>	<b>RESEARCH PROGRESS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Contact between Students and Supervisors</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1.1	Keeping Records of Key Meetings	21
3.1.2	Research Integrity and Ethics Approval	21
3.1.3	Duty of Care	22
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Monitoring Student Progress</b>	<b>22</b>
3.2.1	Annual Progression Review	22
3.2.2	Recommendations Following the Progression Review	23
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Absences, Interruptions and Extensions</b>	<b>24</b>
3.3.1	Leave of Absence	24
3.3.2	Leave of Absence for International Students	25
3.3.3	Vacation Leave	25
3.3.4	Authorised Interruption of Study	25
3.3.5	Extension to the Period of Study	26
3.3.6	Continuation Fees	26
3.3.7	Withdrawal from Study	26
3.3.8	Exclusion from Study and Academic Performance	26
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Preparing the Thesis for Submission</b>	<b>27</b>
3.4.1	Notice of Intention to Submit	27
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Thesis Assessment</b>	<b>28</b>
3.5.1	Appointment of Examiners	28
3.5.2	Assessment of Students who are also Members of Staff	28
3.5.3	Appointment of a Chair for the Oral Examination	28
3.5.4	Date of the Oral Examination	28
3.5.5	The Submitted Thesis	28
3.5.6	Responsibility for the Outcome of the Assessment	29
3.5.7	Assessment Criteria	29
3.5.8	Length of the Thesis	30
3.5.9	The Thesis and Joint Publications	30
3.5.10	Portfolio Material	30
3.5.11	Supplementary Material	30
3.5.12	Lay Summary	31
<b>3.6</b>	<b>The Assessment Process</b>	<b>31</b>
3.6.1	Supervisor Presence at the Oral Examination	31
3.6.2	Organisation of the Oral Examination	31
3.6.3	Examination Outside of the UK	31

3.6.4	Examiner Preparation	32
3.6.5	Examiner Recommendations	32
3.6.6	Notification of Examiner Recommendations	32
<b>3.7</b>	<b>After the Examination</b>	<b>32</b>
3.7.1	Revisions to the Thesis	32
3.7.2	Thesis Resubmission	33
3.7.3	Final Submission of the Assessed Thesis	33
3.7.4	Online Access to the Thesis	34
3.7.5	Graduation	34
3.7.6	Progress of a Typical Full Time PhD	34
<b>4</b>	<b>RESOLVING PROBLEMS</b>	<b>35</b>
4.1	Personal Concerns	35
4.2	Working Relationships	35
4.3	Decisions of the University Committees	36
4.4	Recording Problems with Progress	36
4.5	The Supervisor-Student Relationship	36
4.6	Dignity and Respect	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.7	Complaints	37
<b>5</b>	<b>STUDENT APPEALS</b>	<b>37</b>
5.1	Grounds for Appeal	37
5.2	Information about Special Circumstances	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5.3	Role of the Supervisor in an Appeal Case	38
5.4	Submitting an Appeal	38
<b>6</b>	<b>STUDENT CONDUCT</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Appendix I: Health and Safety</b>	<b>40</b>
9.1.1	The Safety of Postgraduate Students	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9.1.2	The University Health and Safety Policy	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>9.2</b>	<b>Appendix II: Privacy of Personal Data</b>	<b>40</b>
9.2.1	Student Responsibilities	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9.2.2	Supervisor Responsibilities	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9.2.3	Consequences of Breaching the Data Protection Act	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>9.3</b>	<b>Appendix III: University Codes of Practice, Regulations and Links to other Useful Information</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>9.4</b>	<b>Appendix IV: Sources of Additional Advice and Information</b>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	College Offices:	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>9.5</b>	<b>Appendix V: Summary of Responsibilities</b>	<b>42</b>
9.5.1	The Student	42
9.5.2	The Supervisor	42
9.5.3	The University, including Schools, Centres and Institutes where the student is based	43

## 1 Introduction

The University aims to foster a vibrant, successful and interactive research community that generates ideas and discoveries, creates new fields of knowledge and makes a difference to the societal, cultural, environmental, health and wealth development of Scottish, UK and global communities.

Research students have a major role to play in these aims. To this end, the University seeks to provide research students with an exceptional and distinctive experience that prepares them to make significant contributions to knowledge during and beyond their period of candidature in the University.

### 1.1 Scope of the Code of Practice

In placing research excellence and student experience at the forefront, this Code provides guidance and practical advice for both supervisors and research students. It sets out the expected standards for both students and staff, recognising the diversity of contexts and practices across the University. The Code should be read in conjunction with the postgraduate regulations set out in

- [The University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#)
- [The Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

For MSc by Research degrees that include a significant taught element and that have their own Board of Examiners please refer to

- [The Taught Assessment Regulations](#).

The Code of Practice is consistent with the [QAA Code of Practice Chapter B11: Research Degrees](#).

### 1.2 Research Degree Standards

This Code of Practice sets out the University's standards for its research degree programmes. The University Degree Regulations provide further details about types of awards, their key characteristics, and the conditions for awarding the degrees.

#### 1.2.1 Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes

This Code refers to Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes and includes all research-based postgraduate programmes offered by the University of Edinburgh:

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
  - Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
  - MSc by Research
  - Doctorates and other research degrees named according to subject.
- MSc by Research programmes may have different arrangements for supervision and assessment. Information will be available in programme handbooks.
- Different arrangements and facilities may also be in place for distance students and information will be available in programme handbooks.
- Every research degree programme is the responsibility of the relevant College Postgraduate Committee, referred to in this publication as the College committee.

### 1.2.2 Joint PhD Degrees

The University supports fully integrated joint degrees as agreed formally with partner institutions. These are degrees for which there is a single award between partner universities with equal quality assurance, standards, and examination procedures. Joint PhD programmes enable doctoral students to embark on jointly-supervised research degrees ([section 2.1.88](#)). Students matriculated on jointly-awarded PhD programmes have access to two research environments and cultures, as well as training and facilities in two research-intensive universities.

### 1.2.3 Prescribed Period of Study

Students undertake their study over the period prescribed by the postgraduate research degree programme in which they are matriculated.

- [Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#)

Variations to the period of candidature are outlined in this Code, including how to apply for concessions such as interruptions of study and extensions to the prescribed period of study. The period of study begins from matriculation on the degree programme and ends with the submission of the thesis for examination, though in the case of PhD and MPhil degrees the examiners may recommend that the student undertake a further period of study or a period to implement corrections after the examination.

### 1.2.4 The Thesis

The thesis is the final output of the research process, developed over the duration of the student's candidature. The form of the thesis depends on the research degree programme in which the student is matriculated, and will require one or more of the following:

- A written thesis or dissertation
- Assessed essays
- A portfolio of music compositions
- Artefacts, artworks and other practice-based outputs
- Design work including studies, sketches and maquettes
- Placement reports
- Documentary film
- A portfolio of publications

The research degree programme or supervisory team may also require students to undertake and pass some coursework, as outlined in the relevant Degree Regulations and Programme Handbooks.

## 1.3 Key Responsibilities

### 1.3.1 Supervisory Team

The team should contain at least two members, depending on the supervision model (see section 2.1.2). The supervisory team supports the student's candidature. In some cases several Co-supervisors will be appointed. For MPhil and PhD candidates the supervisory team will meet as a group with the

student at least once a year as part of a progression review towards the end of the first year and at least once a year after that. This relationship continues from registration until the end of the student's candidature. Supervisors are responsible for supervision of the student's candidature until the final thesis is submitted fulfilling any requirements of the examiners. Supervisory arrangements for MSc by Research students may differ and details will be provided in the programme handbook.

### **1.3.2 Principal Supervisor**

The Principal Supervisor, or Lead Supervisor (see section 2.1.3) is responsible for providing help and advice to the student on (see also section 2.3.2):

- Research training
- Choice of topic
- Organising the research
- Identifying any specific training needs
- Feedback on written work and any other component of the research
- Pastoral support.

The Principal Supervisor meets regularly with the student, leads the student through the process of producing the thesis and its examination, reminds the student of time constraints, and checks that the thesis conforms to the University's requirements. Meetings may be conducted online or via teleconferencing. The Supervisor will be able to offer advice and direct the student to sources of information about future careers. Comprehensive careers guidance is available from the Careers Service.

### **1.3.3 Postgraduate Director**

The University's teaching and research activity is organised into Schools. Each School has a Postgraduate Director (or Head of Graduate School) responsible for postgraduate matters in the School. Amongst other duties, the Postgraduate Director will:

- Monitor the progress of all research students within the School
- Engage with the formal annual review process for each student
- Ensure that research students receive the help and advice they require
- Help students and supervisors to resolve problems with student progress
- Consult with all supervisors in the School on issues as they arise
- Advance policies about postgraduate matters in the School.

### **1.3.4 Subject Area Postgraduate Adviser**

Large schools may also have Postgraduate Advisers who are responsible for subject areas within the School. Postgraduate Advisers fulfil the Postgraduate Director's duties in the subject area and support the Postgraduate Director.

### **1.3.5 College Postgraduate Academic Management**

Each School is positioned in one of the three Colleges of the University. Each College has a committee or board responsible for overseeing postgraduate research within the College and for maintaining academic standards. The College Postgraduate Committee or College Board of Examiners:

- Approves extensions and interruptions of study

- Approves concessions to the application of regulations such as the language the thesis is written in and the length of thesis
- Approves the appointment of examiners
- Approves any conditions recommended by the examiners
- Considers examiners recommendations on the awarding of the degree
- Considers College-specific policy issues that affect postgraduate education.

The Committee or Board may also implement some of its responsibilities through subcommittees, a Dean or committee chair. The Committee or Board also offers advice to relevant Senate Committees.

#### **1.3.6 Senate Committees**

The Senatus Academicus (Senate) is the University's overarching academic body. The University's governance structure includes several Senate committees. Committees dealing with postgraduate research are:

- [The Senatus Researcher Experience Committee](#)
- [The Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee](#)
- [The Senatus Quality Assurance Committee.](#)

These committees include academic staff from all Colleges and representatives from the Edinburgh University Students' Association. They are convened by the Assistant Principal of Researcher Development, the Assistant Principal Academic Support and the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance respectively.

#### **1.3.7 Support Staff**

Each School and College also has an administrative support team. Amongst other duties they are responsible for handling enquiries, admissions, record keeping, scholarship applications, and applications for interruptions and extensions. The administrative team also supports the role of the Director or Head of Graduate School. They also provide a point of contact to help with routine queries on pastoral support.

## **2 The Student's Relationship with the University**

### **2.1 Finding a Supervisor and Research Topic**

The nature of the student's research interests or the proposed project will affect the membership and composition of the supervisory team. School Postgraduate Directors assess and discuss applications with potential supervisors prior to the student's registration at the University. All students will have at least two supervisors, appointed by the College. If only one is appointed at registration a second will be appointed within two months of the programme start date.

#### **2.1.1 Choice of Topic and Supervision**

A Postgraduate Director, Postgraduate Adviser, supervisor, or potential supervisor will meet with the student to agree the topic area and identify

supervisor(s) before or soon after the student's studies begin. This advice applies also to students who as part of their research degree undertake taught courses at the start of their candidature. Some students will have agreed their topic before recruitment.

