Faculty of Social Sciences & Law

Postgraduate Student Handbook for Research Students

2020/21
This Handbook relates to the session 2020/21 and does not commit the University in respect of subsequent sessions.

You are advised to keep this handbook during your postgraduate studies for your information.

Please also consult:

*The University Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes:*
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/cop-research-degrees.html

and

*The University Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Degree Programmes:*
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome from the Dean</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Faculty</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Officers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Contact details</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation and Committees</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Representation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Committees</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Committees</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Registration</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Matters</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities and Supervision</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Responsibilities as a Research Student</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Supervisory Team</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Monitoring</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Training and Support</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Training Units</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-based training provision</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol Doctoral College</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Academic Language and Development</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Training and Resources</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Research Training &amp; Transferable Skills Training</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn Learning (formerly Lynda.com)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to Teach and Teaching Training</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Service</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught Doctorates and Taught Training Units</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and Faculty Examination Boards</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extenuating Circumstances</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught Doctorate Progression</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Progress Monitoring and Progression</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Progress Monitoring</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression Review</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure for Dealing with Unsatisfactory Academic Progress</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Ethics</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Submission and Examination</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Submission</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Viva Examination (Oral Examination)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism and Cheating</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Plagiarism</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collusion</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unauthorised materials in examinations</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Falsification or fabrication of data</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Regulations</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Study and Changes</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Periods of Study 27
Changes to Periods of Study 29
  Suspension of Study 29
  Mode of Attendance Change 29
  Extension of Study 29
  Withdrawal from Study / Transfer to another University 30

General Information 31

Key Dates 31

Student Wellbeing 32
  Students' Health Service 32
  Student Wellbeing Service 32
  Student Counselling Service 32
  Disability Services 32
  Multifaith Chaplaincy 32

Research Student Facilities 33

Fees, Funding and Research Expenses 34
  Fee Obligations 34
  Research Expenses 34
  Additional Information for ESRC-funded Studentship Holders (SWDTP) 34
  Additional Information for University of Bristol PhD Studentship Holders 36

Official Documents 37
  Council Tax Exemption Criteria 37

Complaints and Appeals 38
  Complaints 38
  Appeals 38
  Just Ask 38
Introduction

Welcome from the Dean

I am delighted to welcome you to the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law!

At Bristol, you will be a member of one of the most talented social sciences and law student bodies in the country, reflected in our South West Doctoral Training Partnership, which is not only accredited by the Economics and Social Research Council (ESRC) but has the largest allocation of funded places in the country. You will also be studying in one of England’s most beautiful and culturally vibrant cities and be advised by scholars with national and international reputations in their specialist research fields. The programmes in the Faculty have been carefully designed to provide a stimulating experience. We hope that you find that your period of study here intellectually challenging, rewarding, and exciting.

I wish you an enjoyable and successful time here.

Professor Simon Tormey
Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law

This Handbook provides basic information relevant to your studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law.

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Law consists of eight Schools at PGR level:

- School of Accounting and Finance
- School of Economics
- School of Education
- School of Geographical Sciences (Human Geography only)
- School of Management
- School for Policy Studies
- School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies
- University of Bristol Law School

Links to School websites can be found at [http://www.bris.ac.uk/fssl/about/schools/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/fssl/about/schools/)

For information relating to the Library ([www.bristol.ac.uk/library/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/library/)) or IT Services ([www.bristol.ac.uk/it-services/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/it-services/)), please consult their individual websites.
The Faculty of Social Sciences and Law
is based in 2 Priory Road.

The student-facing office is the Faculty Education Team Office:

**Open Monday to Friday from 10 am until 4 pm.**
*(Times may vary in Vacation periods and will be closed on University closure days)*

Please note due to the COVID pandemic, the Faculty Office is currently working remotely and only contactable by email.
Faculty Officers

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Law is run by several Faculty Officers and Teams. Below are the Officers and Teams directly relevant to your study as Postgraduate Research students:

**The Dean**

The Dean is the highest academic authority in the Faculty and oversees the Faculty budget and research and education planning. The Dean chairs the Faculty Board and represents the Faculty on all high-level University committees, such as University Planning and Resources Committee, Senate and Council.

**Faculty Manager**

The Faculty Manager is responsible for effective operations support for the delivery of the Faculty academic vision and strategy, with responsibility for project initiation and delivery. They oversee Faculty-level administrative and operational processes and have responsibility for budgets and resources.

**Faculty PGR Director**

The Faculty PGR Director is responsible for all postgraduate Doctoral Research matters in the Faculty, including overseeing student progress, approving suspensions and extensions and advising the Dean on education strategy. The FPGRD chairs the Faculty PGR Committee and represent the Faculty at relevant University Committees including the Research Degrees Examinations Board and the University PGR Committee.

**Faculty Education Manager**

The Faculty Education Manager is responsible for managing the Faculty Education Team and overseeing the student and education processes across the Faculty. This includes registration, timetabling, progress and student record administration, student casework and the provision of advice and information on education procedures.

**Faculty Research Director**

The Research Director advises the Dean on research strategy in the Faculty, to create a positive research environment and infrastructure which will attract and retain the highest quality researchers and postgraduate students worldwide. They oversee the development of flagship and high-impact research, across and between disciplines to answer important societal questions and contribute to the social, political, environmental, and economic well-being of the region, the UK, and the wider world.

**Faculty Education Team**

The Faculty Education Team located on the 1st Floor of 2 Priory Road. They are the central point of information for the Faculty and deal with student progress administration, education processes, policies, and committees. The Team produce official documents for students (e.g. Certification Letters, Bank Letters and Council Tax Forms).

**South West Doctoral Training Partnership**

The South West Doctoral Training Partnership (SWDTP) is accredited by the ESRC to provide postgraduate research training in the social sciences. The Partnership includes the Universities of Bristol, Exeter, Bath, Plymouth, and UWE. It draws together the established research excellence of around 800 academic and research staff at the five institutions.

For more information about the SWDTP, visit their website at: [www.swdtp.ac.uk](http://www.swdtp.ac.uk)
# Faculty Contact details

## Faculty Officers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>The Dean</td>
<td>Professor Simon Tormey</td>
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## Faculty Education Team

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Education Manager</td>
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## South West Doctoral Training Partnership (SWDTP)

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<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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## Professional Liaison Network

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
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Representation and Committees

Student Representation

We encourage students to take an active role within the Faculty by becoming student representatives. The Students’ Union organises elections for representatives at School and Faculty level and also runs training sessions for representatives. Student representatives attend the relevant Faculty PGT and PGR committees and the PG Student-Staff Liaison Committee.

Postgraduate Network - [https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/groups/bristol-su-postgraduate-network](https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/groups/bristol-su-postgraduate-network)

The PG Network is a student-led initiative for all postgraduate students that seeks to develop an active, strong, and vibrant postgraduate community here at Bristol.

The PG Network provides a real chance for students to work together to shape and develop Bristol's postgraduate community life. Its cohesive and supportive nature inspires postgraduate students to get involved in organising and attending social events and provides a platform through which students can effectively feed into and influence the decision-making and priority-setting of Bristol SU and the University of Bristol.

If you would like further information about events or opportunities, or if you have ideas that you wish to share, please contact Students’ Union staff at bristolsu@bristol.ac.uk

Faculty Committees

Faculty Board

The highest decision-making body within the Faculty and is responsible for overseeing all major Faculty academic decisions and priorities. It ratifies reports and recommendations of policy from individual Faculty committees and discusses policy and items referred by University Senate.