#### **2.1.2 Appointment of Supervisor**

Academic staff who have already served as Assistant Supervisor or Co-Supervisor are eligible to serve as Principal Supervisors. Each student will work under the guidance of at least two supervisors appointed by the College Postgraduate Committee. There are two types of supervisory arrangement:

- Principal Supervisor plus Assistant Supervisor(s)
- Co-Supervisors, one of whom is designated the Lead Supervisor.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that supervisors and Co-Supervisors have sufficient time to meet their responsibilities as supervisors. In assessing the supervisory arrangement, Schools and Colleges will also take account of:

- Whether the supervisors are in part-time or full time employment
- The duration of staff contracts.

The University provides training and support for supervisors, and requires attendance every five years on a College or School supervisor briefing session.

#### **2.1.3 Principal or Lead Supervisor**

Supervisory teams will contain at least two people. The School will ensure that the supervisory team is in place within two months of registration. The Principal Supervisor (or Lead Supervisor if the student is co-supervised) must be appointed prior to the student's registration. The Principal or Lead Supervisor has the primary responsibility for supervision and if the student is co-supervised, the Principal Supervisor will also deal with the administrative aspects of supervision. Throughout the rest of this document the term "Principal Supervisor" will be used for both Principal and Lead Supervisor.

#### **2.1.4 Co-Supervisors**

The Co-Supervisor's role and responsibilities are equal to the Principal Supervisor's in supervising the student's work. This supervisory arrangement is normally chosen when it is clear that the student's proposal involves interdisciplinary research.

#### **2.1.5 Assistant Supervisor**

The role of the Assistant Supervisor entails less responsibility than the Principal Supervisor, but in some cases may require closer day-to-day involvement in the student's research.

#### **2.1.6 Advisers**

In some research programmes other staff members will be involved in an informal advisory capacity, especially if specialised equipment is to be used. It is the duty of the Principal Supervisor to ensure that these informal advisers are prepared to undertake this work and to take responsibility for instruction and safety.

### 2.1.7 School Postgraduate Advisers

Schools may appoint an individual or group to support the Postgraduate Director in providing impartial advice to students and academic staff on:

- Issues relating to supervision
- Space and facility needs
- Complaints.

Such an advisory group will be proactive in identifying and resolving issues, and may include experts from outside the School. The group will also function as a means of introducing students to a wider cohort of staff in the School.

### 2.1.8 Collaboration with Other Institutions

In some cases research projects span across several Schools and Colleges in the University and involve other universities and organisations. The University of Edinburgh has collaborative agreements in several research disciplines with partners nationally and worldwide, not all of whom are eligible to award degrees. Agreements are confirmed by the University and managed by Schools and Colleges.

### 2.1.9 Review of Topic and Supervisory Arrangements

Students on postgraduate degree programmes that are longer than one year full time will undergo an annual progression review (see also section 3.2.1). The progression review provides the opportunity for the review committee and supervisory team to assess the candidate's potential as a researcher and the suitability of topic. It also provides an opportunity for candidates to assess their research and to develop and refine their research topic.

## 2.2 Welcome and Induction of New Students

Welcome and Induction events are run at the University, College, School and programme level. ~~Induction a~~Arrangements may differ for distance students and the relevant School will provide information on what is provided. As well as welcoming students, the University and College induction events provide an introduction to the institution and its student support services. For University-~~wide~~ induction events, students will be assigned to an induction cohort and invited to the next available ~~University induction~~ event. ~~School inductions complement the University induction programme. Induction will introduce students to University and School provision. Induction~~ These events ~~will be~~ are timetabled to occur at key entry points for the majority of students. ~~Students will be assigned to the next available induction event.~~

Commented [HS1]: Amendments provided by Jenni, Induction Team 11/15/17

Induction events inform students about:

- The University's administrative structures and how postgraduate research degree programmes fit into these
- University-wide support services, both academic and pastoral, available to postgraduate research students, including those offered by the Students' Association
- Academic support services, in particular library and computing services, and College or School arrangements for access and training in the use of these facilities
- Opportunities for further training and skills development

- Pastoral support within Colleges and Schools.

School based inductions complement the University level activities and introduce students to University and School provision. These local inductions events and/or meetings introduce students to supervising staff, research colleagues, the learning and working environment, the Library and other resources. They also provide an opportunity for research students to ask questions about their programme.

Schools will carry out inductions for new students that will include:

- An introduction to the University's administrative structures and how the postgraduate research programmes fit into these
- An introduction to the work environment and relevant facilities
- An introduction to key staff
- An introduction to other students, including social opportunities which allow students to network
- An introduction to the University library system and relevant IT systems
- Health and safety training (see [section 9.1](#)).

## 2.3 Supervision of the Research Project

### 2.3.1 Deciding on a Research Project

Students and supervisors will decide on the topic of research before the student commences their study at the University or in the early months of study. The project will depend on:

- The student's background and interests
- The student's motivation for the topic
- The supervisors' areas of expertise
- Availability of the supervisors during important periods of the candidature
- Available resources
- Suitability for the research degree in which the student is matriculated
- Availability of relevant training
- Whether the project can be completed within the prescribed period of study
- Any requirements stipulated by studentship funders such as Research Councils and doctoral training centres or partnerships
- Conditions relating to study or examination specified in the letter of admission, for example the acquisition of computing skills or knowledge of a foreign language.

Close contact between supervisors and students is essential. The frequency of meetings will depend on the subject area, and the stage of the student's training. Meetings may occur weekly in the first few months of candidature in order to scope and define the research project. Part-time students should be prepared for a programme of frequent meetings at the initial stages particularly in light of scheduling constraints and the student's commitments outside of their research.

### 2.3.2 Responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor will:

- Ensure that facilities necessary for the project are available
- Facilitate contact with informal supervisors and advisers where necessary
- Arrange regular meetings with the student at which all matters relating to the student's research can be discussed, including feedback on written work
- Identify the student's development needs at the start of the degree and review and update these throughout the student's candidature
- Advise the student on drawing up a research plan, thesis structure and a timetable for completion of the work
- Help the student prepare for the progression review where required
- Complete and submit on time to the appropriate postgraduate contact according to College guidelines, and complete all relevant reports required by Research Councils and other funding bodies, and ensure their transmission (see also section 3.2 Monitoring Student Progress)
- Provide advice on pastoral support as well as academic matters so that problems can be identified early on and appropriate steps taken to obtain concessions where needed, such as interruptions of study, absences from the University, leaves of absence and extensions (see also section 3.3)
- Offer advice on other forms of output from the student's research, such as publication in journals and conference proceedings
- Advise on the final form of the thesis (see section 1.2.4) or any changes to the proposed form of the thesis
- Encourage students to develop transferable skills and to attend appropriate training courses.

The plan for completion of the research will include specific research goals, their timing, sequence, and interdependencies. The supervisor will monitor the student's progress against this plan, along with any revisions.

Pastoral responsibility includes being alert to problems that might affect the student's ability to work effectively. The supervisor needs to be aware of the facilities that the University offers for the support of students, such as the University Health Service, the Student Disability Service, the Student Counselling Service, the Advice Place, Careers Services, the Chaplaincy and the International Office (see also section 1.3.2).

### **2.3.3 Absence of the Principal Supervisor**

Schools will make alternative arrangements for supervision in the event that the Principal Supervisor is absent for more than six consecutive weeks, including during University vacation periods. The student will be notified formally of any such arrangements.

### **2.3.4 Role of Assistant Supervisor**

The role of the Assistant Supervisor is to:

- Support the approach to the main thesis topic addressed by the student and agreed with the Principal Supervisor (rather than offer an alternative approach), for example provide complementary expertise, such as

specialised knowledge of a particular technique, or depending on the work context, provide day-to-day supervision in some cases

- Provide support and assistance if the Principal Supervisor is absent
- Meet with the student periodically
- Follow the student's progress
- Be fully involved in the annual reviews of the student's progress and comment on and sign the student's annual report form.

The role of the Assistant Supervisor will be regularised, agreed and understood by the supervisory team, the Postgraduate Director or Head of Graduate School and the student.

### **2.3.5 Role of Co-Supervisors**

When a co-supervisory model is necessary to support the research, this will be agreed at the time of the student's admission to candidature, or whenever it becomes apparent that the research requires interdisciplinary support. One of the supervisors will assume the role of Principal Supervisor. The Principal Supervisor and Co-Supervisor have equal roles and responsibilities for supervision, but the Principal Supervisor will be responsible for applications for concessions (for example interruptions and extensions), ensure that monitoring forms are completed, and meet other administrative responsibilities.

Both supervisors will assist the student to identify and define the topic of research, either before the student arrives at the University or soon after. If the interdisciplinary nature of the research topic develops later then the Principal Supervisor will consult with the student, identify an appropriate Co-Supervisor, and arrange the terms of the working relationship. Where the Principal and Co-Supervisors are from different Schools, the Principal Supervisor will obtain approval for the arrangement from the Postgraduate Directors of both Schools.

The Principal and Co-Supervisor are jointly responsible to the Postgraduate Director in the School in which the student is matriculated for the duties set out in section 2.3.2 and both will meet regularly with the student.

### **2.3.6 Supervisors in Associated Institutions**

Staff employed by Associated Institutions may serve as supervisors. An employee of an Associated Institution may serve as a Principal Supervisor if:

- The student is working full time in the Associated Institution
- The Co-Supervisor or Assistant Supervisor(s) are University employees
- The Principal Supervisor from the Associated Institution is prepared to take on supervisory responsibilities as if they were working within the University and complies with the roles and responsibilities outlined in this Code of Practice
- The arrangement is approved by the College Committee.

Supervisors employed by Associated Institutions are required to participate in the University's supervisor briefing sessions. The University Co-Supervisor and the Postgraduate Director will ensure that the Principal Supervisor from the Associated Institution has read the University's procedures and Codes of Practice. The University Co-Supervisor, Postgraduate Director and College

committee with responsibility for postgraduate matters will monitor student progress through formal annual reporting. Students working in an Associated Institution have the same rights and responsibilities as those working in a University School. They will also be subject to any additional rules of the Associated Institution.

## 2.4 International Students

The University welcomes international students. Advice is available to assist international students adjust to life away from home, friends and families. The International Office, the Student Counselling Service, the Chaplaincy and the Advice Place provide confidential help and advice. Students can also seek advice from Supervisors, and students in Halls of Residence can also seek help and advice from the wardens.

### 2.4.1 English Language Requirements

The University requires all students to demonstrate sufficient English language competence to undertake and derive full benefit from their chosen programme of study. The written thesis and oral examinations of research degrees are in English (or Gaelic in some cases). Students must be able to communicate fluently with their supervisors.