Faculty Examination Board (Postgraduate)

This board formally approves all final examination results for taught programmes, including taught research training and the taught component of taught doctorates and ensures there is consistent treatment of extenuating circumstances and plagiarism/cheating penalties for students within the Faculty. It also monitors student progress, students on suspension and extension of study, and withdrawals.

Faculty Graduate Studies PGT Committee and Faculty PGR Committee

These committees consider academic policy within a quality assurance context and oversee the new and revised programme and unit proposals. They are also responsible for high-quality postgraduate research and teaching provision in the Faculty. They advise the Faculty Board on all aspects of postgraduate teaching and postgraduate research policy.

Faculty PG Student-Staff Liaison Committee

This committee is chaired by the Faculty postgraduate student representatives and meets three times a year. Membership of the committee is two student representatives from each School and the Faculty Education Director (PGT) and Faculty PGR Director. The purpose of the committee is to discuss academic and pastoral matters that affect students.

University Committees

Research Degrees Examination Board

The Research Degrees Examinations Board (RDEB) is the University-level board that oversees the award of all research degrees. The Board is comprised of the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for PGR, Prof Robert Bickers, and the Faculty PGR Directors from each of the six Faculties. The RDEB oversees awards and examination procedures for all postgraduate research students across the university.
All students **MUST** register at the beginning of each academic year (normally in September) throughout their studies. This includes during the writing up year: usually year 4 of study (for full-time students) or year 7 of study (for part-time students).

Registration can be completed via StudentInfo ([www.bris.ac.uk/studentinfo/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/studentinfo/)).

Failure to register online may mean that students are no longer able to access the library, computing or other facilities and may lead to their withdrawal from their studies.
This section of the Handbook details the academic requirements of your degree, your responsibilities as a PGR student, the supervisory relationship, research training and support, and annual progress monitoring and thesis submission processes, including the procedures and forms you will need to complete over the course of your studies.

As PGR students, you will primarily be engaged with your School, your supervisors, your PGR colleagues and your diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary intellectual communities. The Faculty plays an important scaffolding role in relation to your PGR studies, setting general policy for postgraduate research programmes in Social Sciences and Law, monitoring student progress, and administering student records.

Please note that all the information in this handbook is also available on the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law PGR Support site on Blackboard (requires single sign-on to access).
Responsibilities and Supervision

Your Responsibilities as a Research Student

The University’s Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (Section 4.6.1) sets out the responsibilities of research students.

These responsibilities include (but are not limited to):

- Complying with the University’s Code of Practice.
- Registration (at the start of your programme and each subsequent year).
- Keeping your personal information up to date via Studentinfo: https://www.bris.ac.uk/studentinfo/.
- Attendance/engagement according to the requirements set out in the Code of Practice (Section 4.4).
- Completing your research within the standard period of study.
- Developing and maintaining effective working relationships with your supervisors and other University staff and students.
- Meeting regularly with your supervisors and keeping written records of the meetings.
- Taking responsibility for the progress of your research.
- Taking responsibility for your personal and professional development.

Each school provides students with a handbook, which will give details of different School-level responsibilities, processes, and expectations. By accepting a place on your research programme, you undertake to fulfil all the commitments, including compliance with progress and attendance monitoring requirements.

Your Supervisory Team

The main task for your supervisors is to provide you with research guidance and professional advice during your period of study. You and your supervisors should meet regularly; you should discuss how often you will meet early on. The first meeting will normally take place shortly after your arrival and include discussions of how you want to work, the supervision arrangements including your research training programme, which units are most appropriate for your research, drawing up of a written research plan, clarification of the nature of your degree and your anticipated completion date. The Code of Practice states that you should hold these meetings at least monthly. You and your supervisors should allow at least one hour for supervisory meetings.

Maintaining good communication with your supervisors is vital to a successful partnership. You must keep your supervisors informed if, for any reason, you fall behind in your work or you are experiencing personal, health, financial or other problems. This is particularly important if you might require a suspension of study or an extension to your period of study as such requests cannot be backdated by more than one month. The sooner you inform your supervisors, the easier it is for them to help you with any problem that affects your progress.

Your Supervisors’ Responsibilities

All PGR students have two supervisors. One will be designated the ‘main’ supervisor and is responsible for ensuring that all university procedures are followed and is contacted if questions arise concerning a PGR student. The two supervisors can work together either as equal ‘co-supervisors’ or as ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ supervisors, depending both on School rules and workload allocations and on the agreement reached with the PGR student. The student is normally registered in the School of the ‘main’ supervisor.

The responsibilities of the supervisors (depending on detailed split of the roles) include academic guidance, professional development, and pastoral care (see Code of Practice, Section 5.1, and Annexes 12 and 16). Supervisors are responsible for:

- Assisting with the research process; including the formulation of the research design, offering ideas, and generally providing guidance, encouragement, and stimulation.
- Providing guidance and advice on the progress of research, submission of the thesis, publication of results and, where appropriate, career development.
• Advising on how to keep abreast of recent developments in the subject.
• Encouraging acquiring and improving appropriate skills.
• Ensuring you are aware of, and comply with, the University’s policy on Research Ethics.
• Meeting you regularly. (The timing and frequency of meetings is a matter for negotiation between you and your Supervisor/s).
• Returning written work with comments promptly, provided the work is legible and delivered on time.
• Ensuring you are made aware at the earliest possible stage if your progress is unsatisfactory.
• Advising on examination procedures and assisting with the planning if the viva voce examination.

Please note: the Code of Practice clearly states that ‘the ultimate responsibility for the content of the dissertation and the decision to submit the work rests with the student’ (Section 5.1.2).

Changing supervisors

While most research students remain with their original supervisors until they finish their theses, it is sometimes necessary to transfer to new supervisors or for the supervision arrangements between the supervisors to be altered (see Code of Practice, Section 5.3).

If you are experiencing a problem with your supervisor/s that cannot easily be resolved yourselves, you should talk to your School PGR Director or Head of School. You can also talk to the Faculty PGR Director. Your case will be treated in complete confidence. Most difficulties between students and supervisors can be satisfactorily resolved.

If you wish to change your supervisor/s, you will need to think carefully about why and what changes you hope to make. In many cases, it may be sensible to discuss this informally with your current and future supervisors. However, you must also discuss this change with your School PGR Director or Head of School. Once this change of supervisor has been agreed, your school will advise the Faculty Education Team so that your student record can be updated.

Attendance Monitoring

Research students are expected to maintain a good level of attendance and to remain engaged with their programme of study per the Student Agreement: www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/agreement.html.

Students who fail to maintain appropriate attendance (or regular email contact with their supervisor/s when on fieldwork) will be referred by the School to the Faculty. Persistent lack of attendance or engagement may ultimately result in the need to make changes to a student’s status. If a student is not attending the University and fails to make contact, the School will telephone and email the student twice, before contacting the Wellbeing team. The Wellbeing team and the Faculty Education Team will agree on the next steps.

If no reply is given to the Faculty, the student will be ‘deemed withdrawn’ and their status will be changed to withdrawn. The Faculty will then issue a letter of confirmation and update the University’s student record accordingly.

To fulfil their statutory obligations, Schools are required to monitor the engagement of Tier 4 students via expected contact points between students and their programme of study and report on these monthly. For postgraduate research students, these expected contact points will relate to active engagement with supervision.

The Code of Practice recommends that research students should have a face-to-face meeting with their supervisors at least once per month and that students provide a written report of each meeting.