Commented [HS2]: Amendments provided by Michael Jenkins ELE 30/3/17

The University may require students whose first language is not English to ~~undertake~~ a short diagnostic English test – the - Test of English at Matriculation (TEAM) - in Edinburgh prior to registration to assess training needs. Students who are required to take this test will be notified by their College on admission. ~~The Test of English at Matriculation (TEAM is used alongside English language qualifications to help assess whether international students might benefit from English language support. If any support is recommended, the student will be strongly advised to follow the advice given. The Principal Supervisor will advise the student of the importance of this English language support and encourage the student to attend any classes that are recommended. ) may find that the student needs essential or strongly recommended English language tuition. If so the student will be strongly advised to undertake remedial tuition. The Principal Supervisor will advise the student of the importance of remedial English language training and encourage the student to attend. The language test is rigorous to ensure that any remedial action specified is appropriate, to avoid serious problems in writing the thesis.~~

All Tier 4 applicants must meet Home Office Tier 4 requirements, in order for the University to sponsor them.

### 2.4.2 Immigration and Visa Advice

Immigration advice is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner – a Home Office run scheme for the regulation of immigration advice in the UK. By law, immigration advice can only be provided by designated ~~specifically~~-named staff who meet the required competencies and work in accordance with the Code of Standards as defined by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. International students should only consult with staff at Edinburgh Global in the International Office for visa and immigration advice. There are serious implications if a student needs to stay in the UK and

Commented [HS3]: Amendments provided by Euan Fergusson, Edinburgh Global 3/4/17

fails to renew their visa before it expires, or if a student changes their circumstances (for example, changes of location of study, length of programme, [change in programme](#), or breaks in study). Adjustments to candidate status can take several months, so students requiring help should seek it well in advance of making the change. Contact through [visahelp@ed.ac.uk](mailto:visahelp@ed.ac.uk).

- [International Office|Edinburgh Global](#)

Commented [HS4]: Name change, hyperlink remains the same

## 2.5 Facilities

The University provides central library facilities, an email account, shared access to computers and network access for all campus-based students. Students can expect adequate lighting, heating and ventilation in the spaces in which they work. Schools are responsible for providing study accommodation and equipment.

### 2.5.1 Provision in Schools and Departments

Each subject area has its own provision, which *may* include:

- Bench space
- Dedicated study space
- A desk
- Shelving or space in a bookcase
- Filing space
- Lockable storage
- Local access to the computer network
- A collection point for mail
- Research data file store
- Research premises
- Specialised equipment
- Consumables.

Schools will also provide postgraduate research students with:

- A postgraduate notice board, information point or electronic information point
- Access to a shared photocopier, fax machines and telephone.

Students will have access to the facilities agreed with the School for the duration of their candidature. Facilities may be limited during periods of extensions to candidature due to resource constraints and to make space available for incoming students; facilities will differ for distance students. Schools will make clear to students, before they register on their degree programme, the provision of space and facilities that they can expect.

### 2.5.2 Representation on Committees Dealing with Postgraduate Provision

Schools will ensure that postgraduate research students are represented formally on relevant School committees and provided with the opportunity to communicate with committees through student forums. Students will be informed of the means by which they can make their views known to the School committees and School managers.

## 2.6 On Being a Research Student

### 2.6.1 The University and the Student

All students are members of the University community. The University invites research students to share in the strategic objectives of the University as an institution. The University aims to provide:

- A nurturing and stimulating intellectual and social environment
- The opportunity to develop critical and analytical skills
- Training in research methods and relevant technical skills
- Adequate facilities for research
- A professional level of supervision
- Personal, professional and career development advice and opportunities
- Pastoral support
- Efficient administration
- Fair treatment
- Clear regulations and assessment procedures
- Good, regularly updated documentation
- Timely information
- Understandable and effective complaints and appeal procedures
- Common institution-wide standards
- A nationally and internationally accepted qualification.

The University invites and encourages students to participate in the life of the University during their candidature and throughout their later careers as alumni, upholding and enhancing the reputation of the University. The University actively seeks the views of students, will respond to feedback from Student Representatives and those who participate in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

### 2.6.2 Involvement in the Life of the University

Commented [HS5]: Amendments provided by Tanya, Students' Association 12/5/17

Supervisors will encourage students to play a part in the intellectual life of the School, the University and the wider community. Schools will provide information for distance students on how they can become involved. ~~There are many University societies that support involvement in the University community.~~ Research students are automatically members of ~~the~~ Edinburgh University Students' Association which supports over 250 student-run, who operate these societies and volunteering groups. ~~In addition the Students' Association provides to providing~~ a full range of other services, including advice and representation, Peer Learning and Support, peer support, and events and entertainment. For more details, consult the postgraduate guide provided by the association, ~~visit at~~ eusa.ed.ac.uk/postgrad or visit one of the Students' Association buildings at Teviot Row House, Potterrow, Pleasance, or call into the Advice Pace at Potterrow or King's Buildings House.

- [Students' Association](#)

### 2.6.3 Responsibilities of the Student

During candidature students are responsible for their own development as researchers and for developing their projects. Students will:

- Acquaint themselves with the standards expected of the relevant degree in their subject (PhD, MPhil, MSc by Research or taught professional doctorate)
- Undertake any training as recommended by their Principal Supervisor
- Take advantage of the facilities and supervision offered in the University
- Fulfil the requirements of their research degree programme
- Work diligently and effectively throughout the period of their candidature
- Work as a professional, independent researcher accountable for the development of their own research
- Engage with student representation processes and elections so that Postgraduate Research Reps can work with them to improve their University experience and the Students' Association can adequately represent postgraduate research students
- Acknowledge the work of other scholars and researchers on whom they draw (See also section 6 on plagiarism and cheating.)
- Produce a thesis that makes a significant contribution to knowledge
- Submit the completed thesis on time
- Ensure that the thesis is their own work and acknowledges sources correctly (See [section 6](#) on plagiarism and cheating.)
- Actively seek advice and help from the sources identified in this Code if problems arise.

#### 2.6.4 Responsibility for the Quality of the Thesis

Responsibility for the quality of the thesis submitted for assessment resides with the student rather than the supervisory team or the University. Possible examination outcomes are listed in the Assessment Regulations. After assessment, the examiners make recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee or Board, who then decide on the basis of the examiners' reports whether the thesis passes, or if further work is required.

- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

#### 2.6.5 Team Working

The University recognises the substantial benefits of team working, including with other students and staff, and encourages joint publication. In the thesis submitted for assessment the examiners will need to be able to identify and assess the individual work of the candidate. It is the student's responsibility to indicate clearly which parts of the thesis describe work done by others. See section 3.5.9 on the inclusion of joint publications in the thesis.

#### 2.6.6 Proofreading

Supervisors may advise students to seek assistance from others who can aid with proofreading. Proofreaders should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English, but not advise on subject matter or argumentation. It is good practice to acknowledge any assistance provided in producing drafts and in the final thesis. The Students' Association provides a [free peer proofreading service for non-native English speakers. Other students can volunteer to become a peer proofreader.](#) Information is available [from](#):

**Commented [HS6]:** Amendments provided by Tanya, Students' Association 12/5/17

- [Advice Place – peer proofreading](#)

### 2.6.7 Previously Assessed Material

If the period of candidature includes individual work components submitted for assessment then the components must contribute to a coherent whole. Students may not reproduce material for assessment that has already been submitted for credit at this or another institution. In the case of doctoral and MPhil programmes for which there are coursework requirements, material from courses may be included in the final thesis, as these degrees are assessed on the quality of the final thesis only. ~~Coursework submitted for an MSc by Research that includes a taught element contributing to credit for the degree may not be reproduced for assessment in another course.~~

Commented [HS7]: AB advised delete

### 2.6.8 Producing Publications

Students and supervisors need to discuss and agree strategies for producing publications, and whether they are to be authored singly or as joint publications. The student and the supervisors may collaborate to advance and disseminate the research, leading to joint contributions to seminars, workshops and symposia, and joint publications in academic journals. The *Code of Practice for Research* is available from Edinburgh Research and Innovation (ERI) and provides guidance on research practices within the University. The student and supervisor will discuss:

- Including text from publications in the thesis
- Including in the body of the thesis any verbatim published outputs or page proofs
- Including publications as an appendix to the thesis
- Providing an explanation in the thesis of the inclusion of co-authored text
- Any strategy for complying with Open Access requirements
- How best to indicate any portfolio element in the thesis.

The University encourages its researchers to produce outputs that are widely read, cited and used. For guidance see:

- [Open Access](#)
- [Code of Practice for Research](#)

### 2.6.9 Intellectual Property

The intellectual property (IP) represented by the dissertation or thesis remains the property of the student, as does the copyright of that material to the extent that is has been exclusively generated by the student. Exceptions apply where prior agreements have been undertaken, for example, as part of the conditions of employment on an externally-funded project, or in other sponsored research. Industry funded studentship agreements are primarily the responsibility of the University's Research Support Office. Edinburgh Research and Innovation (ERI) is the University's wholly-owned company established for commercial development that assists University staff with Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues in the context of commercialisation and/or collaboration with industry with Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues. ~~It provides general advice to students on interaction with industry partners.~~ To avoid disputes, any issues relating to ownership of IP will be discussed with the supervisors, the

Commented [HS8]: Comments received from ERI and Legal, 31/3 and 1/4/17

student and ERI as soon as any potential issues become apparent. See the Code of Practice for Research.

- Research Support Office
- ERI

## 2.7 Support Services

The University, Colleges and Schools provide a comprehensive range of support services to enable students to make the most of their time as members of the University community. Many of the University's student support services offer services on an online basis as well as face to face, although the range of services that distance students can access may be more limited than those available for on-campus students.

### 2.7.1 The Advice Place

The Advice Place is home to the Students' Association's professional advice team offering students free, impartial and confidential information on everything and anything including funding, accommodation, student welfare, and academic advice~~that their members need to know.~~

Commented [HS9]: Amendments provided by Students' Association 12/5/17

### 2.7.2 Student Representation

The Students' Association and Schools facilitate effective student representation across the University. At the beginning of each academic year, Schools will recruit Postgraduate Student Representatives who will be trained and supported by the Students' Association and will work closely with their Postgraduate Director. If postgraduate research students think services and support should be improved, they should work with their Student Reps Representatives who work in partnership with staff to improve the student experience. In addition, students will elect one Postgraduate Rep for their School as well as a Postgraduate Research Rep and five Sabbatical Officers who represent all students across the University.

Commented [HS10]: Amendments provide by Students' Association 12/5/17

### 2.7.3 Student Counselling Service

The Student Counselling Service offers one-to-one counselling, workshops and consultation, and training for staff. The service aims to help students work through their difficulty, understand themselves better and find ways of managing their situation.

### 2.7.4 English Language Tuition

The English Language ~~Teaching Centre (ELTC)~~Education (ELE) provides classes, workshops, and materials for international students at the University who ~~require~~would benefit from English language support whilst studying for their degree. (See also section 2.4.1 above.)

Commented [HS11]: Amendments provided by Michael Jenkins ELE 30/3/17

If School staff feel a student needs help with English, the Supervisor can refer the student to ELE directly, even if the student has not taken TEAM. The student will then be offered English language tuition, or independent study materials and advice.

### 2.7.5 Study Skills

The University, Schools and Support Services provide information, support and training for the development of research and transferable skills. These skills are vital for development as an independent researcher and important for progression beyond the degree. Skills can be developed as an integral part of supervision and may be provided through credit-bearing research methods courses. Additional support is provided through a variety of training courses, online resources and engagement with the research community, including tutoring and demonstrating activity.

Colleges, Schools, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), the Careers Service, the Students' Association, Information Services, doctoral training centres and partnerships and other groups provide training in transferable skills and professional development. Resources for developing skills are also available online and in University libraries.

Supervisors will work with their students to encourage attendance on the appropriate training courses. The University encourages postgraduate students to take the initiative in their development and record their own portfolio of skills, including:

- Attendance on regular training and development opportunities in accordance with their personal development needs and the demands of their research
- Use of e-learning opportunities
- Use of the library and online resources
- Engagement with the research community including presenting at seminars, tutoring and demonstrating, producing publications and attending conferences.

### 2.7.6 Library Collections and Services

A wide range of library services, collections and study spaces are provided to support both taught and research elements of students' work. Collections include print and digital books and journals, rare books and special collections, artworks, images, museum items and archives. Digital and print library resources are available for students based in Edinburgh. In addition to purchased electronic resources, printed library materials are digitised where possible for students undertaking online or distance learning. There is an Academic Support Librarian allocated to each School. Their role is to provide advice and assistance on using library services and collections, demonstrate the use of information resources by arranging subject-specific information skills sessions, give help with students' research by arranging one-to-one advice sessions, and advise on research data management.

- [Academic Support Librarians](#)
- [Library services](#)

### 2.7.7 Computing Resources

The University assumes that students will be computer literate and competent in use of the web and communication by email. All students are provided with a University email account and the University treats email correspondence via

Commented [HS12]: Richard Battersby confirmed this content is ok as it is 10/4/17

the student's University account as the official and sufficient means of communication. See:

- [Policy on the use of email for contacting students](#)

Schools will ensure that students have access to specialised computing facilities where required, and that students receive appropriate training. Training will cover the means of access to computing facilities and essential components of their use, as relevant to particular degree programmes and research projects.

Information Services provides a wide range of advice on all aspects of computing and IT.

- [IS Computing Services](#)

#### 2.7.8 Disabled Students

The Student Disability Service provides information and advice to University staff, including Programme Directors, supervisors and support staff, as well as to disabled students. Amongst their range of services, staff in the Student Disability Service will:

- ~~Agree a range of reasonable adjustments based on an assessment of the student's needs which Schools must implement in line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Recommend a range of support based on an assessment of the student's needs which Schools are expected to implement in line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. If Schools think there are pedagogical issues with implementing the recommended support, the School should contact the Disability Service~~
- Advise supervisors and support staff on how best to support disabled students
- Advise on specific support adjustments to study, examination and assessment procedures
- Provide a range of student support assistants who can carry out tasks such as proofreading texts, assist in the library and act as notetakers
- Support students to apply for statutory or University funding, if they are entitled to Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) or equivalent funding for international and EU students
- Provide training on request in response to ~~the stated needs of requests from~~ academic and other University staff.

Students with impairments (this includes dyslexia, long term mental health problems, ~~Asperger Syndrome~~ students on the autistic spectrum, as well as physical and sensory impairments) that will ~~affect~~ impact on study should contact the Student Disability Service as soon as possible in their candidature. See:

- [Student Disability Service](#)
- For regulations relating to "Reasonable Adjustments" see:
- Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

Commented [HS13]: Comments from Sheila Williams, SDS 1/5/17 incorporated below

Commented [HS14]: Update provided by Tom Ward 3/4/17

### 3 Research progress

#### 3.1 Contact between Students and Supervisors

Postgraduate research students rely on contact with their supervisors for guidance and intellectual input to their research. Supervisors will maintain regular contact with their students. Students have a responsibility to make themselves available at times agreed with their supervisors. Supervisors may be available for consultation during office hours and outside of scheduled meeting times.

The first nine months of candidature are crucial in setting the agenda of the research. The University regulations specify that the student and supervisor will maintain frequent contact and meet at least twice in every three month period. The student can initiate meetings, but the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the requirement for the minimum number of meetings is met.

##### 3.1.1 Keeping Records of Key Meetings

The University requires students and supervisors to back up guidance and decisions with written (or emailed) communication. The student and supervisor will keep a record of their key meetings. The student will produce a record of the meeting and forward it to their supervisor for agreement. This record is an essential part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement process and will include:

- Date of the meeting
- Purpose of the meeting
- Any specific problems identified
- Action points.

##### 3.1.2 Research Integrity and Ethics Approval

The University is signatory to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, in which the University agrees to:

- Maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- Ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- Support a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- Use transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- Work with partners to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly.

See also:

- [The Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)
- [UKRIO Code of Practice for Research: Promoting Good Practice and Preventing Misconduct](#)

Students and supervisors are responsible for maintaining ethical standards in the design, conduct and reporting of research, and will need to follow any procedures for ethical approval laid out by their School research committees.

### 3.1.3 Duty of Care

The University has legal responsibilities to its students and staff for health and safety, equality and diversity, data protection and dignity and respect. Supervisors and students are covered by these policies:

- [Health and Safety](#)
- [Data Protection](#)
- [Equality & Diversity](#)
- [Dignity & Respect](#)

## 3.2 Monitoring Student Progress

### 3.2.1 Annual Progression Review

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring student progress and reporting annually to the Graduate Office and College postgraduate committee or board. Appropriate milestones for each year of study will be agreed between the supervisor and the student.

The University provides an online annual progression monitoring system and requires Schools and supervisors to review student progress within nine to 12 months for each year of full time or part-time study for doctoral and MPhil degrees. By this time the student will have produced an identifiable body of work that has been generated independently and that can be assessed. This will normally form the basis for confirmation of degree registration, or permission to progress.

- a) The first review will take place within nine to 12 months of the student's matriculation.
- b) Progress in subsequent years is assessed at nine to 12 month intervals until thesis submission, or more frequently if recommended by the Graduate Office for the individual student (see *h* below)..
- c) The student will attend a review meeting and is required to provide a presentation or report prior to the meeting. The student may also be required to prepare an oral presentation.
- d) The student's electronic submission will include a forward plan of their work.
- e) An assessment panel will review the student's presentation or report. The assessment panel will include the supervisory team and at least one other person (reviewer).
- f) After each review, students are provided with feedback from the assessment panel . The student, supervisors , reviewer and School Postgraduate Director then sign-off the online report before it is submitted to the College.
- g) Similar procedures apply to part-time students, and reviews of part-time students will also take place within nine to 12 months of their matriculation. The reviewers will make allowance in their assessment for the part-time status of the student's candidature.

- h) If the progression review indicates concerns about a student's progress, then a further review will take place within three months. (Only one repeat review may be undertaken before confirmation of registration.)
- i) If the assessment panel identifies a serious problem, or advises discontinuation, then the student will be interviewed. Students will not be discontinued until they are given an opportunity to respond to the assessment. See section 3.3.8 on discontinuation of study.

The progression review provides the formal report by the supervisor on the student's progress, although some Schools have additional requirements. The first progression review will indicate that the area of study has been defined, and each annual progression review will:

- Form the basis for the decision to confirm degree registration
- Provide a record of achievements to date and confirm that any conditions of registration have been met

Schools will explain to postgraduate research students the School's review requirements. The annual review may include any of several components, such as:

- A timetable for progress agreed by the student and supervisory team
- A record of whether deadlines have been met
- The results of coursework examined by written tests or continuous assessment
- Assessments of presentations and reports of directed reading or specific project work
- The results of interviews about progress.

Students will also report on:

- Any programme of skills training required by their research
- Transferable skills development.

Supervisors will be frank about any difficulties that have arisen and will give their views on the prospect of successful completion. The supervisor will provide the student with a written report outlining these. Supervisors can recommend that a student matriculated for an MPhil re-register for a PhD if merited by the project and the student's performance, or that a student matriculated for a PhD might re-register for an MPhil, or discontinue study (see recommendations in section 3.3.8).

Practices will vary according to School and discipline, but by the end of the second year a student in the social sciences, arts and the humanities will be expected to produce a substantial piece of writing beyond that submitted in the first year. In the case of practice-based research the student will have by the second year assembled a substantial part of their portfolio and any relevant documentation.

### **3.2.2 Recommendations Following the Progression Review**

In consultation with their Postgraduate Director, supervisors will recommend to the College Postgraduate Committee or Board the future of the student's

candidature. The supervisors will provide feedback to the student, but the student is not involved in the progression decision.

The recommendations available following the annual review are set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

If the annual progress review indicates serious problems or requests for extensions to the period of study then the College Postgraduate Committee or Board will examine annual reports for:

- Indications of how the difficulties arose
- What steps were taken by supervisor and student to deal with them at an early stage.

Note that on behalf of the Committee or Board, the chair (or Postgraduate Dean) may undertake this assessment with advice from the Postgraduate Office.

If the student's research changes direction and diverges from the supervisors' expertise then the supervisors will review their own competence to deal with the new research area. In this case:

- The School can recommend a change in supervisors to the College Postgraduate Research Committee or Board.

(See also Section [3.3.8](#) Exclusion from Study and Academic Performance.)

### **3.3 Absences, Interruptions and Extensions**

Absences, interruptions and extensions to study are concessions for which students must have appropriate approval. Schools and supervisors reviewing requests for interruptions and other concessions will ~~consider~~ [take account of](#) any adjustments put in place for individual students.

#### **3.3.1 Leave of Absence**

Students, who are not on a recognised distance learning programme, may need to conduct some of their research for long periods in locations outside of Edinburgh, including overseas. A leave of absence is required for compulsory or optional activity, away from Edinburgh, that is related to the programme of study. Colleges will authorise a formal request if it:

- Benefits the research programme
- Is not detrimental to the research and the student's development and participation in the University's academic community
- Does not conflict with any other requirement of the student's programme of study
- Does not conflict with any obligations to be available for on-campus activity
- Has a working timetable agreed by supervisors and student
- Has an agreed method and frequency for submitting written work and receiving feedback, established by the supervisors and student.

Colleges will provide further information on how leave of absence changes are approved and recorded, as well as how the student will be supported during the leave period.

### 3.3.2 **Leave of Absence for International Students**

Students who hold a Tier 4 visa are normally required to carry out all studies on University premises. Where a study location change is required (in accordance with section **Error! Reference source not found.**), the University ~~is required to will~~ report to the Home Office informing them of the new location of studies, and the duration of the absence. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the University to withdraw sponsorship of the student's Tier 4 visa for the duration of the absence, and the student will need to make a new visa application if they return to the UK for studies. It is, therefore, important that Tier 4 students seek full advice from ~~Edinburgh Global the International Office~~ before proceeding with a leave of absence request. See section 2.4.

**Commented [HS15]:** Amendments provided by Euan Fergusson, Edinburgh Global 3/4/17

### 3.3.3 **Vacation Leave**

Students may be absent from their studies for up to six weeks of the year without applying for an interruption of study, and should notify their supervisors and the School Postgraduate Office of any such planned absences.

### 3.3.4 **Authorised Interruption of Study**

Students unable to study for a period of time can apply for an interruption to their period of study. Application for interruption of study:

- Will be made formally to the School or College postgraduate office using the appropriate request form
- Will be made in advance of the period of interruption, not in retrospect
- Will have an impact on a student's visa - advice is available from ~~the International Office~~ [Edinburgh Global](#).
- Should be accompanied by verification of need if applicable, such as a medical certificate.
- An interruption of study cannot be granted after the maximum period of study has elapsed.