During the COVID pandemic, when we are all encouraged to work from home, online supervisions are recommended and count as ‘attendance’.
Research Training and Support

Research Training Units

Research training is an important element of PhD programmes in Social Sciences and Law. Research Training units offered in different Schools across the Faculty are designed to provide you with the necessary skills required to support you in conducting your research. They also provide transferrable skills which may help with employment after you have finished your Doctorate.

Research training is mandatory for all PhD students (except for those who have completed an approved MSc in Research Methods (MRes) degree or those who can demonstrate and get Faculty approval for Recognised Prior Learning¹). You must complete at least 60 credits of research training units. The units for research training are determined by your School and/or your specific PhD programme. Please consult your School Handbook or digital platform (e.g. SharePoint or Blackboard) for more information on which units are included in your research training programme. You should also discuss research training requirements with your supervisors at the beginning of the year, ideally at your first supervision meeting, so you can be sure to register for the correct units.

Research training units need to be completed prior to your Progression Review. The Progression Review takes place between 12 and 18 months from the start of your PhD programme for full-time students (or 24-36 months for part-time students).

Basic research training units appropriate for many PhD programmes and offered by several different Schools in different formats are:

- Philosophy and Research Design in the Social Sciences
- Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods in the Social Sciences
- Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods in the Social Sciences

More advanced research training units, some generic to the social sciences and others discipline specific, are also available across the Faculty, including [depending on term and staff availability]:

- Advanced Qualitative Methods
- Further Quantitative Methods
- Discourse Analysis
- Theorising Society and Space
- Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography
- Practical Statistics for Use in Research and Policy
- Explanation, Causation, and Longitudinal Analysis
- Research Methods in Global Operations and Supply Chain Management
- Research Methods and Marketing Metrics

Research training can continue throughout your research programme and you should discuss any research training needs that emerge with your supervisors in the first instance.

Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma in Research Methods

If you choose to withdraw from your programme before completing your research degree, but have completed 60 credits or 120 credits of taught units from an approved research methods programme in your subject area, you will be eligible for the relevant Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) or Diploma (120 credits) as an exit award, following a recommendation from the relevant Examination Board. Exit awards are processed automatically as part of withdrawal from studies. Students who are exempted from any of the units on such a programme will not be eligible for the award.

A Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma is only available as an exit award if you do not complete your research degree and have achieved the required credits.

If you complete your research degree, and have taken taught units, your University transcript will have a record of your units and marks, but you will not be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma in addition to your research degree.

¹ Approval for Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) should be sought from the Faculty PGR Director prior to teaching commencing in the first term of the PGR degree. Please submit your form to your School Administrator.
School-based training provision

Each School provides support tailored to the broad needs of research students in their discipline(s). The School may also run workshops on managing the PhD process (including Progression Review and viva preparation), with opportunities to share their experience with students at later stages of study. Other training may include media skills, academic career development, specialist ethical, fieldwork or data analysis skills, support for teaching, peer mentoring and other initiatives to develop skills in literature review and writing for different audiences. Students are also encouraged to discuss training opportunities within their School.

Bristol Doctoral College

The Bristol Doctoral College (BDC) is dedicated to supporting the personal and professional development of all postgraduate research students, providing a hub of information and resources to help you get the most out of your time at Bristol. The BDC oversees the University’s central Personal and Professional Development (PPD) programme for postgraduate research students. This includes over 160 interactive workshops, seminars and resources covering everything from ‘Planning and Managing your PhD’ and ‘Developing a social media strategy’.

The full central PPD programme is available on the BDC website: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/ppd/

The BDC also organises university-wide events such as the Festival of Postgraduate Research and the Three Minute Thesis Competition specifically designed for researchers to develop communication skills, raise awareness of their work, and meet other researchers from across the University.

Centre for Academic Language and Development

The Centre for Academic Language and Development offers courses in research, English, and academic literacy. These courses are available to all PGR students. The centre also provides one-to-one tutorials.

More information can be found at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-language/study/current-students/.

IT Training and Resources

The University's IT Services have provided a page which contains links to resources and training specific to Doctoral Students: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/it-services/learning/research-postgraduates.html

Advanced Research Training & Transferable Skills Training

Any training opportunities across the South West Doctoral Training Partnership (SWDTP), will be advertised on the SWDTP (http://www.swdtp.ac.uk/) and National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) (www.ncrm.ac.uk/training).

LinkedIn Learning (formerly Lynda.com)

In addition to specific training courses run by the university, there are many practical training courses available to PGR students on LinkedIn Learning via the University’s single sign-on. More information can be found at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/it-services/learning/linkedinlearning.

Opportunities to Teach and Teaching Training

Your school might be able to provide you with an opportunity to teach on undergraduate programmes or contribute to the marking of assessments and invigilation. You are advised to speak to your supervisor or School PGR Director in the first instance, who will be able to inform you of any opportunities in your school or who to approach. The University’s Policy on PGR students who teach can be found at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/pgrswhoteach.html.

The Academic Staff Development team provides training for research students who would like to teach. More information can be found at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/academic/learningandteaching/pg/. The BDC also provides
information on support for Doctoral Students who teach: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/current-research-students/doctoral-teacher-support/.

**Careers Service**

Information on the services available from the Careers Service can be found at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/careers/.
Taught Doctorates and Taught Training Units

Students who are in the taught phase of their taught doctorate and students taking taught training units will be governed under the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes. Students need to be familiar with the following assessment and examination procedures.

The University Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes (Rules for Assessment, Progression and the Award of the Qualification): http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html governs the way that assessment and progression are conducted for taught programmes within the Faculty. Also, the University’s Examination Regulations cover examinations and the procedure for dealing with student cases of plagiarism and cheating as well as student appeals.

School and Faculty Examination Boards

School and Programme Boards of Examiners’ meetings normally take place in the Summer and Autumn terms and at dates specified in school handbooks. These Boards moderate and agree on student marks for examinations and assignments, award credit points to students, and recommend the awarding of degrees.

Students who fail any assessments or who are not awarded the full complement of credit points are recorded and advised of reassessment opportunities.

The Faculty Examination Board (Postgraduate) normally ratifies final taught postgraduate awards and those students exiting with a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma, throughout the year and considers penalty recommendations from Faculty plagiarism panels to ensure consistency of treatment.

The pass mark set by the University for any master’s level unit is 50 out of 100 (or C and above on the alpha scale).

Note: Programme/unit specific guidance on assessments can be found in the respective School or Unit handbooks/Blackboard sites. If you have any queries relating to assessments, contact the unit/programme administrator or convenor.

Extenuating Circumstances

If you are experiencing any difficulties (e.g. health - physical or mental; domestic; work or financial problems) during the completion of a taught unit which affects your ability to fully participate, then you should let any one of the following from your School know: your supervisor, unit tutor, pathway coordinator, programme director, any other member of academic staff or a member of the Wellbeing Service. They will be able to advise on the next steps and how we can help.

Taught Doctorate Progression

A Taught Doctorate has two phases, a taught phase, and a dissertation phase. Progression to the dissertation phase is dependent upon successful performance on the taught phase as outlined in your school handbook. Students who do not progress to the dissertation phase may be awarded an Exit Award depending on the number of credits gained: 60 credits for a Postgraduate Certificate; 120 credits for a Postgraduate Diploma.
Annual Progress Monitoring and Progression

The Faculty and its Schools monitor the progress of research students to ensure that research students make good progress in their research studies and receive adequate support.