**Commented [HS16]:** Amendments provided by Euan Fergusson, Edinburgh Global 3/4/17

Permitted periods of authorised interruption of study are set out in the [Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#). If the need for the interruption is sudden and unforeseen then the application must be made as soon as practical. In any case, the student will notify the supervisor as soon as the need for the interruption arises, or encounters a problem that will affect the progress of their study. An approved interruption of study postpones the date at which the student's total permitted period of study will end. Students applying for interruptions need to investigate how any alteration to their period of study will affect external conditions such as their funding, visa, or council tax arrangements. The Advice Place can [help](#) [advise students](#) on the funding and council tax implications of interruptions. Advice on the implication of interruption for a student with a Tier 4 visa is available from ~~the International Office~~ [Edinburgh Global](#).

- [Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#)
- [The Advice Place](#)
- ~~International Office~~ [Edinburgh Global](#)

### 3.3.5 Extension to the Period of Study

Students who are unable to submit their thesis within their prescribed period of study, plus any permitted submission period (see section 1.2.3) need to apply formally for an extension. The formal application will include:

- A statement outlining the academic reasons for the delay
- A plan of work towards submitting the thesis, with milestones and specific dates agreed with the supervisors.

Supervisors will monitor closely the student's plan for completion. Extensions to the period of study are exceptional and not automatic.

- Students can only request up to 12 months at a time.
- The maximum total period of extensions is 24 months.
- Students must submit their thesis within 12 months of the end of the prescribed period of study.
- If required, students must apply for extensions of study before the end of their maximum submission date (for example, within four years for a full-time PhD).

Further information on periods of study is available in the Degree Regulations:

- [DRPS Study Period Table](#)

Students applying for extensions need to investigate how any alteration to their period of study will affect external conditions such as their funding, visa, or council tax arrangements. See

- [Authorised interruption of study or extension of study – Postgraduate Research](#)

### 3.3.6 Continuation Fees

Students continuing study beyond the period for which annual fees are payable are required to pay one matriculation fee during the submission period and then a continuation fee for every authorised extension until they submit their thesis. Continuation fees are charged pro rata for the full period of an approved extension. During the prescribed period of study, the matriculation fee is included in the tuition fee.

- [University continuation fee information](#)

### 3.3.7 Withdrawal from Study

Withdrawal from studies is a voluntary decision by the student. Any student may withdraw permanently from the University at any point in the year. However, a student may not voluntarily withdraw after a College, or the University, has decided to exclude the student (see 3.3.8).

Before applying to withdraw, the student is strongly advised to consult their supervisor in order to consider the implications of withdrawal.

### 3.3.8 Exclusion from Study for Unsatisfactory Academic Performance

Candidates unable to submit the thesis by the end of the maximum period of study, or the extended maximum period of study (including concessions), will be notified by the College postgraduate committee of impending exclusion from study.

Supervisors may recommend that a student already matriculated on the PhD, MPhil, MSc by Research or a professional doctorate is excluded from study. In this case the following procedure will be followed.

1. The supervisor recommending exclusion from study will inform in writing the Head of School, or their nominee (normally the Postgraduate Director).
2. The Head of School or nominee will notify the student that exclusion from study has been recommended.
3. If the Head of School or nominee disagrees with the supervisor's recommendation for exclusion from study, they will ensure that an appropriate framework is in place to allow the candidate to continue with their studies, including the provision of any conditions, targets or deadlines that the candidate must fulfil.
4. The College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters examines the recommendations of the Head of School or nominee before deciding whether to accept the recommendation.
5. If a student has not met the criteria for progression, they will normally be invited to interview by the College committee before the decision is taken. This does not form part of any subsequent appeal process nor does it affect the student's right to submit a case for appeal.
6. If the decision to exclude from study is approved by the College, the student has the right to submit a case for appeal if they feel they have grounds. [See section 5 Academic Appeals.](#)

### 3.4 Preparing the Thesis for Submission

The student should agree with their supervisor the final form of the thesis (see section [1.2.4](#)) and a schedule of dates for completing the elements of the final thesis ready for submission. The student will check the University guidance about the format of the thesis, binding requirements and electronic formats. See the Academic Services thesis submission web page.

- [Academic Services: thesis submission](#)

#### 3.4.1 Notice of Intention to Submit

Students on doctoral and MPhil degrees should submit the thesis during the submission period, which begins three months prior to the end of the prescribed period of study. Students wishing to submit a thesis earlier than the submission period need to discuss this option with their supervisor and request permission from the College postgraduate committee before doing so.

The submission procedure begins when the student submits a Notice of Intention to Submit form to the postgraduate office no later than two months in advance of submission. The Notice of Intention to Submit form will be accompanied by an abstract of the thesis suitable for distribution to examiners or potential examiners.

### **3.5 Thesis Assessment**

#### **3.5.1 Appointment of Examiners**

Each student is assessed by at least one External Examiner and one Internal Examiner. In the case of an interdisciplinary topic and on the advice of the supervisors, the College postgraduate committee may appoint a second external examiner.

The choice of examiners will take into account:

- Their expertise in the discipline of the thesis
- Their ability to provide an impartial assessment of the submitted work
- Their availability to examine the thesis.

Regulations for appointment of examiners are set out in the [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

#### **3.5.2 Assessment of Students who are also Members of Staff**

Regulations for assessment of members of staff candidates are set out in the [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

#### **3.5.3 Appointment of a Chair for the Oral Examination**

The School will nominate the chair the oral examination. This will be the Internal Examiner unless a Non-Examining Chair has been appointed. The regulations governing appointment of Non-Examining Chairs are set out in the [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

#### **3.5.4 Date of the Oral Examination**

The oral examination will normally be held within three months of thesis submission. The date of the oral examination depends on:

- The date the Notice of Intention to Submit is presented to the School or College postgraduate office
- The date the thesis is submitted by the student
- The time it takes to select and appoint examiners
- The period the examiners require to examine the thesis
- The availability of all parties to meet for the oral examination, including any visa restrictions on the student's availability.

#### **3.5.5 The Submitted Thesis**

The student is responsible for producing the thesis in the time allotted and to the required quality. The thesis will:

- Be the student's own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised clearly on the declarations page of the thesis
- Make an original and significant contribution to knowledge in the field of study
- Contain material suitable for wider dissemination
- Show adequate knowledge of the field of study and of the relevant literature
- Demonstrate critical judgement of the candidate's own work and that of other scholars in the field

- Present a coherent body of work.

Written aspects of the thesis will:

- Be satisfactory in literary presentation
- Include full and adequate references
- Present a coherent structure
- Make clear the intentions of the work, its background, methods and conclusions
- Be understandable to a scholar in the same field.

### **3.5.6 Responsibility for the Outcome of the Assessment**

The thesis is the student's own work and the student is responsible for its eventual quality as assessed by the examiners. Approval by the supervisors is not a guarantee of a favourable assessment outcome. If the supervisors have any concerns about the quality of the thesis then they need to communicate this, in writing, to the student as soon as possible prior to the proposed submission date. Such advice may also include recommending to the College postgraduate committee that the student be re-registered for a different degree and the thesis is submitted for a different degree, for example an MPhil is submitted for examination as a PhD, or a PhD is submitted for examination as an MPhil.

### **3.5.7 Assessment Criteria**

The criteria for assessment of research theses, the procedure governing the examination and the recommendations open to examiners are described in the regulations.

- [Degree Programme Regulations](#)
- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

The examiners are asked to assess the thesis in terms of the grounds for the award of degree set out in the regulations. Examiners will arrive at their own assessment even if parts of the work have already been peer reviewed for publication. The purpose of the assessment is to allow the examiners to establish that the thesis is satisfactory. As part of their written report, examiners will be asked:

- Is the thesis an original work that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of knowledge?
- Does the thesis contain material worthy of publication?
- Does the thesis demonstrate adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature?
- Does the thesis show the exercise of critical judgement with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field?
- Is the presentation and style of the thesis satisfactory?

Examiners will also be asked if they think the student needs to make any corrections, amendments or major revisions to the thesis.

### **3.5.8 Length of the Thesis**

The Postgraduate Degree Regulations specify the maximum length of the written thesis. The maximum length applies to the length of the body of the thesis. This body includes the main text, preface material, footnotes and references, but does not include material in any appendices, bibliography, abstract or lay summary (see section 3.7.3). Note that any appendices are examined at the discretion of the examiners. If a longer thesis is required for adequate treatment of the thesis topic, the supervisor will seek the approval of the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters prior to submission.

[Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#)

### **3.5.9 The Thesis and Joint Publications**

Candidates are encouraged to publish their research during their candidature, and provision is made for articles and papers to be bound in the thesis. Where the thesis includes the results of team working the thesis will be more than a compendium of jointly authored articles, and will include information that makes it possible for the examiners to track the individual work of the candidate. Where the thesis includes collaborative publications this must be made clear in the thesis and stated on the signed declaration (section 3.7.3):

- The candidate's role in any joint work.
- The nature of team involvement in any experimental procedures
- How the team involvement facilitated the findings of the research.

### **3.5.10 Portfolio Material**

The Postgraduate Degree Regulations and programme handbook specify any further requirements for designs, composition, artworks, or performances and their display, presentation and documentation.

Where the body of the thesis is to consist in whole or in part of a portfolio of conference, workshop or journal publications or published book chapters (submitted for review, in press or in the public domain) then the thesis will demonstrate coherence by

- The choice and ordering of the publications in the thesis
- An introduction to the compilation, including a discussion of the relevance of any included publications to the whole thesis, and an explanation of any repetition of content across the publications
- In addition to any conclusion to and summary of the thesis, a conclusion to the compilation that ties together the themes of the publications with any other material within the thesis
- An introduction preceding each publication that explains the context, and any co-author or team contributions
- A single concluding alphabetically ordered reference list.

### **3.5.11 Supplementary Material**

A candidate may wish to provide additional data or presentation material in electronic form. This electronic material may help the examiners to understand and assess the thesis. Electronic material may be provided as a file upload in the case of electronic submission, or on portable media included with the

printed thesis. Such material will supplement the thesis and the examiners may choose to take it into account in their assessment.

### 3.5.12 Lay Summary

The lay summary is intended to facilitate knowledge exchange, public awareness and outreach. It should be written in simple, non-technical terms that are easily understandable by a lay audience, who may be non-professional, non-scientific and outside the research area. The lay summary is included with the thesis submitted for assessment, although it is not assessed by the examiners, but can be discussed with the supervisor at any stage prior to the final thesis being lodged with the Edinburgh Research Archive. The lay summary is to be produced in a standard format. After examination the candidate will need to provide a lay summary in the final thesis. -

- [Lay summary form](#)
- [Lay summary guidance](#)

## 3.6 The Assessment Process

The thesis is assessed by the examiners and an oral examination is held for doctoral and MPhil degrees. ~~MSc by Research dissertations are assessed without an oral examination.~~

Commented [HS17]: AB advised delete

The examiners provide an initial report to the College before oral examination and deliver their assessment and recommendations to the College postgraduate board after the oral examination. The College postgraduate board takes the final decision on the degree award.