Annual Progress Monitoring

To complete Annual Progress Monitoring, the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law currently uses an online system called STaR (Skills Training and Review) [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/star/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/star/). This system is designed to bring together all aspects of postgraduate research, development, and support. STaR enables you to:

- Record meetings between you and your supervisor, setting and managing research objectives as you progress.
- Keep or share notes on any aspect of your research.
- Access your own public space on Pure to upload publications and develop an online profile.
- Explore skills training and researcher development opportunities, planning and tracking your development.
- Complete the forms and processes required for Progress Monitoring, in accordance with Faculty guidance.

Annual Progress Monitoring (APM) is mandatory for all postgraduate research students at the University of Bristol.

In the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, most PGR students complete this process annually. ESRC-funded students complete this monitoring bi-annually.

Progress Monitoring reports record training undertaken, conferences attended, work completed, an assessment by the supervisors of the quality of work and the rate of progress, a work plan for the next year, and comments by the student. These reports provide an opportunity for both students and supervisors to provide a summary of your progress. The completed forms are reviewed at School level, normally by the School PGR Director, and at Faculty level, by the Faculty PGR Director.

Feedback from progress monitoring reports may make recommendations relating to your progress, which you will be expected to address as a condition of continuing registration. If your progress is considered a matter of concern, you will initially be offered ‘Enhanced Academic Support’. Continued lack of progress may invoke the ‘continued concern’ stage of the Unsatisfactory Academic Progress procedure described in the Code of Practice (Annex 3).

Please note: The Annual Progress Monitoring online system and processes are currently under review.

- In Spring 2021, the Faculty will move away from STaR to a new online system.
- In September 2021, the Faculty will move to a new Annual Progress Monitoring process which includes the submission of documents annually, the use of independent reviewers to assess progress and the integration of the Progression Review (see below) into the APM process for PhD students.

Progression Review

All students on PhD programmes are required to complete a Progression Review. The Progression Review is made up of two elements: The Progress Report and the Progression Meeting. The Progression Meeting is structured like a viva examination and is one of the ways that we review your progress during the PhD programme. The process is an excellent opportunity to present your work to a panel of academic colleagues and gain feedback. If your progress is not satisfactory, the Enhanced Academic Support procedure will be invoked (Code of Practice, Section 6.3).

Students are normally expected to have completed their planned research training units before the Progression Review and to have applied for research ethics approval, if relevant.

Please note: The Progression Review will be integrated into the APM Process for PhD students from September 2021.
The Timing of the Progression Review

Progression review must take place between 12-18 months after registration (24-36 months for part-time students) unless an extension is granted by the Faculty PGR Director.

The Progression Report

A progression report is submitted to the independent progression assessors. The length of the report is normally 10,000-15,000 words (excluding references and appendices).

The report should normally include:

- **A research proposal** that includes
  - a description of the research problem, its background, and its relationship to existing scholarship/literature, with brief definitions and discussion of central concepts.
  - a statement of the research aims, questions or hypotheses and an indication of the kind of argument(s) that will be made and the kind of evidence that will be used to reach any conclusions.
  - a brief statement of how the study will use or relate to theory and the theoretical/conceptual framework(s) which will be used for the study.
  - an outline of the proposed methods of data collection and analysis with any key methodological issues (such as ethics or access) highlighted and with references on methods.
  - a proposed chapter outline; and
  - a timetable of the thesis as a whole. This should show the student's work plan for the remaining period of study.

- **A writing sample** that will form a substantive part of a key thesis chapter.

- **A working bibliography** to show the kind of sources being used.

- **Research governance paperwork** including any relevant risk assessment forms and ethics paperwork. The paperwork should have been submitted to the relevant ethics committee before progression but does not have to have been formally approved yet.

Please Note:

There are some discipline-specific variations to this format of the progression report. For instance, in the case of theoretical or doctrinal theses (e.g., in Law), students will not be expected to provide information on methodological issues. In the case of Economics & Finance theses, students are expected to submit a paper.

The Progression Review Panel

Your supervisor(s), in consultation with the School PGR Director, will set up (with some weeks’ notice) a Progression Meeting with a Progression Review Panel. This panel normally consists of two members of staff familiar with your field of study and your supervisors. The panel will read your progression report and meet with you to ask a series of questions about your thesis and doctoral plans. The questions will ascertain the project viability, whether you have the knowledge and skills to complete the work and whether any additional support will be needed. Copies of the materials will need to be provided for each panel member.

The Progression Meeting

The progression meeting should normally occur no later than one month after the report has been submitted, and at least two weeks’ notice should be given of this meeting. The meeting resembles a *viva voce* and will usually last about one hour. Supervisors attend the meeting solely as observers. The staff member chairing the panel will ensure orderly questioning and that you get the opportunity to show your strengths as well as any weaknesses.

The Progression Review Panel will consider the extent to which:

- You have clearly defined research questions that are located within and contribute to identified existing bodies of work.
- There is a coherent theory or conceptual framework and it is clear theory or framework plays in the research.
- The data can be collected with the resources available to address the question identified.
• It is clear how the data will be analysed.
• You have acquired the skills to undertake the research and can write up the thesis to the standards required.
• You have completed and passed planned research methods units.
• You have addressed potential ethical issues
• The research can be completed in the time frame allowed

The Progression Review Outcomes

Based on the Progress Report and Progression Meeting, the Progression Review Panel may make one of the following recommendations:

At the first attempt:
1. that the candidate continues on a PhD registration.
2. that the candidate continues on a PhD registration, subject to modifications of the progression review materials.
3. that the candidate is allowed one resubmission of revised materials to the same panel, within three months of their first review panel date (or six months for part-time students) and will be managed under Enhanced Academic Support (see Code of Practice, Annex 3).

At the second attempt:
1. that the candidate continues on a PhD registration.
2. that the candidate continues on a PhD registration, subject to modifications of the progression review materials.
3. that the candidate continues to work through the procedure for dealing with Unsatisfactory Academic Progress; which includes attending a progress concern meeting.

It is the responsibility of the panel to communicate the outcome of the meeting to the student. This must be done at the earliest possible opportunity and a report in writing will also be supplied, providing a clear and detailed statement. The recommendation will be recorded on the official Faculty form (available on the Faculty website at http://www.bris.ac.uk/fssl/current-students/ and sent to the Faculty Office for the signature of the Faculty PGR Director. It is the responsibility of the panel to write the report.

The Faculty Office will write to the student confirming the outcome of the Progression Review and provide a copy of the Progression Review Panel report, which will detail any further steps, as necessary. In cases where the student is to be allowed one resubmission of the materials, the deadline for this will be taken from the date of the panel meeting – 3 months for full-time students and 6 months for part-time students.

Procedure for Dealing with Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

Undertaking a PhD can be challenging. Many students struggle to find a clear focus, the right level of work, or a balance between their research and their day-to-day lives. To help you through any difficulties that you may encounter the Enhanced Academic Support process may be used. This is a collaborative process designed to enable you to focus your research and get back on track with your studies.

If your progress falls behind or does not meet the expected academic standard, you and your supervisors should be discussing how best to correct the situation. You and your supervisors will be advised of the options available to you, including satisfying an agreed work plan, voluntary withdrawal, and requests to change your registration to another degree. Full details on the procedure and appeals procedure can be found in the Code of Practice (Annex 3).
Research Ethics

It is the responsibility of students to undertake their research in an ethical manner and in accordance with University principles governing the ethics of research. Any appropriate ethical considerations must be embedded throughout your postgraduate research, from the planning stage through any fieldwork and library work, to the writing up stage and publication. These issues should be discussed with your supervisors from the outset of your PhD programme.

**Ethics approval** for any work with human subjects of any kind - e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups, ethnography, oral histories, and so on - **must be sought in advance** from your School Ethics Committee and must be submitted with your Progression Report for review by the progression assessors. Care must be taken with data protection as well as confidentiality, consent, risk assessments, and so on. Any particularly problematic issues will be referred from the school level to the Faculty Ethics Committee for consideration.

The University’s ethical framework for research can be found at [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/ethics/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/ethics/)
Thesis Submission and Examination

Thesis Submission

Submission of your thesis is a two-stage process:

1. **e-Submission**

   Postgraduate research students submitting their theses must submit an electronic copy to plagiarism detection software (TurnitinUK) via your School's Blackboard submission site. Details and instructions are provided in of the Code of Practice (Annex 8).

   Please refer to the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degrees and the website of the Examinations Office (http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/research-degree/) for further information on the current requirements for submission.

2. **Formal submission**

   Normally, two copies of your thesis in temporary/soft bindings must be submitted either in person to the Information Point on the ground floor of 5 Tyndall Avenue (open between 9 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday) or by post directly to the Postgraduate Research Examination office (for latest information see: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/research-degree/)

   Your date of submission is recorded as the date the soft-bound copies of the thesis are received.

   **Note:** If your submission deadline falls on a weekend of University Closure day, then you should hand in your thesis on the next available working day after your submission deadline.

   **Please note:** as part of the University’s response to coronavirus, the normal requirement to submit printed copies of your dissertation has been suspended for a temporary period (at least until 30 October 2020). You should instead submit a fully formatted pdf version by email to the Academic Quality and Policy Office, as well as submitting a copy to Turnitin via Blackboard. Please check with your School or on the Faculty PGR Blackboard site for updated information on thesis submission.

The Viva Examination (Oral Examination)

The viva is the final stage in the research degree process when the research student is expected to explain and defend their thesis. Two examiners (one internal to the University of Bristol, the other external) will be looking for both strengths and weaknesses in the analysis and it should be a challenging experience in all cases. The viva may be chaired by an independent third-party and supervisors may attend as non-participating observers.

At the viva, your examiner's, who have carefully read your thesis and have each written preliminary report assessing it, will discuss your research with you. They will assess your thesis and your performance in the viva according to the University’s 'criteria for the award of research degrees’ (as specified on the Research Degrees Examiners' Joint Final Report form), according to which:

1. The dissertation should:
   - Embody the results of research, carried out by the candidate, which may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student in the period of study specified in the Regulations for the degree.
   - Consist of the candidate's account of their investigations.
   - Make clear the sources from which information has been derived, the extent to which the work of others has been used, and the areas which are claimed as original.
   - Show the exercise of critical judgment concerning both the candidate's work and that of other scholars in the field; and
   - Be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument.
2. The dissertation and the oral examination together must demonstrate that the candidate has:

- Adequate knowledge and understanding of the discipline and the context within which the research is grounded and of the literature relevant to the research; and
- The ability to put forward arguments in an appropriate form, both orally and in writing.

After the viva, the examiners will produce a report covering both the content of your thesis and your performance in the oral examination. The report enables the Research Degree Examinations Board (RDEB) to assess the scope and significance of your work. The examiners may make their recommendations known to you, but the final decision rests with the Research Degree Examinations Board.

**Viva Examinations by Video Link**

An oral examination may only be conducted remotely by video link in exceptional circumstances. For example, when the candidate or an external examiner is at a distance from the university (normally outside the UK) and is unable to travel to Bristol at the appropriate time. Typically, it is only permissible for one participant of the oral examination to be remote.

**Please note:** as part of the University’s response to coronavirus, all vivas are being held online with all parties remote from one another. All such remote vivas will have an Independent Chair charged with making sure the viva runs smoothly. Please check with your School or on the Faculty PGR Blackboard site for updated information on whether or not vivas are still being held remotely, in case of a resurgence for example.

**Outcomes of the Viva Examination**

a) Pass with no modifications

b) Minor corrections

- If minor corrections are required, for example, typing, spelling, grammar, punctuation or inadvertent omission, examiners will make clear what corrections are required. Your degree will be awarded, and you are invited to attend a Degree Congregation.
- You must complete corrections within 28 days of notification. Your degree certificate will be withheld until the Board receives written confirmation the corrections have been made.

c) Errors or omissions of substance

- If you have to make substantial corrections, examiners will provide clear and comprehensive written guidance. This will be separate from the examiners’ report.
- You are normally allowed six months from the date of the Board meeting where the decision was made, to make the corrections.
- In exceptional circumstances, an extension to the time allowed may be granted.
- You may send your corrected work directly to your internal Examiner or independent chair.
- Your examiner(s) will inform the Board in writing when you have completed the corrections to their satisfaction.

d) Resubmission

- If you have to resubmit your work for a full re-examination, examiners will provide clear and comprehensive written guidance for you.
- You are normally allowed 12 months from the date of the Board meeting where the decision was made, to make the corrections.
- In exceptional circumstances, an extension to the time allowed may be granted.
- To resubmit, you must submit copies of your revised work to the Exams Office and to blackboard in the same way as for your first submission and pay a resubmission fee.
- The examiners will carry out a full re-examination, usually including an oral, and provide a second set of report forms to the Board.
Plagiarism and Cheating

Each year, some students commit academic misconduct offences such as plagiarism or cheating. The University takes cases of academic misconduct very seriously.

Students found to have committed a serious offence of plagiarism or to have cheated, can be awarded a mark of zero for a unit, not be permitted to progress in their studies and have to exit with a lower qualification than the one they registered for, or be withdrawn from the programme without a lower qualification. It could also have implications for your professional career due to having a record of dishonesty.

The four most common types of offences are plagiarism, collusion, unauthorised materials in an examination and falsification or fabrication of data.

1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as though it were your own. This can take several forms, including:

- *Obtaining an essay*, e.g. from the Internet or another provider, and submitting it as your work either in part or in full.
- *Using another student’s work and submitting it as your work either in part or in full.*
- *Self-Plagiarism*, i.e. reusing your material which you have already submitted elsewhere without referencing it.
- *Copying*, or electronically cutting and pasting, sections (i.e., even parts of sentences) of someone’s work, *without using quotation marks to indicate what text is not yours*. Passages quoted from other authors, or your previous work, must be identified in quotations and the sources of the quoted material must be acknowledged by the student. Use of unacknowledged sources may be construed as plagiarism.
- "Borrowing" the structure of an argument from another writer and following this too closely, *presenting it as your own, without acknowledgement*. You may not copy verbatim sections from the original, but you are still presenting someone else’s ideas and work as your own. Depending on the extent to which you do this, it may make it difficult to assess the work as your own, and result in a mark of zero for the unit.
- *Contract cheating* – where an organisation or individual contracts with students to complete an assignment for the student for a fee. Contract cheating is a very serious breach of academic integrity.

The University of Bristol, like most UK universities, uses Turnitin UK Plagiarism Detection Software. This system detects similarities with internet sources, other students’ work, books, and journal articles. Most assignments are routinely run through Turnitin software and any with a high instance of similarity with other sources will be considered further either at School or Faculty level.

All Schools in the Faculty run sessions on good academic practice and avoidance of plagiarism at various points during the academic year. **You are should attend these sessions to ensure you follow correct referencing procedures and have a full understanding of what is required in submitting assignments.**

More information about plagiarism can be found at:

- [www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/studentlearning/plagiarism/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/studentlearning/plagiarism/) (requires single sign on)
- Or the Study Skills pages [www.bristol.ac.uk/students/study/skills-development/study-skills/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/study/skills-development/study-skills/).
- [www.bristol.ac.uk/library/support/findinginfo/plagiarism/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/library/support/findinginfo/plagiarism/).