### 3.6.1 Supervisor Presence at the Oral Examination

Supervisors may attend the oral examination as observers, if the student and examiners consent to this. On such occasions supervisors:

- may take notes
- will not comment during the examination
- will leave the examination room with the student
- will not participate in the discussion and decision of the examiners
- will absent themselves at any stage if the student requests this.

### 3.6.2 Organisation of the Oral Examination

An oral examination will be held to assess a student's PhD or MPhil thesis. Arrangements for the oral examination are the responsibility of the Internal Examiner, who also chairs the meeting of the examiners unless a Non-Examining Chair is appointed. These arrangements, including the date and place of the oral examination and the names of all participants, will be provided in advance to all those who are to be present. Students staying overseas must be prepared to return to the UK for the examination, unless other arrangements are made as outlined in section **3.6.3**.

### 3.6.3 Examination away from Edinburgh

- The normal expectation is that the oral examination will be held in Edinburgh. However, in exceptional circumstances arrangements can be made for remote assessment by video link, which may be at a meeting venue outside of the UK.

This requires agreement from the College postgraduate committee or board, the student, all examiners and any Non-Examining Chair.

- [Guidance on video linked viva examinations](#)

#### **3.6.4 Examiner Preparation**

The College is responsible for ensuring that the Internal Examiner and Non-Examining Chair are suitably prepared for the examination, that is:

- training is available to inexperienced internal examiners and chairs
- they are aware of their duties in the examination process
- they are familiar with the University's regulations
- they are familiar with the range of recommendations available to the examiners after the oral examination.

#### **3.6.5 Examiner Recommendations**

The examiners may recommend that the thesis pass without amendment or further work. In this case the candidate may not make further alteration to the thesis.

The examiners may specify minor corrections, to be completed without further supervision or further research, or more substantial further work requiring supervision. The examiners will also be required to specify the time frame in which further work is to be completed. Any corrections required by the examiners to publications that are already in the public domain, will be indicated via corrections and revisions to the introductions and conclusions in the body of the thesis. In the case of a portfolio component to the thesis, examiners may also request that publications be removed from the thesis or replaced with alternative material.

Alternatively, the examiners may recommend the award of, or resubmission for, a different degree or a fail. Full details of examiner recommendations are available in the assessment regulations:

- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)
- [Guidance on Including Publications in Postgraduate Research Theses](#)

#### **3.6.6 Notification of Examiner Recommendations**

The examiners may tell the candidate what their views are at the end of or after the oral examination, and they will make clear that their view is a recommendation to the College committee and not a final decision. After inspecting the examiners' reports the committee reserves the right to modify or change the examiners' recommendation.

### **3.7 After the Examination**

#### **3.7.1 Revisions to the Thesis**

The supervisor's role may continue after the examination. If minor corrections are required or the student needs to correct deficiencies in the thesis then these will be communicated to the candidate and to the supervisor. The supervisor will confirm the necessary revisions with the candidate. The examiners' joint report will be made available to the candidate and their supervisor for further guidance on the general quality of the thesis and level of the candidate's

knowledge. The revised thesis is then checked by the Internal Examiner. The External Examiner may also ask to check the corrections..

### 3.7.2 Thesis Resubmission

The examiners may recommend resubmission for the same, or a different, degree after a further period of study under supervision. The thesis will normally be re-examined by the original examiners, and a second oral examination may be held.

The supervisor should offer guidance to the candidate on the steps necessary to meet the requirements expressed by the examiners and will provide further supervision as appropriate. If resubmission is required:

- The candidate will be given a clear written statement prepared by the examiners and approved by the relevant College committee of the aspects that require revision.
- The resubmitted thesis may be assessed only against this written statement on re-examination, and the examiners will not introduce new criticisms of previously examined material.
- The written statement of the aspects of the thesis that require revision cannot subsequently be altered without the agreement of that committee.

If the College committee fails the thesis then the candidate will be provided with a written statement explaining the decision. In these circumstances the supervisor will discuss the outcome with the student. The College Postgraduate Dean is also available to talk with the student if requested.

- [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

### 3.7.3 Final Submission of the Assessed Thesis

At the end of the assessment process all successful doctoral and MPhil candidates are required to submit the final version of their thesis to the University in electronic form in addition to one hardbound copy. From March 2017, the Library will prefer online submission of the PDF instead of handing in a CD with the hardbound copy. Hardbound copies should conform to the [Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis](#):

- [How to submit the final version of your PhD thesis](#)

Candidates should therefore hand in the following to their College postgraduate office:

- i. One hardbound version of the thesis conforming to the Regulatory Standards, including
  - a. a signed declaration
  - b. one completed 'Access to Thesis' form (see below), which can be downloaded from the Academic Services website
  - c. any supplementary data required for assessment. Datasets should be supported by good accompanying documentation which is appropriate to the subject discipline. The UK Data Archive (UKDA) offers some specialist advice in this area.
  - d. a lay summary of the thesis (see section 3.5.12)
  - e. one copy of the abstract
- ii. An electronic version including

- a. a PDF version (for uploading to the Edinburgh Research Archive)
- b. the original document source files (where possible) for digital preservation purposes
- c. a completed thesis note indicating whether or not the candidate wishes to take up the option of restricting access to the electronic version of the thesis for a limited one year period. The form can be downloaded from the University's Academic Services website.

**3.7.4 Online Access to the Thesis**

Candidates should discuss with their supervisor the implications of publishing the thesis online in the Edinburgh Research Archive (ERA). The student can restrict access to the thesis or parts of the thesis if

- the thesis contains confidential or sensitive data
- the candidate intends to publish the whole thesis or extracts from it.

The candidate can restrict access to the electronic version of the thesis as indicated above in section 3.7.3. If the candidate wishes the electronic embargo to be longer than one year then this must be negotiated with the ERA administrators. ERA will release an embargoed thesis for download at the end of the restriction period.

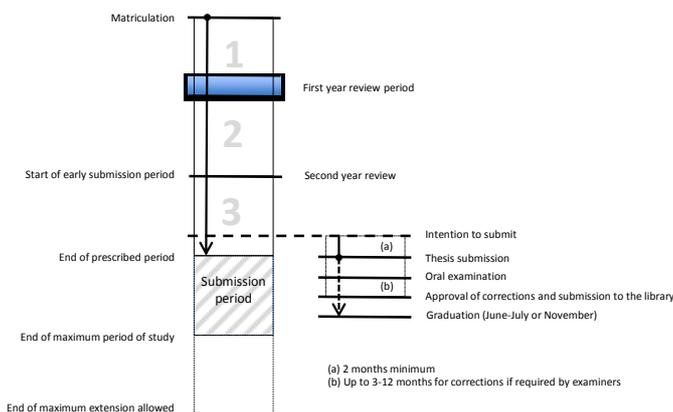
**3.7.5 Graduation**

Degree awards are conferred at graduation. Information about graduation ceremonies and how to apply to attend is available on the University website.

- [Graduations](#)

**3.7.6 Progress of a Typical Full Time PhD**

Figure 1: Progress of a typical PhD



**Figure 1.** Diagram showing the progress of a typical full time PhD candidature with milestones, and prior to the inclusion of any periods of interrupted study or extensions. Note that prescribed period of study is reduced to two years for a full time MPhil and one year for an MSc by

Research. ~~MSc by Research students do not undergo a progression review and may not provide an intention to submit form.~~ Part-time MPhil and PhD candidates are required to undergo a progression review in their first year even though their prescribed period of study is longer than for full time candidates. See section **3.2.1**.

Commented [HS18]: AB advised delete

## 4 Resolving problems

### 4.1 Personal Concerns

Students are encouraged to bring any concerns, including those of a social or medical nature, to the attention of supervisors especially if the problem is interfering with the student's work. Supervisors will be able to advise on special circumstances (see 4.2 below) and how to apply for concessions if appropriate. Supervisors will also respect any student's request for such concerns to be treated confidentially. Schools may provide postgraduate advisers as well as supervisors who can discuss any concerns. School support staff also provide contact points for advice on available support services.

### 4.2 Special Circumstances

Special circumstances are circumstances beyond a student's control which are exceptional for the individual student, are beyond that student's control and for which there is sufficient evidence to show that they had a significant adverse impact on research performance, attendance or assessment submissions. For example, significant short-term illness, or bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship, can be examples of special circumstances.

Students whose circumstances are affecting their ability to engage with their studies should discuss them with their Principal Supervisor in the first instance.

For postgraduate research students, students with special circumstances that are disrupting their studies can be supported by being offered authorised interruption or extension of study. However, there may be occasions when personal circumstances have an impact on assessment, such as annual progression review meetings or the oral examination. In these circumstances, it may be possible either to reschedule the progression review meeting or oral examination, or to make some adjustments to the format of the meeting. It may also be appropriate for the College Postgraduate Committee or Board to take account to these circumstances when considering the recommendations from a progression review or oral examination. Students should notify their Principal Supervisor, Postgraduate Director or Postgraduate Adviser in writing of any special circumstance before the meeting of the examiners or College Committee or Board meeting.

Examples of circumstances that might have a significant impact include:

- physical illness or injury;
- mental ill-health or similar illness;
- bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship;
- a long-term relationship breakdown, such as a marriage.

Examples of circumstances that are unlikely to be accepted include:

- pressure of academic work;

- employment commitments;
- a short-term, self-certificated illness, such as a common cold.

For taught components undertaken by postgraduate research students, the University's Special Circumstances Policy applies.

- [Special Circumstances Policy](#)

#### 4.3 Working Relationships and Dignity and Respect

Most interpersonal problems will be avoided if the student, supervisors, and other members of the University community contribute responsibly and professionally to their working relationship by being respectful, courteous, punctual and conscientious.

The University seeks to provide equal opportunities for its students and staff. Respect, trust, confidence and fairness are essential elements in the relationship between supervisor and student. The Dignity and Respect policy promotes a positive culture for working and studying to which every student and member of staff contributes and within which they are able to fulfil their potential. Breaches of the policy include, but are not limited to, harassment, bullying, discrimination and inappropriate remarks or behaviour, and all University staff and students will observe the obligations outline in the policy.

- [Dignity and Respect Policy](#)

#### 4.4 Decisions of the University Committees

If a student wishes to contest a decision of the College committee then as well as discussing the matter with their supervisors they may consult with the committee Convener (usually the College Postgraduate Dean) or Secretary. The Advice Place can also be approached at any stage to offer independent guidance and advice. (See also [section 5 Academic Appeals](#).)

#### 4.5 Recording Problems with Progress

Supervisors are required to provide constructive criticism about the student's work. Honest discussion can reduce conflict or prevent it arising. Supervisors and students are required to keep a record of their key meetings (see section [3.1.1](#)). A supervisor who thinks that progress has been consistently unsatisfactory should notify the student in writing after discussing the problem with them. Unsatisfactory progress will also be noted in annual reports, and flagged for remedial action.