2. Collusion

Collusion is unauthorised collaboration with another student to produce work together. While we expect you to work cooperatively with other students and enjoy discussing your work with each other, what you submit for assessment must be your own. As a rule of thumb, you should never share any electronic or other written material relating to an assessment task with another student.
3. Unauthorised materials in examinations

Many examinations do not permit students to take any materials at all into the examination room. Some examinations permit certain printed material or certain dictionaries. However, very few, if any, are ‘open book’, allowing you to take your notes in. Each unit will make it very clear what is and is not allowed, and this will also appear on the rubric at the top of the examination paper. You should note that it is an offence simply to have unauthorised material with you. It is, therefore (at best), extremely foolish to engage in activity which results in possession of unauthorised material (such as writing on your hand) in the examination.

4. Falsification or fabrication of data

The authenticity of research findings, and the trust that others have in them, are reliant on the quality of data from which the findings and conclusions are developed. Fabrication – making up data – or falsification – changing, excluding, or altering data – undermines the quality of data and so the findings. Offences of this nature are considered very serious and may be referred for consideration under Student Disciplinary Regulations.

Procedures

a) Research Thesis

Postgraduate research students submitting their theses are required to submit an electronic copy to be reviewed using Turnitin (plagiarism detection software) via Blackboard. The details of how and when to submit are available to students and supervisors on Blackboard and from the Programme Administrator in your school. You will also have formative opportunities to submit drafts of your work to Turnitin.

Please refer to the Code of Practice (Annex 8) and the Examinations Office (www.bristol.ac.uk/exams/research/) for further information on the current requirements for submission. Small irregularities deemed by the Faculty PGR Director and the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (PGR) to constitute ‘poor academic practice’ can be dealt with outside of the normal plagiarism procedure and the student will be asked to modify the submitted work. Cases involving the suspicion of more serious plagiarism or other offences will be considered by a Faculty Panel convened by the Faculty PGR Director (Code of Practice, Annex 8).

b) Taught phase of Taught Doctorate and Taught training units

The University has a set of procedures for dealing with allegations or suspicions that plagiarism or an examination offence has occurred. Small irregularities which amount to poor academic practice can be dealt with as a matter of marking and the student later notified. Cases involving the suspicion of plagiarism or other offence will be considered by either a School Panel or a Faculty Panel, depending on the seriousness. Small volumes of plagiarised material may be treated as minor, substantial amounts of plagiarised material; unauthorised materials in examinations and collusion are serious. Minor cases are dealt with by a School Panel; serious cases by a Faculty Panel chaired by the Faculty Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Officer.

The University Examination Regulations outline the procedures to be followed in cases of student plagiarism and cheating and can be found at www.bris.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/examregs.html.
University Rules
All students must adhere to the University’s rules and regulations: [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/).

In addition to the University Rules, the University also provides regulations which govern your programme:

- **Research**
  Research students should familiarise themselves with the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*: [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/cop-research-degrees.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/cop-research-degrees.html).

- **Taught**
  PGR students taking taught research training units or taught units on a taught doctorate should also familiarise themselves with *The University Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Degree Programmes*: [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html).

*The current version of the Rules, Regulations and Code of Practice applies to all students irrespective of their year of initial registration.*
Length of Study and Changes

PGR programmes are lengthy endeavours and life sometimes intervenes: financial or family issues, physical or mental health issues, bereavements and even unexpected pandemics can interfere with the best laid research and study plans. It is therefore not uncommon for students to need to make changes to their mode of attendance or to require a suspension of study or an extension to either their progression deadline or maximum thesis submission date. On rare occasions students need to withdraw from their programme altogether. With your supervisors and school, the Faculty Office and the Faculty PGR Director are responsible for helping you to manage any such changes.
Periods of Study

The **Code of Practice** (Section 4.3) outlines the minimum and maximum study periods for research programmes.

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<th>Doctorates</th>
<th>Full Time</th>
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<td>Minimum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<td>Doctor of Education (EdD)</td>
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<td>Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)</td>
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<td>Doctor of Social Science (DSocSci)</td>
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<th>Master’s degrees (by research)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Philosophy (MPhil)</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Science by Research (MScR)</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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Please note that the PGR **Code of Practice** stipulates that “all research students must submit their dissertation within their maximum period of study, which will take account of any approved extensions and exclude any approved suspensions. Where a research student does not submit within the prescribed maximum period of study, the student will be deemed to have withdrawn due to lapse of time” (Section 4.3.1).
Changes to Periods of Study

Suspension of Study

A suspension is an approved interruption of a student's study period. A suspension may be granted because the student is unable to engage effectively with their studies owing to external factors such as serious and persistent health problems, disability, bereavement or additional sole caring responsibilities, serious financial problems, mandatory military service, or where a part-time student's employment pattern has changed.

A period of suspension effectively 'stops the clock' on the maximum study period for a set time. A suspension of studies will only be granted where there are good grounds and supporting documentation.

If you are considering suspending your study for any reason you should first discuss the situation with your supervisors. The appropriate form is available from your School upon request and will need to be signed by your supervisors and approved by the School PGR Director and the Faculty PGR Director.

Suspension requests can only be backdated a maximum of one month.

Once a suspension request has been approved, the Faculty Education Team will confirm in writing to include the dates of suspension, expected return date and whether there are any conditions of return (e.g., being medically fit).

Students are not expected to engage with their studies during a period of suspension and are expected to confirm their return to study with the Faculty Education Team before the end of the suspension period.

Important information for sponsored/funded students and Tier 4 visa-holding students

If you are sponsored or funded by another body, it is your responsibility to obtain their permission to suspend your studies. For funded students, stipend payments will normally also be stopped for the period of suspension. If you are an ESRC-funded student there may be additional funding restrictions on suspensions. Please read the ESRC Funding Guide at [http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/).

If you are a Tier 4 visa-holding student and considering suspending your studies or making any other change to your registration status at the University, you must speak to the Student Visa Services team and get their input and signature before submitting your suspension request form. This change will likely affect your visa status.

Mode of Attendance Change

Students may request to change their mode of attendance from full-time to part-time, or vice versa. Possible reasons for such a request could include changes in a student’s personal or employment circumstances.

Health reasons are usually not considered for a mode of attendance change, unless medical evidence indicates that the change would be of assistance to the student. A suspension would generally be more appropriate for ill health.

If you are a Tier 4 visa-holding student and considering making a change to your registration status at the University, you must speak to the Student Visa Services team in the first instance. A mode of attendance change is usually not permitted for Tier 4 visa-holding students.

If you are in receipt of a Postgraduate loan from the Student Loans Company, a change in your mode of attendance may affect your funding. Please contact the Student Funding Office for advice before applying to change your attendance status.

Extension of Study

An extension of study may be granted to students who require additional time to complete their research programme. Grounds for an extension of study may include serious and persistent health problems, significant bereavement,
additional sole caring responsibilities, serious financial problems, mandatory military service or where a part-time student’s employment pattern has changed. Any request for an extension of study must be accompanied by supporting evidence, a timeline to completion, and supervisor support. Extenuating circumstances already mitigated by a suspension will not be accepted as grounds for a further extension.

Extensions of study must be applied for at least three months before the expected submission date. Extension requests will not be granted retrospectively and must be approved by your supervisors, School PGR Director, and the Faculty PGR Director.

If you face serious unforeseen circumstances at the time of thesis submission, a one-off emergency request for a short extension of no more than 10 working days may be made to the Faculty PGR Director (see Code of Practice, Section 6.4.3). This request also requires supervisor and School PGR Director support.