#### 4.6 The Supervisor-Student Relationship

If for any reason students feel unable to confide in their supervisors they should approach the Postgraduate Adviser in their subject area, or the School's Postgraduate Director. ~~If the problem is not able to be resolved, the student or supervisor may then consult with the Secretary or Chair of the College committee. As long as they have explored these avenues the student may consult with the Secretary or Chair of the College committee.~~ University staff will treat such information as confidential and will limit disclosures to as few

colleagues as necessary to resolve the problem. Such avenues are also appropriate when the supervisor-student relationship seems to have broken down or needs to be amended (for example if the supervisor changes institution). ~~In the event of problems, supervisors may also approach the Secretary or Chair of the College committee.~~

Where the supervisor-student relationship seems to have broken down and problems are not able to be resolved locally, both the supervisor and the student must consider mediation. Mediation is a voluntary process, however the University will always seek to resolve conflict in a positive way and therefore will require the parties who are in conflict to give informed consideration to mediation as a means of resolving the conflict. Schools can request mediation from the College who can contact the University's accredited mediator in Human Resources for advice.

Commented [HS19]: Content provided by Douglas Gillespie and agreed at REC 15/11/16

#### 4.7 Complaints

The University aims to ensure that its teaching and support services provide positive experiences and opportunities for students. The University has a procedure for considering complaints and recognises that it can learn from them, enabling it to improve the quality of the student experience, and the quality and effectiveness of its services. Students are encouraged to try and resolve problems as early as possible and with assistance from appropriate staff. See

- [Complaint Procedure](#)
- [Students' Association support and advice on complaints](#)

### 5 Student Appeals

The Student Appeal Regulations apply to student appeals against academic decisions; appeals against exclusion; appeals against decision of Fitness to Practise Panels; and appeals against decisions under the Code of Student Conduct.

Students may not use an appeal to challenge academic judgment. The fact that a student believes that they deserve a different outcome cannot constitute a ground for appeal.

- [Student Appeal Regulations](#)

#### 5.1 Grounds for Appeal

There are three formal grounds under which a postgraduate research student may submit an appeal. These are

- Ground A: Substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the examination which for good reason was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken.
- Ground B: Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination. For this purpose conduct of an examination includes the conduct of a meeting of the Board of Examiners.

- Ground C: Evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence in the examination on the part of any of the examiners (for academic appeals only).

### 5.2 Role of the Supervisor in an Appeal Case

The supervisor's pastoral role continues after an appeal has been lodged, even though the appeal might question the quality of supervision. The supervisor will decide, after taking appropriate advice, whether to assist the student in formulating the case for an appeal. If a full hearing of the appeal is to take place then the Appeal Committee may request the supervisor's written comments in advance of the hearing, and supervisors will usually be invited to give evidence at the hearing.

### 5.3 Submitting an Appeal

Students considering an appeal should contact an Academic Adviser at the Students' Association Advice Place for independent advice.

- [Advice Place support on appeals](#)

Appeals should be submitted in writing, with the application form available on the Academic Services website, to [academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk). Further information on the University appeal procedure and details of the University Student Appeal Regulations are available on Academic Services' website.

- [Academic appeals](#)

## 6 Student Conduct

Matriculation is the process by which students are formally admitted to the University of Edinburgh. By matriculating, students are automatically subject to the University's Code of Student Conduct. The Code states the University's expectations for student conduct, outlines examples of misconduct offences and states how the University will handle such offences. The University expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in their day to day activities, including in their dealings with other students, staff and external organisations. Students are expected to comply with University policies and regulations. In the unlikely event of students being subject to disciplinary procedures, advice is available from the Advice Place. There are detailed regulations governing University examinations, libraries, the use of computing facilities, the use of automatically processed personal data (in connection with academic work), academic misconduct, fitness to practise in a particular profession and University managed accommodation. In the unlikely event of students being subject to University disciplinary procedures, advice is available from The Advice Place. The University's Code of Student Conduct is available on Academic Services' website:

- [The Advice Place](#)

The Code of Student Conduct is available on the Academic Services' website:

- [Student Conduct](#)

Commented [HS20]: Content provided by Ailsa Taylor

## 7 Plagiarism and Cheating

As outlined in section 3.5.5, a thesis must be the student's own work, except where clearly stated, and make an original and significant contribution to knowledge. Also see section 3.1.2 on research ethics and integrity. Plagiarism and cheating are counter to this ethos, and are offences against University discipline.

Further information about academic misconduct (which includes plagiarism and cheating) can be found at

~~The full text of the University's regulations on academic misconduct, and specific guidance on plagiarism for research students and supervisors can be found at Academic Misconduct~~

- [Advice Place support on plagiarism and academic misconduct](#)

## 8 **Edinburgh University Students' Association**

Edinburgh University Students' Association is run by students, for students. All students are automatically members, and the Students' Association is the body which represents all students at the University and provides a wide array of number of valuable services, activities and support mechanisms which are confidential and independent of the University. As a postgraduate research student, you have a lot you can contribute to and gain from the Students' Association so we encourage all students to get involved. You can visit the Students' Association cafes, shops, bars, and social spaces and you can also join societies and volunteering groups, and you can play your part in shaping the university experience for yourself and your colleagues by voting in the elections and working with (or becoming) a student representative.

If you have any questions – big or small – about University processes and procedures or about student life and welfare more broadly, you can visit or contact the Advice Place. If you have been experiencing specific difficulties during your studies which you are not sure how to address, or you have not been able to resolve these issues to your satisfaction, you can contact the Advice Place can help. Their service is free and their professional, experienced staff will be able to advise you on University procedures, practices and ways of resolving difficulties as well as accompanying you to meetings and acting as your advocate should this be required. For full details on the range of advice on offer, which includes emergency loans, funding and tenancy advice visit:

- [The Advice Place](#)

If you wish to raise specific policy or school issues related to your student experience, you can do this via your Postgraduate School Representative, your university-wide Postgraduate Research Representative, or the student Sabbatical Officers school postgraduate representative. For their details of your representative please contact your School Postgraduate Director or Students' Association. The Association Sabbatical Officers and postgraduate representatives also represent students on many University committees. Get in touch on visit: [postgrad@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:postgrad@eusa.ed.ac.uk).

Commented [HS21]: Amendments provided by Students' Association 12/5/17

- [The Students' Association Elected Representatives](#)

Find out more about everything your Students' Association has to offer in your postgraduate guide or at [eusa.ed.ac.uk](http://eusa.ed.ac.uk)

## 9 Appendices

### 9.1 Appendix I: Health and Safety

The University has a duty, so far as reasonably practicable, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and students while at work, and the safety of all authorised visitors and members of the public entering the precincts of the University. The University Health and Safety Policy is issued upon the authority of the University Court and contains the Health and Safety Policy statement and summary of the organisation and arrangements of health and safety within the University. The successful implementation of the University Policy requires the support and co-operation of all employees and students - no person shall intentionally interfere with, or misuse anything provided by the University in the interest of health, safety or welfare.

#### The University Health and Safety Policy

The University Health and Safety Policy is supported by a Framework document published in two parts on the Organisation and Arrangements of health and safety within the University. Individuals are required to comply with any procedures or arrangements formulated under the authority of this Policy. Any questions or problems about matters of health and safety can be taken up initially with the School Safety Adviser. Further guidance on health and safety matters can be found on the Health and Safety Department website at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety> including contact details for all professional staff within the corporate Health and Safety Department.

### 9.2 Appendix II: Privacy of Personal Data

The Data Protection Act regulates the use of personal data. Personal data includes all recorded information about a living, identifiable individual. Students using personal data as part of their studies must comply with the responsibilities as outlined in the linked guidance. Before using personal data as part of their studies students must become familiar with the linked guidance, discuss implications with their supervisor and seek appropriate written approval. Failure to comply with the responsibilities is an offence against University discipline, and could lead to a breach of the Data Protection Act. A data protection breach can cause distress to the people the information is about, and can harm relationships with research partners, stakeholders, and funding organisations. In severe circumstances the University could be sued, fined up to £500,000, and experience reputational damage.

### **9.3 Appendix III: University Policies, Regulations and Links to other Useful Information**

[Assessment Regulations](#)

[Authorised interruption of study or extension of study – Postgraduate Research](#)

[Complaint Procedure](#)

[Computing Regulations](#)

[Conduct, Student Code](#)

[Contacting Students by Email Policy](#)

[Data Protection - Use of Personal Data by Students](#)

[Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#)

[Dignity & Respect Policy](#)

[Disclosure of Information about Students - Guidelines](#)

[Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

**[Available from the Students' Association:](#)**

Edinburgh University Students' Association, *Postgraduate Guide*

A range of guides about welfare and other issues are available from the Advice Place:

- [The Advice Place - Guides](#)

[Glossary of Terms](#)

[Including Publications in Postgraduate Research Theses, Guidance](#)

[Lay summary guidance](#)

[Library Regulations](#)

[Mental Health, Student - Code of Practice](#)

[New students' website](#)

[Plagiarism guidelines](#)

[PGR Annual Review Form software help \(PGR Supervisors\)](#)

[Research - Code of Practice](#)

[No Smoking - University Policy](#)

[Social Media, University Guidelines](#)

[Student Appeal Regulations](#)

[Student Information Pages](#)

[Video linked viva examinations, Guidance](#)

#### **9.4 Appendix IV: Summary of Responsibilities**

This section sets out the responsibilities of each of the three parties contributing to the education and training of a postgraduate research student. These are the student themselves, the student's supervisor(s) and the University.

##### **9.4.1 The Student**

1. Upholds the standards of professional behaviour expected of all University members.
2. Conforms to the conditions of their funding and the regulations of the University.
3. Takes charge of and dedicates themselves to their own development and completion of their degree.
4. Makes the best efforts to achieve agreed goals and timetable.
5. Acknowledges their sources of funding and the work of others in all publications and presentations.
6. Shows respect to all University members, whether students, academic staff, administration or support.
7. Respects the intellectual property that belongs to others.
8. Keeps supervisor and University informed of absences and issues that affect the student's ability to progress.
9. Keeps the University and supervisor informed about contact details.
10. Lets the University know of issues that affect the safety, well-being and performance of other University members.

##### **9.4.2 The Supervisor**

1. Upholds the standards of professional behaviour expected of all University members.
2. Provides advice that is in the best interests of the student and their training, ability to progress and career development.
3. Ensures that the student has all agreed resources needed for their training.
4. Respects the student as a part of the University community.
5. Respects the intellectual property that belongs to the student.
6. Meets regularly with the student.
7. Provides prompt feedback on the student's work.

8. Keeps the University informed about issues that affect the student.

**9.4.3 The University, including Schools, Centres and Institutes where the student is based**

1. Ensures appropriate supervision and training arrangements, including independent pastoral care.
2. Provides all agreed resources, including workspaces, equipment, supplies, supervision, training opportunities.
3. Provides a high-quality and safe researcher training experience for the student.
4. Ensures prompt and fair assessment of the student's work, including progression reports and thesis.
5. Ensures that the student receives periodic (for example at least annually) review and feedback on progress.
6. Ensures that academic standards of behaviour and performance are upheld.
7. Keeps the student informed about issues that affect the student's ability to progress.
8. Treats the student courteously and fairly irrespective of gender, age, race, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, year of study.
9. Involves student representatives in decision-making situations that affect students.
10. Provides accurate information about the degree programme, the student's matriculation, performance, and assessment status.
11. Provides student support resources, including counselling, advice, career, academic and transferable skills. The provision of student support services will differ for distance students.
12. Provides access to the University cultural, social, and sporting facilities and opportunities. Access to facilities and campus-based opportunities will differ for distance students.
13. Provides the administrative support needed for smooth delivery of the student's training.
14. Provides complaints and appeal mechanisms.