**Important information for sponsored/funded students and Tier 4 visa-holding students:**

If you are sponsored or funded by another body, it is the student's responsibility to obtain their permission to extend your studies. For funded students, stipend payments are not normally paid during the period of extension. If you are an ESRC-funded student there may be additional funding restrictions on extensions. Please read the ESRC Funding Guide at [http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/).

If you are a Tier 4 visa-holding student and considering extending your studies or making any other change to your registration status at the University, **you must speak to the Student Visa Services team and get their input and signature before submitting your extension request form.** This change will likely affect your visa status.

**Withdrawal from Study / Transfer to another University**

Any student wishing to withdraw from the university or transfer to another institution must complete a withdrawal or transfer form. The appropriate form is available from your School upon request.

*The University collects and holds student withdrawal data for academic, administrative, and statutory reasons. All student data is collected, processed, and disclosed under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be treated as confidential. Monitoring reasons for withdrawal also helps the University to improve its services to current and prospective students.*
General Information

Key Dates

Introductory Week (PGR): 21 September – 25 September 2020
Teaching Block 1: 5 October 2020 – 15 January 2021
January Assessment Period: 18 – 29 January 2021
Teaching Block 2: 1 February – 14 May 2021
Summer Assessment Period: 24 May – 14 June 2021

Vacation Dates

Christmas Vacation: 21 December 2020 – 8 January 2021
Easter Vacation: 29 March – 16 April 2021

University closure dates can be found at www.bristol.ac.uk/university/dates/
Student Wellbeing

Looking after your physical, mental, and emotional health will help you make the most of your time here. A range of support and services are provided by the university.

Students' Health Service

All new students need to register under the NHS with a local doctor when they arrive in Bristol. One such NHS doctors’ surgery is the University Students’ Health Service. The Student Health Service has considerable experience in dealing with a variety of health and related matters affecting students. Whilst confidentiality is always maintained, there is a particularly good liaison with academic staff if students experience stress from their studies. For more information, visit their website at: www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/StudentHealthService/

Hampton House Health Centre, St. Michael's Hill, Bristol
Tel: 0117 33 02720 / Home Visit Request: 0117 33 02721

Student Wellbeing Service

The Wellbeing Service provides a wide range of support and resources to help students manage their wellbeing and mental health while at University. They offer non-clinical advice and can help to co-ordinate the right support for you in a range of situations. For more information, visit their website at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/services/

Tel: 0117 456 9860 (9 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday)
Email: wellbeing-access@bristol.ac.uk

Student Counselling Service

The counselling service can provide support for a range of issues through short term individual or small group counselling. They are trained and experienced counsellors who offer specialised emotional support to students. The service is free and inclusive. For more information, visit their website at: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/services/student-counselling-service/.

3rd Floor, Hampton House, St. Michael's Hill, Bristol
Tel: 9 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday +44 (0)117 456 9860
Email: wellbeing-access@bristol.ac.uk

Disability Services

Disability Services provide confidential information, advice, and guidance to prospective and current students with a range of disabilities, learning difficulties and other physical or mental health conditions. They offer tailored case-by-case disability-related support and identify if there is any support we can offer, such as mentoring, study skills and exam support. They can also advise on sources of funding for disability-related study support. For more information, visit their website at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/.

Tel: 0117 331 0444
Email: disability-services@bristol.ac.uk

Multifaith Chaplaincy

The multifaith chaplaincy is made up of a range of chaplains and local faith contacts and welcomes people of all faiths (and of no faith). They provide opportunities to explore spirituality, faith, and belief; confidential personal; and give religious advice and information. For more information, visit their website at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/chaplaincy/

Tel: 0117 95 46600
Email: multifaith-chaplaincy@bristol.ac.uk
Research Student Facilities

The table below outlines the minimum provision of facilities that a research student within the Faculty can normally expect during their registration period. Conference travel funds may be available through your School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Status</th>
<th>Desk / PC Access</th>
<th>Stationery</th>
<th>Interlibrary Loans</th>
<th>Telephone Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Yes – access to space &amp; machines shared with other research students</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entitled to apply for free interlibrary loans</td>
<td>Internet &amp; local only. National/International calls with prior approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Yes – but maybe in communal space (necessarily just shared with other research students)</td>
<td>Headed Paper. Printer paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing-up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note, research students are not charged for printing. You do not need to add money to your Print Credit to use the Print Release devices across campus.
Fees, Funding and Research Expenses

Fee Obligations

Students must pay tuition fees each year of their studies, except during the writing up period.

You can make payments or set up future recurring payments in the Fees and Funding channel in your MyBristol portal: www.bristol.ac.uk/mybristol/. Information on other payment options is available from the Fees and Funding website: www.bristol.ac.uk/fees-funding/.

Students who are in debt to the University will need to resolve their debt with the Income Office or they may no longer be able to access the library, computing, or other facilities during their studies. Student debtors will be subject to the University’s Student Fees Policy: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/.

Research Expenses

Some schools provide funding to support PGR students’ research activities, for example, contributing to the costs of taking training or of delivering research papers at conferences. More information on what is available in your school can be found in your School PGR Handbook or by contacting your School PGR Administrator.

There is also some funding available from:

- The University of Bristol Alumni Foundation
  https://www.bristol.ac.uk/fees-funding/awards/alumni-travel-grant/
- Research and Enterprise Development (RED)
  http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/development/opportunities/funding-for/
- The Bristol Doctoral College (BDC)
  https://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/current-research-students/pgr-funds/

Note: ESRC-funded students receive funding for expenses through their RTSG. More information can be found on the SWDTP website: https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/funding-for-current-students/

Additional Information for ESRC-funded Studentship Holders (SWDTP)

Information and Guidance

ESRC studentship-holders who have questions or queries about their awards should first read the ESRC’s guidance which is available from the ESRC website: https://esrc.ukri.org/skills-and-careers/doctoral-training/esrc-students/

Further information on the award payments (including sick leave and maternity leave payments) can be found in the ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide:

Forms and information regarding applying for SWDTP funds (Such as Overseas Fieldwork and Institutional Visits) and placement enquiries can be found on the SWDTP website: http://www.swdtp.ac.uk/

Information around the requirements for RTSG and expenses payments can be found in the SWDTP handbook:
http://www.swdtp.ac.uk/information-for-current-students/.

SWDTP Hub

The SWDTP Hub is principally for ESRC-funded interdisciplinary research students who may not have study space in their School and for interdisciplinary students from the Universities of Bath, Exeter, Plymouth, and UWE when they are visiting Bristol. It offers computer workstations in 2 rooms, secure lockers, and kitchen space. The SWDTP Hub provides a quiet and productive environment for research students to work and study.
The SWDTP Hub is located at 1 Priory Road. Interdisciplinary research students can access the building via UCard reader at the entrance to the building. Interdisciplinary students should automatically be given access at the start of the year. However, if for some reason you cannot access the building and you wish to be given access, please email the Faculty's Senior Executive Assistant (pa-fssl@bristol.ac.uk) with your request.

For more information about the SWDTP Hub, please visit http://swdtp.ac.uk/.

Contacts
- For University of Bristol-related queries, including Je-S: Please contact the Faculty Education Team at swdtp-bristol@bristol.ac.uk
- ESRC regulatory enquiries: Please contact the SWDTP Hub at swdtp-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk
- For payment enquiries: Please contact Cath Pullinger in the Faculty Finance Team at cath.pullinger@bristol.ac.uk

Please note: the ESRC does not permit studentship-holders to contact the ESRC directly.

Thesis Submission Rates and Satisfactory Academic Progress

The ESRC annually monitors the number of funded research students who complete their PhD within four years. The ESRC is keen to ensure that research student completion rates remain higher than their minimum threshold of 70%. Sanctions apply to universities or Doctoral Training Entities that fall below this threshold. A studentship termination will adversely impact on thesis submission rates.

The ESRC and the University expect ESRC studentship-holders to make excellent progress in their 1 + 3 (MRes + PhD) or + 3 (PhD) programme. The University’s Annual Progress Monitoring and Progression Review procedures are designed to monitor the performance of research students. Please note that continuation on an ESRC studentship is subject to satisfactory academic progress.

Any issues which interrupt a research student’s progress, such as suspension, maternity leave, long-term illness, or failure to make progress, MUST be reported to the Faculty immediately so that appropriate advice can be given.

Changes to Studentships that Impact on Funding or Submission Dates

Any change to an ESRC studentship that impacts on funding must be approved by the ESRC in advance. Applications for extensions or suspensions should be submitted as normal via your School. It is the student’s responsibility to speak to the SWDTP before submitting a request. Email: swdtp-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk.

In the case of suspensions, stipend payments will be suspended for the period of suspension of studies.

Examples, where approval must be sought in advance, include:
- Extensions and suspensions of study
- Delays in progression from the MRes/MSc (1+3) to the PhD (+3)
- Maternity/paternity leave (and adoption leave)
- Institutional transfers
- Overseas fieldwork
- Overseas institutional visits
- Difficult language training
- Placements
- ESRC-funded Internships
Payment of Awards

The University’s Student Funding Office will issue cheques and BACS payments to ESRC studentship-holders and deals with any payment queries. Each ESRC studentship-holder has a finance account against which is recorded additional expenditure e.g. RTSG, overseas fieldwork expenses.

For further details about the RTSG please visit the SWDTP website at https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/funding-for-current-students/

Additional Information for University of Bristol PhD Studentship Holders

Information and Guidance

The full terms and conditions of the University of Bristol PhD Scholarship can be found in the Code of Practice (Annexes 14 and 15).

Changes to Studentships Which Impact on Funding or Submission Dates

Suspensions

In the case of suspensions, stipend payments will be suspended for the period of suspension of studies. The exceptions to this are sick leave and maternity, paternity, and adoption leave.

- Sick Leave

Students who receive a maintenance stipend funded by the University of Bristol are entitled to up to 13 weeks paid medical absence at their standard stipend value from the first day of certified illness within any 12 months.

A medical certificate is required to receive sick leave funding.

Note: Students in receipt of awards covering tuition fees only are not eligible to receive any payment during periods of sickness.

See the Code of Practice (Annex 15) for more information.

- Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave

Students who are funded by the University of Bristol PhD Scholarship are entitled to payment of maternity, paternity and adoption leave for up to 52 weeks. This is paid as follows: 26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at a reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.

See the Code of Practice (Annex 14) for more information.

Withdrawals

If the student withdraws from the University, stipend entitlement will cease. The student will be invoiced for any overpayment from the date of the withdrawal.

Payment of Awards

Stipends are paid monthly via BACS into a UK bank account, usually on 1st of the month (subject to adjustments for weekends and Bank Holidays). New students will be paid their first monthly instalment 5 days after registering in person. Students registering outside of the main September registration week will receive a pro-rata payment in the first instance, future payments will be in line with the monthly payment schedule and the final payment will also be a pro-rata payment.
Official Documents

The Faculty Office can produce official documents including Certification Letters (confirmation of student status), Bank Letters (to open a bank account), Council Tax Certificates (for full-time students applying for Council Tax reduction/exemption) and Transcripts.

These documents can be requested through the Faculty of Social Sciences Online Shop at: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/fssl/official-documents/

Please note the following when ordering documents:

- Documents take 1-3 working days to produce, from receipt of the order through the Online Shop. Transcripts can take up to 10 working days. During peak periods, some requests may take longer to process.
- You can only order documents for yourself, you cannot order documents on behalf of someone else.
- When collecting documents in person, you must present your UCard.
- Documents are normally only available in hard copy.
- For Bank Letters, students in non-University of Bristol accommodation will be required to present evidence of tenancy, such as a contract or other proof of address.

If you have any queries about Official Documents, please email transcripts-fssl@bristol.ac.uk.

Council Tax Exemption Criteria

- Council Tax exemption starts on the start date of your programme of study and continues until you have completed your programme or submitted your dissertation. You might be liable for Council Tax outside of those periods (e.g., if you rent a property before the start of the programme of study or remain in the property after your submission date).

- Students can only claim Council Tax exemption/reduction if their programme of study meets the definition of "full-time". Most part-time, visiting, or occasional students are not eligible for Council Tax exemption.

- The University provides Bristol City Council with listings of all full-time students (undergraduate and postgraduate) three times a year, in early November, January and May. Therefore, it might not be necessary to request a Council Tax Certificate.

- Students that live in Halls of Residence or University-owned student houses do not need a Council Tax Certificate.

More information on Council Tax regulations can be found on the University website at: www.bristol.ac.uk/currentstudents/.

Application forms for exemption are available on the Bristol City Council website: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-tax/student-exemptions-and-discounts (or, for those living outside the Bristol area, from their local authority).
Complaints and Appeals

In the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, we try very hard to make decisions that are fair and take proper account of the personal circumstances of each student. Inevitably, however, sometimes things go wrong and you may disagree with a decision that affects you. For this reason, the University has a system for dealing with student grievances and appeals.

Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about action or lack of action by the University or the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University.

The University aims to operate a fair and transparent student complaints procedure and students will not suffer any detriment by making a complaint. Before starting any formal complaint process, all informal means available within the Faculty must be exhausted. This means that you should try to seek a resolution within your School before involving the Faculty PGR Director. Disputes can often be resolved in this way, which saves everyone concerned much time and effort.

If you have a complaint and have been unable to solve by speaking to your School and the Faculty PGR Director, you may contact the Student Complaints Officer to arrange mediation as part of the Student Complaints Procedure. Further information on the student complaints procedure can be found at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-inch.

Appeals

An academic appeal is a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment, and awards. Appeals are normally about examinations or another form of assessment, a student's progress, a penalty imposed for cheating or plagiarism, or, in the case of a research postgraduate student, a decision by a Dean, a Registration Review Panel relating to termination or change of registration, or by the Research Degrees Examination Board. These decisions are formally ratified by the Faculty in a process which will already have given the student a chance to make representations, for example, by submitting extenuating circumstances. Before appealing, you must familiarise yourself with the Examination Regulations at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regis/.

Students are encouraged to take advice from the independent Just Ask Service at the Students' Union.

Some general principles apply which you may find useful:

- Any relevant medical or other extenuating circumstances MUST be presented in advance of any decision at which they are to be considered. Your School will have made the relevant deadlines clear.
- The University appeals process does not seek to question the academic judgment of examiners but, broadly speaking, checks that the processes and decisions were fairly made based on proper information. Disagreement about the quality of your work is not a ground for appeal.
- Formal appeals against the decision of a Board of Examiners must be made within 15 working days of notification of the decision of the Examination Board/Progress Committee which ratifies them. The Faculty meeting will take place after the School-level meeting.

Just Ask

Just Ask is a free, confidential advice service provided by Bristol Students' Union. Just Ask specialises in academic Advice but University of Bristol students can go to them about anything and they can signpost them to relevant services and provide information. More information is available on their website: https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/advice-support.

Tel: 0117 331 8634
Email: bristolsu-justask@bristol.ac.uk