REC: 23.05.17  
H/02/26/02

# REC 16/17 5G

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

23 May 2017

## Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

### Executive Summary

The paper comprises the terms of reference of the Researcher Experience Committee and includes some amendments to the "Composition" section. Changes are consistent with other Senate committee terms of reference and clarify membership from University business units (see 5.5 and 5.7). The terms of reference currently state that early career researcher membership will be nominated by Colleges (see 5.9).

Colleges are currently considering nominations for co-opted membership to include a Director of a Centre for Doctoral Training, Head of Graduate School, PhD Adviser, School and College administration (see 5.10).

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

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan objectives of Leadership in Learning and Leadership in Research.

### Action requested

REC is invited to approve the suggested amendments for submission to Senate for final approval.

### How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Action related to membership will be implemented and communicated by the Convener and Academic Services.

### Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**  
Staff resources, including members time to attend meetings and carry out committee business is expected to be met within existing resources.
2. **Risk assessment**  
No risk assessment is included in the paper, however it is important that appropriate membership is identified to allow the committee to conduct its business effectively.
3. **Equality and Diversity**  
No major equality impacts are anticipated and having appropriate committee membership is expected to support consideration of equality and diversity issues.
4. **Freedom of information**  
The paper is **open**.

### Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Services  
23 March 2017

**The University of Edinburgh  
Senatus Researcher Experience Committee  
Terms of Reference**

**1. Purpose and Role**

- 1.1 The Researcher Experience Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senatus, for postgraduate research degree training, higher degrees and provision for the training of other, early career researchers.
- 1.2 The Committee provides a forum to facilitate and encourage the development of appropriate strategy and also discusses and promotes relevant developments, whether internally driven or externally indicated.

**2. Remit**

The remit of the Researcher Experience Committee is to:

- 2.1 Discuss, formulate and promote strategic initiatives which enhance the Postgraduate Research student experience and the early researcher experience and which contribute to and support attainment of the University's objectives.
- 2.2 Offer strategic advice on the University's provision of postgraduate research programmes in order to support continued growth and development.
- 2.3 Support the creation and development of a high level research skills and employability training framework.
- 2.4 Promote and promulgate specific innovations, embracing new pedagogies and technologies, in support of the enhancement of the research experience.
- 2.5 Approve any specific developments or initiatives which could have substantial implications for University strategy or policy or for University level services and/or operations.
- 2.6 Proactively engage with any high level issues or themes arising from the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, the International Student Barometer, the Careers in Research Online Survey and other relevant internal and external satisfaction surveys, including outcomes from REF and internal Postgraduate Programme Reviews.
- 2.7 Engage in horizon scanning to anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in postgraduate research student education and the early career researcher experience.
- 2.8 Proactively and positively respond to any changes, initiatives and developments in the external environment which relate to postgraduate research student education and/or the training of early career researchers.

**3. Governance**

- 3.1 The Committee will act with authority, as delegated by the Senatus, in order to take decisions in the area of postgraduate research student education and support and training for early career researchers.
- 3.2 In taking forward its remit, the Committee will support and encourage diversity and variation where this is beneficial, whilst seeking consistency and common approaches, where these are in the best interests of staff and students.

- 3.3 The Committee shall report direct to the Senatus as necessary, but at least annually.
- 3.4 The Committee shall liaise with relevant Court Committees and with specific managers and offices in respect of issues or instances where matters of academic policy intersect with management issues. The Committee will specifically interact with the University Staff Committee and the Human Resources Department in areas of relevance.
- 3.5 The Committee shall identify and agree the ways in which it will periodically interact and exchange information with relevant University services in matters relating to the early researcher experience.

#### **4. Operation**

- 4.1 The Committee will meet at least four times per annum. The Committee will also interact electronically, as is necessary for its business to be effectively progressed.
- 4.2 The Committee may also meet electronically to note formal items or items which are not considered to be of strategic importance.
- 4.3 The Committee will follow a strategic agenda which is set prior to the start of the Academic Year and which is agreed through consultation with Senatus, the Convenors of the other Senatus Committees, and other relevant members of the University community.
- 4.4 It is expected that limited life Task Groups will be critical to the detailed examination of, and consultation on, the strategic issues which make up the majority of the Committee's work.
- 4.5 Task Groups will be given a clear brief and will consult as appropriate during their work in order to ensure the confidence of the Committee, the Senatus, and the wider University Community in the resulting conclusions and recommendations.
- 4.6 Information on Task Group activities will be made available electronically to ensure that members of the University Community are kept informed and can contribute to specific developments.
- 4.7 Agenda, papers and approved minutes will be published on the University's web pages in accordance with the University's agreed publication scheme and the status of the above listed in respect of freedom of information legislation. This will include details of the membership of the Committee.

#### **5. Composition**

- 5.1 The Committee shall be convened by the Assistant Principal Researcher Development.
- 5.2 At its first meeting the Committee shall identify a Vice-Convenor for the Committee from amongst its membership. The Vice-Convenor should serve for a period of at least one year.
- 5.3 The Colleges shall each nominate a senior member of staff within the College who has responsibility for postgraduate research students.
- 5.4 The Edinburgh University Students' Association shall nominate an appropriate Research Postgraduate Student Representative and an appropriate member of permanent staff who shall be an ex officio member.
- 5.5 The Director of the Institute for Academic Development or his/her nominee shall be an ex officio member of the Committee~~The Head of Researcher Development, Institute for Academic Development shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee.~~

- 5.6 The University Secretary or his/her representative shall be an ex officio member of the Committee. The University Secretary or his/her representative shall also identify a member of staff from Academic Services to act as the expert academic governance member of the Committee.
- 5.7 The Director of Human Resources or his/her nominee shall be an ex officio member of the Committee.
- 5.8 The Colleges shall each nominate a Postgraduate Research Student member.
- 5.9 The Colleges shall each nominate an Early Career Researcher Representative.
- 5.10 Up to 5 additional members may be co-opted onto the Committee by the Convenor depending on the expertise required. Co-opted members will normally serve a three year term.
- 5.11 The Convenor may invite individuals by invitation for specific meetings or agenda items.
- 5.12 Substitutions of members (due to an inability to attend) shall be at the discretion of the Convenor of the Committee.
- 5.13 The University Secretary will be responsible for ensuring the provision of secretariat support for the Committee.
- 5.14 The Convenors of the other Senatus Committees shall receive papers for the Committee and can attend any of the meetings.

## **6. Responsibilities and Expectations of Committee Members**

All members of the Committee:

- 6.1 Are expected to be collegial and constructive in approach.
- 6.2 Should attend regularly and participate fully in the work of the Committee and its Task Groups. This will involve looking ahead and consulting/gathering input in order to provide the broad spectrum of thoughts and opinions which are necessary for proper consideration of the area being discussed.
- 6.3 Will need to take collective and individual ownership for the issues under the Committee's remit and for the discussion and resolution of these issues. In taking ownership of the work of the Committee, members must take steps to ensure that they are empowered to take decisions on behalf of academic and managerial colleagues.
- 6.4 Are expected to be committed to communicating the work of the Committee to the wider University Community.

Version ~~78~~, ~~423~~ May 20147  
Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer  
Academic Services

## REC membership 2017/18

Professor Jeremy Bradshaw	Assistant Principal Researcher Development (Convener)		5.1
Professor Neil Mulholland	Dean of Postgraduate Studies, CAHSS (College representative)		5.3
Dr Patrick Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Researcher Experience, CMVM (College representative)		5.3
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Students, CSE (College representative)		5.3
TBC	Postgraduate Research Student representative, Edinburgh University Students' Association		5.4
Ms Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka	Edinburgh University Students' Association Staff PGR Representative	ex officio	5.4
Dr Fiona Philippi	Head of Doctoral Education, IAD	ex officio	5.5
Ms Nichola Kett	University Secretary's/Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services		5.6
Ms Zoe Lewandowski	Director, Human Resources	ex officio	5.7

TBC	College Postgraduate Research Student representative(s)		5.8
TBC	College Early Career Researcher representative(s)		5.9
Vacancy	Co-opted member	(September 2017 – August 2020)	5.10
Vacancy	Co-opted member		5.10
Vacancy	Co-opted member		5.10
Vacancy	Co-opted member		5.10
Vacancy	Co-opted member		5.10

REC: 23.05.17

H/02/26/02

# REC 16/17 5H

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

23 May 2017

## **Knowledge Strategy Committee Report (24 March 2017)**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper provides a report of the Knowledge Strategy Committee meeting held on 24 March 2017.

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

University mission, 'providing the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning'; strategic objective, 'leadership in learning'; development theme, 'digital transformation and data'.

### **Action requested**

For information

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Paper provided for information

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**  
Paper provided for information
- 2. Risk assessment**  
Paper provided for information
- 3. Equality and Diversity**  
Paper provided for information
- 4. Freedom of information**  
This paper is **open**

### **Originator of the paper**

Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services

**KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE REPORT****24 March 2017****1 Initial Draft Information Services Group Plan 2017/20**

An overview of the initial draft Information Services Group plan for the period 2017/20 was reviewed. The context of the University planning round was discussed, with prioritisation of the additional Information Services funding requests important in ensuring overall affordability for the University. Members suggested that the distance learning at scale funding request should closely involve Colleges from an early stage, use the University's research quality as a differentiator to attract students and improve course delivery for both students and academics compared to existing smaller scale courses.

**2 Network Replacement Programme**

The Director of the IT Infrastructure Division presented a summary of the outcome of the IT Infrastructure review project, with an additional £4M (£9.5M in total) of capital investment sought through the University's Planning Round given the larger than initially expected level of equipment replacement and need to restructure some areas of the network. The Planning Round submission was endorsed.

**3 Digital Preservation Policy**

A Digital Preservation Policy to aid in managing and preserving digital records that the University aims to retain on a long term basis as a corporate memory and archive was approved. It was noted that no additional funding is requested to implement the policy.

**4 Information Services Group Key Performance Indicators**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Information Services Group were reviewed, encompassing: quality, learning and teaching, staffing and space utilisation, public engagement, and national and international digital research services measures. It was noted that KPIs without targets set at present would have targets set shortly. The Committee discussed moving from KPIs that are measures of activity to more meaningful strategic performance measures and benchmarking the performance of the library with comparator institutions.

**5 Joint item:****i) Core Systems Strategy Programme – Terms of Reference****ii) Digital Transformation Governance Board**

The proposed terms of reference for the Core Systems Strategy Programme Board and for the Digital Transformation Governance Board were noted. Improving academic representation on the boards was discussed, with the Chief Information Officer and Assistant Principal Online Learning to consider approaching individuals.